Statement on WHO's role in medical evacuation from Gaza via the Rafah crossing to Egypt

Jerusalem, 10 April 2026

Under difficult circumstances, WHO continues to work for the health of the people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including supporting the Ministry of Health (MoH) with medical evacuations. These may resume on 12 April, after WHO had to suspend its support to medical evacuations, following a security incident in which a person contracted to provide services to WHO in Gaza was killed. With commitments now received from relevant parties to ensure the safety of patients and staff, WHO stands ready to resume its support to the operation.

Medical evacuations follow pre-established procedures.

WHO acknowledges that some social media posts raise concerns about how medical evacuations are conducted. WHO takes all such concerns seriously and is looking into the matter.

WHO's role in the MoH-led medical evacuations is strictly supportive, limited to coordination and logistical support, carried out in close collaboration with various stakeholders and health partners, to ensure the safe, dignified, and orderly transfer of patients from Gaza to the crossing. WHO or its staff are not involved in, and have no influence over, the prioritization of patients approved to exit Gaza for medical evacuation.

Patients are referred for medical evacuation by their treating physician, who issues a referral form that is submitted by the hospital to the Referral Committee. This body is composed of local health officials from Gaza. WHO is not a member.
The committee bears sole responsibility for prioritizing patients for medical evacuation.

The prioritized patient list is shared by the Palestinian Authority (PA) with Israeli and Egyptian authorities for security clearance. Once clearance is granted, the PA shares the security-cleared list with WHO.

Upon receiving the cleared patient list, WHO's role is limited to the following:

- Contacting patients to communicate logistics, including collection point locations and transport arrangements to the designated departure health facility, and to confirm any medical needs during transfer.
- Ensuring the designated health facility is well-prepared with medical and psychosocial support, food, water and sanitation services, and disability-accessible facilities.
- Coordinating all logistical and medical arrangements for transfer to the crossing from the designated health facility.

On medical evacuation days, patients are transported via appropriate medical vehicles provided by WHO's partners to designated collection points, then onward by WHO-contracted buses to the departure health facility. From there, the evacuation convoy departs to the Rafah crossing, passing areas outside the established ceasefire zone within Gaza.

Patients are received at the Rafah crossing by the PA, which verifies identities alongside the European Union Border Assistance Mission, before the patients cross to the Egyptian side.

WHO is committed to transparency and to fulfilling its mandate in all its operational areas, including to support the health system in the occupied Palestinian territory. WHO calls for a safe, predictable and enabling operating environment that allows delivery of health and humanitarian assistance at scale, in line with humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law.

Notes

WHO has posted about the process of medical evacuation on its website since September 2025 https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/Medevac_-_17_Sep_2025.pdf

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