

Statement by Scott Anderson, Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator and Director of UNRWA Affairs in Gaza

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Visiting the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis yesterday, I witnessed some of the most horrific scenes I have seen in my nine months in Gaza. This overstretched health facility admitted well over 100 of yesterday's severe injuries. With not enough beds, hygiene equipment, sheeting, or scrubs, many patients were treated on the ground without disinfectants. Ventilation systems were switched off due to a lack of electricity and fuel, and the air was filled with the smell of blood.

I saw toddlers who are double amputees, children paralyzed and unable to receive treatment, and others separated from their parents. I also saw mothers and fathers who were unsure if their children were alive. Parents told me in despair that they had moved into the 'so-called humanitarian zone' in the hope that their children would be safe there.

My colleagues from the humanitarian community are doing everything possible to increase medical capacity in Gaza, where the health system has long been on the ropes. Yesterday, we provided referral services, as well as additional tents, beds, stretchers, disposables, and medications. But impediments to humanitarian operations prevent us from supporting people anywhere near the scale necessary.

Civilians must be protected at all times. We urgently need a ceasefire, the release of all remaining hostages, respite for the people of Gaza, and a meaningful opportunity for healing to begin.