# Limiting or prohibiting medications from reaching injured and ill people is a death sentence and form of genocide



10 Jan 2024

Israel-Palestinian Territory

Share On

**Geneva** - Those who have survived Israel's ongoing air, land, and sea raids on the Gaza Strip face an imminent risk of death amid a dire lack of

medications and serious spread of epidemics, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor said.

Euro-Med Monitor strongly denounced Israel's ban on medical supplies to hospitals and pharmacies in the Gaza Strip, particularly those in Gaza City and the Strip's northern areas, calling the measure a death sentence for thousands of injured and sick people and another weapon of genocide, aimed at causing severe physical and psychological damage to the people of Gaza that will ultimately result in their death.

Testimonies gathered by the Euro-Med Monitor team from medical officials and pharmacy owners in the Strip indicate that, over three full months since the start of Israel's genocidal war against Palestinian civilians, the suffering of patients there is increasing at an unprecedented rate.

According to medical officials, there is a severe shortage of most medications, painkillers, and other crucial supplies needed for primary care, emergency care, and central care. The shortage even includes children's vaccines and infant formula. This cruel health situation, said Euro-Med Monitor, negatively affects all hospitals and patients in the Strip.

Haitham Muhammad, 41, said that worms multiplied in his son Khaled's wounds after Khaled underwent surgery at the Shuhada Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah, central Gaza Strip, due to a shortage of sterilisers. Muhammad said that a missile fired by an

Israeli warplane close to their home caused shrapnel injuries to his son approximately a week ago. Khaled underwent the surgery with barely any anesthesia, and has since suffered from infected wounds due to antibiotic-resistant bacteria; his doctors told the family that there are no available antibiotics suitable to combat these bacteria.

Ghada Saeed Murjan, 37, testified that her three children recently experienced severe vomiting. She attempted to find medication for their condition in most of the pharmacies in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, but was unsuccessful. The medication shortage is even more dangerous, however, for people with chronic diseases.

Fifty-one-year-old Shaaban Sharab informed the Euro-Med Monitor team that he has been searching for a suitable treatment for his 26-year-old daughter, who has lung cancer, for three weeks. Since 7 October 2023, she has not received any chemotherapy doses, which has resulted in a serious decline in her health.

Khawla Ribhi, a 45-year-old displaced woman with type 1 diabetes whose body is unable to produce enough insulin to control blood sugar levels, also experienced a recent decline in her health, after failing to obtain enough insulin.

Euro-Med Monitor received testimonies from six people with chronic diseases in the central and southern areas of the Gaza Strip—including a heart

patient and another individual who needs dialysis—all of whom are suffering from deteriorating health in light of the lack of medicines and health care available to them.

As per the report by Euro-Med Monitor, the limited medical assistance that reaches the Gaza Strip via the Rafah border crossing with Egypt primarily consists of anesthetic drugs and other medications meant for medical surgeries. It does not include any medications meant to treat chronic illnesses and other medical conditions.

The Geneva-based organisation said that the health of 10s of thousands of patients is rapidly worsening as a result of the extremely limited supply of medications for chronic diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure or cholesterol, excessive lipids, pulmonary diseases, and respiratory illnesses, amid the serious spread of epidemics in the Strip's overcrowded displacement centres. Euro-Med Monitor warned of the serious implications of running out of medications for these chronically ill patients.

Hospitals in the Gaza Strip are struggling with a severe lack of intravenous fluids, insulin, and anesthesia supplies. Additionally, hospital-based electrically-dependent medical equipment, such as ventilators, incubators, X-rays, CT scans, analyzers, and anesthesia machines, are becoming less and less functional.

A shortage of antibiotic medications is another major problem, as it increases the risk of wound infection, as is a lack of most painkillers, ointments, and medical supplies including traditional antiseptics like iodine. Dozens of pregnant women have also suffered miscarriages due to the absence of blood-thinning medications—which prevent clotting—as well as tonics and vitamins.

The Gaza Strip is also experiencing a severe shortage of vaccine stocks, which is contributing to thousands of cases of infectious diseases in centres for internally displaced persons, while the decomposing remains of dead bodies across the Strip pose a serious danger that threatens to ignite a public health crisis.

According to the Palestinian Health Ministry, there are currently more than 2,000 cancer patients in the Strip; 1,100 kidney failure patients; about 50,000 cardiac patients; more than 60,000 diabetics; and thousands of others with chronic diseases who are unable to receive any actual health care.

This comes at a time when just nine out of 36 hospitals and 18 out of 72 health care centres in the Gaza Strip are currently operating. According to data released by the World Health Organisation, the average bed occupancy rate in these operating hospitals is 350%, and the bed occupancy rate in intensive care units is 260%. Furthermore, a severe lack of food, fuel, water, and electricity due to the strict Israeli siege is preventing hospitals from operating.

Gaza's hospitals are also struggling with a lack of medical personnel, particularly neurosurgeons, specialised surgeons, and intensive care nurses, as medical personnel find it difficult to get to hospitals because of the Israeli evacuation orders and general movement difficulties resulting from Israel's ongoing attacks. The quality of medical care, Euro-Med Monitor stated, is being determined by extremely limited resources and capacity fluctuations.

Tens of thousands of patients in the Gaza Strip will die slowly and painfully if they do not receive medicine, medical supplies, and other necessities, Euro-Med Monitor declared. The rights group underscored the urgent need for a humanitarian ceasefire to protect and replenish the Strip's remaining medical facilities and to treat all injured and ill Gazans.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor confirmed that these crimes are being committed as part of Israel's genocide and are evidence of Israeli collective punishment and mass killing policies against the more than 2.3 million people in the Gaza Strip. These policies are in violation of both international humanitarian law and international human rights law, the organisation said, and Israel's brutal campaign in the Strip is believed to be one of the bloodiest in modern history, given the unprecedented rate of killing there.

Euro-Med Monitor reiterated its call for the international community's parties, particularly those

who have ratified the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, to take decisive action to halt Israel's genocide against the people of the Gaza Strip, protect civilians and medical facilities, give them the resources they need right away, make sure that they are no longer targeted,and hold accountable all those involved in these crimes and violations.

Defending freedom Throughout the MENA Region and Europe

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor is a Geneva-based independent organization with regional offices across the MENA region and Europe

FOCUS AREAS



CONNECT WITH US

NEWSLETTER

Get News & Action Alerts in Your Email.

Subscribe Subscribe

Privacy Policy