

Israeli army's intention to deliberately kill civilians and non-combatants and prevent aid and relief to them, disregarding international law



05 Oct 2024

Israel-Palestinian Territory

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Beirut - The Israeli army has provided no supporting documentation for its assertion that fighters are transporting combat equipment in ambulances in Lebanon -- a mere pretext for Israel's flagrant violations against the Lebanese relief and ambulance sector.

Israeli attacks on civilian targets, including the war crime of targeting health facilities protected by international humanitarian law, are also crimes against humanity as part of Israel's aggression against Lebanon by means of a systematic and widespread attack against Lebanese civilians.

According to the toll released by the Lebanese Ministry of Health, since the start of Israeli attacks on 8 October 2023, and up until 3 October 2024, Israel has targeted 45 medical centres, 128 ambulances, and fire engines. This resulted in the deaths of 97 paramedics and the wounding of 188 others.

Israel also targeted 17 centres and 62 vehicles belonging to the Islamic Health Authority in Lebanon, killing 68 paramedics and wounding 98.

Furthermore, 18 paramedics were killed and 62 injured when 57 Islamic Message Scout vehicles and 15 medical facilities were targeted.

The Lebanese Ambulance Authority also lost seven paramedics when a medical facility and two of its cars were attacked. Three volunteers were injured when the Israeli army attacked three medical facilities run by the International Amel Association and a Lebanese Red Cross vehicle. As for the Lebanese Civil Defense, 9 medical centres and 6 vehicles were targeted. 4 paramedics were killed, and 25 others were injured during the attacks.

In related Israeli actions, on Thursday, 3 October 2024, the Lebanese Civil Defence received an Israeli threat ordering its members not to travel to the targeted areas, namely the southern suburb of Beirut, which had been subjected to the most violent raids since the attacks on Lebanon expanded on 23 September 2024. The threat also stated that they would be targeted if they went near the raid sites in the suburb to aid the victims.

This occurred after calls were made to Civil Defence centres across Lebanon on 26 September 2024, requesting the evacuation of centres that were under threat in order to incite panic and disrupt relief efforts.

Based on information from the Lebanese Ministry of Health, 1,974 people were killed in Lebanon between 8 October 2023, and 3 October 2024, including 127 children, 261 women, and 97 paramedics, with 9,384 injured. Israeli bombings have damaged over ten hospitals. The most recent attack occurred at Bint Jbeil Hospital on Friday evening, 4 October 2024, and UNIFIL ambulance crews were not allowed to enter to rescue casualties.

The Israeli army's actions, along with their targeting of the relief and health sectors, are a clear breach of international humanitarian law, which states unequivocally that medical personnel,

both military and civilian, must always be respected and protected.

According to Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and Article 85, paragraph 5, of the First Additional Protocol of 1977, intentional attacks against healthcare workers and relief workers are considered war crimes.

Israel is still bound by the Geneva Conventions and customary international humanitarian law, despite not having ratified the First Additional Protocol or the Rome Statute and not considering itself bound by them. These legal obligations go hand in hand with Israel's humanitarian and moral commitment to respect and protect paramedics and relief workers who transport and evacuate the wounded from areas of military operations and to ensure the freedom of passage for all medical missions.

The attacks in Lebanon bear witness to the Israeli army's intention to deliberately kill civilians and non-combatants and prevent aid and relief to them, disregarding international law and the urgent priority to always distinguish between civilians and combatants.

The international community must take immediate action to compel Israel to stop its crimes against relief workers in Lebanon and ensure their protection. The international community must stop these illegal attacks, prevent further escalation in the region, impose effective sanctions on Israel, and hold it accountable for its ongoing crimes against civilians and the defenseless.