

MAP demands protection for health workers and civilians inside Shifa Hospital

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Amid reports that Israeli forces have entered the Shifa Hospital, Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) is gravely concerned for the welfare of the 500 staff, 600 patients and thousands of displaced people believed to still be inside and demands their protection.

MAP's CEO Melanie Ward said: "The hundreds of medical professionals, patients, and people seeking shelter in Shifa Hospital are civilians with the right to protection under international law. Our team has lost all communication with healthcare workers inside Shifa, leaving us in the dark about the current situation, and extremely worried about what might happen without the world being able to bear witness.

"Almost two-thirds of all hospitals in Gaza are now no longer functioning due to damage, lack of fuel and insecurity. Health workers have endured weeks of bombardment and siege, and yet continue doing all they can to save lives. The international community must act now to end Israel's systematic dismantling of Gaza's health system, and secure an immediate ceasefire."

The Shifa Hospital is now largely not functioning except for the few essential services that the staff are able to continue. The blocking of fuel into Gaza means that the hospital's generators have shut down. Just yesterday, 40 patients died at the hospital. Three premature babies have also died after their life support systems, including incubators, failed when the hospital generator shut down.

Yesterday, staff announced that they have had to dig a mass grave inside the hospital grounds to bury the bodies of 180 patients, which cannot be evacuated due to Israel's ongoing military offensive.

Photo: Palestinians inspect the bodies of victims who were killed in the Israeli bombardment as they lie outside Al-Shifa Hospital. (Credit: Mohammad Abu Elsebah/DPA/Alamy Live News).

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