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MAP and IRC Emergency Medical Team report serious malnutrition and harrowing injuries in Gaza hospital

4 January 2024

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Medical experts comprising the first Emergency Medical Team (EMT) deployed by the Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to Gaza have reported harrowing injuries and evidence of serious malnutrition at the hospital where they are working to help treat an unprecedented influx of casualties from Israel's military bombardment.

Reporting from Gaza, Professor Nick Maynard, a senior surgeon from Oxford University Hospital and the EMT's clinical lead, said, "The injuries we're witnessing are predominantly blast injuries with shrapnel wounds all over the body. Most are to the limbs, and multiple adults and children and babies coming in with traumatic amputations of arms and legs. We've seen small children with the most horrible facial burns. Every square inch of the hospital - the halls, the staircases, the reception areas, the wards - are covered with people lying on the ground."

"We are seeing children and adults in the hospital with serious malnutrition. At the first hint of any infection these patients lose weight rapidly and look ever more profoundly malnourished."

With more than 53,600 people injured so far, Gaza's healthcare system and its staff are on the brink of catastrophic collapse. [According](#) to the World Health Organization (WHO), only 13 out of Gaza's 36 hospitals are currently partially functional. Hospitals are facing critical shortages of basic supplies and fuel, and occupancy rates are now reaching 206% capacity in inpatient departments and 250% capacity in intensive care units.

Beyond casualties resulting from bombardment, Israel's siege, destruction of essential infrastructure, and the displacement of 1.9 million people, many into overcrowded shelters, are causing a public health catastrophe. [A quarter](#) of people have completely exhausted their food supplies and face starvation.

Senior Technical Advisor for Emergency Health at the IRC and Paediatrician Dr. Seema Jilani said, "The scenes inside Gaza are harrowing. In just the first few hours at the hospital, I treated an approximately one-year-old boy who lost his right arm and leg in the bombing – on the floor as no stretchers were available. Orphaned children and babies are arriving with severe burns, in shock, shaking with fear and barely alive. My heart is breaking for the children of Gaza."

Guided by MAP's more than 30 years of experience working inside Gaza, the Emergency Medical Team, comprises a group of trauma doctors, surgeons, paediatricians and humanitarian experts. They are working alongside their local counterparts to support the treatment of trauma injuries, the provision of emergency and urgent clinical care and emergency resuscitation.

As well as Emergency Medical Teams, MAP and IRC are working together to supply essential medical items, including those needed to treat trauma injuries, to Gaza's hospitals through the Rafah Crossing with Egypt. On Friday 29 December, the latest shipment of four truckloads of medicines and disposables entered Gaza, for distribution to Ministry of Health hospitals in the South and Middle Areas of Gaza.

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