Stop the suffering of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip by protecting their human rights

Palestinians citizens in Gaza have been under a crippling Israeli blockade for more than 10 years. The blockade has increased the humanitarian and development situation of Palestinians in Gaza. Palestinians in Gaza has endured three Israeli military offensives in less than six years that caused many civilian casualties and left tens of thousands of Palestinian families homeless. The blockade has also played a major role in further deepening the Palestinian territorial division over the course of the decade. Gaza is the "world's largest open-air prison", where citizens are deprived of the most basic human rights such as adequate electricity supply, access to clean water, health services, and education. Unemployment rate is at 42% one of the highest in the world, 96% of the water in the Gaza Strip is undrinkable, 80% of the Households in Gaza Strip receive humanitarian aid, 47% do not have enough food.

Monthly average of MW available per day the Gaza Strip	Monthly average of MW needed per day	Month
189	600	January 2017
198	600	February 2017
182	500-600	March 2017
151	500-600	April 2017
126	500-600	May 2017
133	500-600	June 2017

122	500-600	July 2017 (3-4 hours of electricity available per day)[1]

Prolonged electricity cuts and fuel shortages have a serious negative impact on Palestinian hospitals; especially on critical departments such as neonatal care; kidney dialysis and intensive care which rely heavily on electricity to sustain medical equipment. This is critical and life threatening to new born babies and intensive care patients. The electricity cuts and fuel shortages are also posing a threat to the refrigeration of blood and vaccine storage, damage to medical equipment and generators. According to WHO, "there are around 300 backlog machines and equipment items currently out of order and awaiting repair".

"The situation in Gaza has become increasingly precarious over recent months. No one is untouched by the energy crisis. And restrictions by the Palestinian Authority in the medical sector are hitting some of the most vulnerable adults and children in the Strip." Said the Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt Robert Piper[2].

They delay in shipment from the Palestinian Authority and decrease reported more than 1/3 of essential drugs being at zero stock. Palestinians living in Gaza have the right to get the necessary medical services they need. According to the WHO Special Report Gaza, Opt May to July 2017"Out of the 516 medications on the essential drug list, 177 drugs items (34%) were at zero stock levels in May. In June, 184 drug items 36%) were at zero stock in the Ministry of Health's Gaza Central Drug Store (CDS)...Out of the 184 items out of stock, 161 items are completely depleted in June (31%)."

Data collected by Palestinian center for human rights PCHR indicates that there is also a gradual decline in the number of medical referrals issued for the Gaza Strip patients, "as the number

[1] UN OCHA oPt
[2]https://www.ochaopt.org/content/appeal-funding-stabilize-gaza-s-deteriorating-humanitarian-conditions

reached 2,190 referrals in last March, but declined to 1,756 in April at a rate of 19.8%. Moreover, the medical referrals decreased in May to 1,484 at a rate of 32.2%. The information collected by PCHR shows that the number of referrals in June did not exceed 500, which points out that they declined at a rate of over 75%." Not only that they decreased but also the External Medical Treatment Department adopted a new mechanism when dealing with serious cases, under which patients are referred upon the approval of the Department's Director, as the "financial coverage is offered later and following the coordination needed". This mechanism stopped upon instructions given by Ramallah's Ministry of Health of the External Medical Committee in the Gaza strip on June 15th 2017.

The number of medical referrals was always expected to go higher with the electricity crisis continue to be a major issue in the Gaza strip. Denying patients their right to health and receive medical treatment abroad, in the view of absence of proper alternative in Gaza, is a violation of the right to health ensured in the Palestinian Basic Law amended in 2003 and the Public Health law 20/2004 that stipulates in article (2-1) "With the coordination with the concerned institutions, the Ministry of Health must provide governmental preventive, diagnosis, curative, and rehabilitative health services; and establish needed health institutions". Denying patients the right the health is violation of the international human rights standards, including article 12 of the international Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) to which Palestine acceded in 2014. Palestine is obligated to provide health access to health services, medication and treatment.

- PNGO demands that the Palestinian parties to ensure neutralize the different services and that Palestinians in Gaza don't pay the price of Palestinian political division.
- PNGO calls upon the PA to process referrals without delay and ensure that medicine supplies and pharmaceuticals are available in the Gaza strip.

- Due to the urgent need to help mitigate the effects of deep electricity cuts and lack of fuel for generators for hospitals, water treatment plants, sewerage pumps and many other key

facilities, PNGO calls upon the international community to act now and provide the necessary humanitarian aid to Gaza.

- PNGO calls upon the international community to pressure Israeli occupying power, to assume its legal obligations as occupying power towards the Gaza Strip residents in a way that guarantee their right to obtain the most attainable stand of mental and physical health and right to travel and have secure access to hospitals aboard according to international humanitarian law, particularly the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and 1977 Protocols I and II additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.
- PNGO also calls upon the international community to do everything in their power to lift the Gaza blockade; hold Israel accountable for their criminal actions against Palestinians in Gaza, allow Palestinians to get medical treatment without interference and delaying permits to treatment needed, take hard measures to ensure that international law is implemented.

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