



## **Palestinian Human Rights Organisations Condemn the Serious Israeli Violations at Kamal Adwan Hospital in Northern Gaza**

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The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), Al Mezan, and Al-Haq, strongly condemn the serious violations committed by Israeli forces inside Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza. These violations included the destruction of parts of the hospital, as well as the arrest and abuse of many medical staff and

displaced people. Due to the displacement of the majority of our teams from northern Gaza to the south and the complete disruption of communication services and the internet in Gaza for the fourth consecutive day, our teams were unable to verify many of the violations reported within the hospital premises. The attacks on Adwan hospital and the serious violations committed against its medical staff and displaced people necessitate the opening of a swift, independent international investigation, as part of Israel's systematic and widespread attacks on Palestinian hospitals and health facilities since 7 October. According to the preliminary monitoring of our teams, on 5 December 2023, Israeli forces began firing at the gates of Kamal Adwan Hospital and imposed a siege on it with continued gunfire. On 8 December 2023, Israeli forces tightened their siege on the hospital, and tanks approached its surroundings. At that time, there were 65 patients, including 12 children in the intensive care unit and six newborns in incubators. Additionally, there were about 100 medical staff and nearly 3,000 displaced people. On 11 December 2023, Israeli forces targeted the maternity ward of the hospital with one shell, killing two women and injuring several people inside. The following day, Israeli forces intensified their siege on the hospital, with tanks approaching its gates. Simultaneously, snipers positioned in nearby tall buildings, indiscriminately opened fire on anyone attempting to move inside or outside, rendering the hospital completely inoperable. On 13 December 2023, Israeli forces, accompanied by tanks, stormed Kamal

Adwan Hospital after destroying its gates and walls, deploying soldiers on its roofs, and turning it into a military barracks. On the same day, the Israeli forces ordered those who were inside the hospital, including medical staff, to exit the hospital to the courtyard. They began removing the displaced people in batches, interrogating them and subjecting them to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment. They were detained for a while in an open area, and then the majority of them were released. Israeli forces instructed the majority of them to return to the hospital, while ordering some others to go to other shelters. Meanwhile, Israeli forces continued to detain about 70 people, including some medical staff, and the hospital director, Dr. Ahmed Al-Kahlout. On 14 December 2023, Israeli forces stormed the hospital again, forcing all remaining displaced people—approximately 2,500 individuals—to evacuate. Males aged 14 and above were forced to strip down to their underwear and were taken to another area, where they underwent a six-hour detention, interrogation, and identity verification process. While the majority were released, approximately 50 individuals remained under Israeli detention. Approximately 50 people, including patients, injured people, and their families, along with five doctors and nurses, were confined inside the hospital. They were detained in one of the buildings without food, water, or electricity. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza, the medical staff were unable to provide care for twelve infants in the intensive care unit and ten patients in the emergency room, leading to the death of two patients. On Saturday morning, 16 December 2023, Israeli forces withdrew from the hospital after destroying parts of the administration building, the pharmacy, and drug storage. They also made extensive excavations inside the hospital yard, including the exhumation of a mass grave where 26 Palestinian bodies had been buried. Previous relentless Israeli shelling and ground operations had prevented people from burying them in a graveyard. On Sunday evening, 17 December 2023, Israeli forces fired towards the hospital's courtyard as a medical team from the Ministry of Health attempted to hold a press conference to present details about the violations committed inside it over the past few days. The serious Israeli violations committed against the health system in Gaza have effectively disrupted its operations. Since 7 October, 300 health personnel have reportedly been killed—according to Medical Aid for Palestinians, this is a higher number than the total number of deaths of health workers recorded in all conflict countries last year and in every single year since 2016. Furthermore, 22 out of 36 Gaza hospitals, along with 57 health centers, are no longer operational, while 138 health institutions and 102 ambulances were targeted according to the Ministry of Health. Our organizations emphasize that the operational hospitals, mostly in the southern areas of Gaza, face significant challenges due to power outages, fuel shortages, and a lack of medications and medical supplies. This situation becomes more critical as casualties and injuries surpass their operational

capacity. We note that the continued disruption of communication and internet services for the tenth consecutive day has serious implications for reporting injuries or casualties. The work of various organizations, grappling with the catastrophic aftermath of the Israeli attack on Gaza, has been significantly affected. Moreover, the severed communication has impeded contact between residents within Gaza and their families outside. Our organizations affirm that hospitals and medical facilities are civilian objects and enjoy special protection under international humanitarian law. We emphasize that Israeli violations against hospitals require an international investigation to ensure accountability and justice. We call for the immediate release of the detained medical staff, both from Kamal Adwan Hospital and those previously detained from Al-Shifa Hospital, to ensure their safety. We also remind of the absolute prohibition against torture and other ill-treatment set forth under treaty and customary international law, and the illegality of forced confession obtained by means of torture or other forms of duress. We reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of the Israeli aggression on Gaza, an end to the aggressive criminal affecting all aspects of life there, and a halt to all practices of genocide against our people in Gaza. We also call on the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to expedite the investigation into crimes committed in the occupied Palestinian territory, including those against hospitals. We further call on him to stop the double standards and political bias in cases of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, and to take decisive action to investigate these crimes and ensure accountability for the perpetrators.