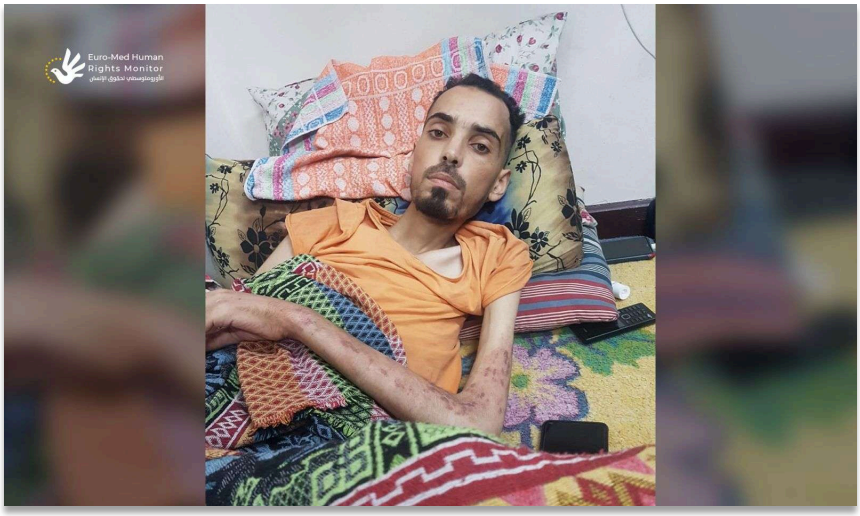
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Gaza: Growing number of sick and injured people are dying due to Israeli blockade, restrictions on entry of medical supplies



Ishaq Nael Mushtaha, 29, from the Gaza Strip, died on 3 August 2024, after suffering from Crohn's disease and malnutrition

05 Aug 2024

Israel-Palestinian Territory

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Palestinian Territory - Following 10 months of its systematic and widespread destruction of the health sector, and imposing arbitrary blockade, Israel continues to deliberately prevent the entry of medical supplies, including medical devices and essential medicines, into the Gaza Strip, resulting in a high death toll there.

Now more than ever, immediate action is needed to lift Israel's blockade on the Strip, bring in medical supplies to save the lives of sick and injured persons, guarantee the right to travel for those in need of critical treatment, and bring in the supplies required to immediately rebuild the health system and ensure its safety from Israeli targeting.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor receives dozens of daily complaints from Palestinians seeking to travel for life-saving treatment outside of the Gaza Strip due to the lack of adequate treatment, medicines, and medical devices, as the majority of hospitals are out of service due to the ongoing Israeli blockade and direct targeting.

Since the redeployment of its military forces and the destruction of large parts of it last May, Israel has closed the Rafah land crossing with Egypt—the only route for travel in the Gaza Strip since the start of Israel's ongoing genocide of Palestinians there. The closure has prevented thousands of sick and injured people from traveling for treatment, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of them thus far.

The latest statistics from the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza indicate that more than 12,000 injured people and 14,000 sick patients are in urgent need of traveling for treatment, stressing that these are part of the tens of thousands who are in dire need of travel to complete treatment or receive essential therapy and rehabilitation services that are not available anymore in the Gaza Strip.

Dozens of patient deaths, including of elderly people, are reported on a daily basis, the majority of which are a result of inadequate medical care, medication, or treatment. Euro-Med Monitor emphasises that these individuals are not formally included in the official list of those killed by Israel's ongoing genocide.

> **"I was using ineffective, basic painkillers to get by. The hospitals were far away, and because of the collapse of the medical system... I feel like I am getting closer to death every day**
>
> **Maysaa Alian Kamel Aliwa, a cancer patient in the Gaza Strip**

Data from the Ministry of Health show that the death rate in the Gaza Strip has significantly increased in the past few months when compared to the same period in the last two years. A correlation has also been noted between the increasing deaths, hospitals

that are no longer operational, and the breakdown of the health system because of systematic Israeli targeting and blockade.

Twenty-nine-year-old Palestinian Ishaq Nael Mushtaha died on Saturday 3 August as a result of malnutrition and being unable to travel for treatment.

The deceased patient's brother, Mohammed Nael Mushtaha, had previously requested in a statement obtained by the Euro-Med Monitor team that his brother be permitted to travel for treatment, stating that Ishaq had been suffering from Crohn's diseases and experiencing symptoms like adult colic and stomach pain before the ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip. The illness worsened at the start of the genocide. On 2 May, Ishaq had an intestinal operation that resulted in the removal of 30 centimetres of his intestines and a loss of weight from 75 to 39 kilogrammes. Mushtaha's requests to travel for medical treatment were denied, due to the Rafah crossing's closure, up until his recent death.

Numerous other complaints about the suffering of patients or their families due to inadequate treatment have been received by Euro-Med Monitor. One such complaint was from the mother of a two-and-a-half-year-old from northern Gaza named Youssef Basil Al-Adham. Youssef's mother told the Euro-Med Monitor team that her child had been injured in the Israeli bombing of a house, and had come out of the rubble with cerebral palsy. He now

suffers from malnutrition and body ulcers. Though Youssef has had multiple surgeries in an attempt to save him, the military attack has made it impossible for him to receive the proper care. " according to what the doctor told me my child needs to travel abroad for treatment so that I can see him able to sit again," said Youssef's mother, "But despite registering for a transfer abroad, the crossing is closed, and he cannot travel."

