

# Medical staff and critically ill patients forced to flee Shifa Hospital on foot

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Medical staff from Shifa Hospital say they have been forced to flee the hospital on foot with critically ill patients through a warzone.

As two-thirds of hospitals in Gaza have now shut down, there is no capacity to receive them, and with barely a trickle of fuel or medicine getting into Gaza, they will not receive the treatment they need. With Israel's indiscriminate bombardment continuing across all areas, they will not reach safety.

Among those still to be evacuated are the surviving premature babies who have been forced out of incubators by Israel's denial of generator fuel for the hospital. The last information received by MAP indicated that four have so far died and 35 remained alive. Their lives are at immediate risk.

There can be no justification for forcing the closure of Shifa Hospital, with the devastating impact on civilian lives that this will bring.

As an occupying power, it is Israel's duty to ensure the proper functioning of Palestinian health facilities and the protection of medical personnel, the sick and the wounded. Instead, Israel's attacks and siege have forced the near-total collapse of Gaza's health system.

Meek expressions of concern by the international community will not be enough to stop the systematic dismantling of Gaza's health system.

These violations will only end when those responsible fear the consequences of their actions. States must therefore ensure that attacks on healthcare are independently investigated and perpetrators held to account.

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