Thousands of cancer patients, meanwhile, are facing severe suffering and are threatened with death as a result of the lack of treatment and their urgent need to travel to receive chemotherapy therapy.

Maysaa Alian Kamel Aliwa, a cancer patient who has been deprived of medical care due to the ongoing genocide, told the Euro-Med Monitor team: "I have been a cancer patient since 2018. In addition to the Israeli bombing, another challenge we've faced during the war has been getting water, because it is scarce and requires traveling to a distant location. I've suffered from forced displacement and bombing...we've had to spend nights under artillery shells and aircraft bombing. We were miraculously spared from certain death when an area behind us was bombed, [but] we were forced to evacuate to Khan Yunis without access to even the most basic necessities—food and water. I had no access to follow-up care or treatment during that time, so I was using ineffective, basic painkillers to get by. The hospitals were far away, and because of the collapse of the medical system, we were unable to get the

essential medical care. I feel like I am getting closer to death every day."

The mother of nine-year-old Abdullah Muhammad Akrim spoke with the Euro-Med Monitor team as well, saying: "After our house in northern Gaza was bombed, we were forced to evacuate to a school. When my son suddenly became ill, we took him to the Kamal Adwan Hospital, the only hospital in northern Gaza that was still open at a time when the health system is failing. After three days of intensive care, the doctors determined that he had kidney failure and required dialysis. I blame this on his months-long reliance on canned food and his deficiency in minerals and vitamins, which are unavailable in northern Gaza due to a shortage of produce, food, medical care, and supplements."

A pediatrician at Kamal Adwan Hospital, Saher Nasr, told the Euro-Med Monitor team that a lack of nourishment and weakened immunity have caused a rise in illness cases among children in northern Gaza in recent days: "Many skin diseases have spread among children during the war, most of which we had not recorded previous cases [of]. Most of these diseases are caused by bacteria, viruses, and fungi, which only affect people with weakened immune systems. As a result of the overcrowding in shelter centres, poor hygiene, contaminated water supplies, and a diet high in processed foods and low in protein, people are becoming more and more susceptible to these diseases. This has caused delayed healing of wounds and the occurrence of

infections in them, and treatment is currently unavailable in the form of ointments or antibiotics. We in the hospital are dealing with the symptoms without being able to treat or control the disease. If the current situation continues as it is, the numbers will increase even more, and we will see more difficult cases."

As the Israeli army has demolished and rendered most of the Gaza Strip's hospitals and medical facilities inoperable, the arbitrary siege and crossing closures that are still in place are further evidence of Israel's intention to deliberately execute a large number of patients and injured individuals.

Israel has been committing genocide in the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023. Its attacks have primarily focused on destroying hospitals, medical facilities, and means of transportation; preventing the entry of medicines and medical equipment; and arresting or killing medical personnel. These actions—intentionally depriving individuals of food, medicine, and other necessities for survival—are slowly killing those not directly killed by military attacks.

Israel's destruction of the Strip's health sector is a fundamental pillar of the systematic, organised, and large-scale plan it has implemented to destroy the lives of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and eliminate them entirely by turning their homeland into an uninhabitable place devoid of basic services. Through its integrated crimes, the most dangerous of which is the deliberate and widespread targeting

of the health sector, which Israel apparently intends to put completely out of service, bringing it to the point of no return, Israel is depriving Palestinians of any opportunities for survival, recovery, shelter, and even life itself.

In addition, given that these acts are part of the larger, systematic Israeli military assault against the civilian population in the Gaza Strip, Israel's crimes against hospitals and protected individuals, such as the ill and injured, also qualify as crimes against humanity and as full-fledged war crimes.

By violating the principles of distinction, proportionality, and military necessity, i.e. refusing to take the necessary precautions to protect civilians and civilian objects, the Israeli army is violating international humanitarian law, and the special protections enjoyed by civilian hospitals and medical personnel specifically. Israel blatantly refuses to acknowledge the legal protections enjoyed by civilians, whether working in a medical capacity or not and continues to target the wounded and sick in a flagrant manner—individuals that are supposedly protected in the eyes of international law, whether they are civilians or military personnel.

A swift international intervention is required to put an end to Israel's crime of genocide; lift its arbitrary siege on the Gaza Strip; permit the entry of food and non-food items as well as life-saving medical aid into the enclave; immediately rebuild the health sector; establish field hospitals in the northern section of the

Strip; pressure Israel to stop its systematic attacks against hospitals that have been rendered inoperable and guarantee the safety of the medical personnel, sick and injured patients, and displaced people inside; allow anyone who needs it to receive life-saving treatment; and facilitate the transfer of thousands of emergency cases for medical treatment abroad.

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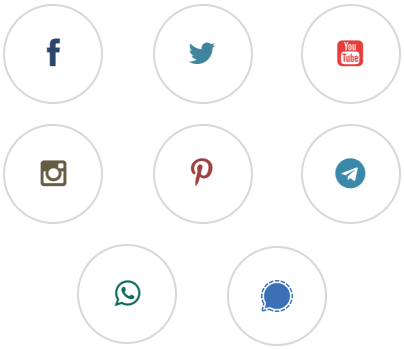
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