

New report highlights attacks on Gaza's hospitals and medics in 2014 military offensive

A joint NGO report has highlighted the devastating attacks on Gaza's medical facilities and personnel which occurred during the 2014 military offensive on Gaza. This comes as states prepare to discuss the UN Commission of Inquiry into last summer's 51-day attacks at the UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva on Monday.

The report, *'No More Impunity: Gaza's Health Sector Under Attack'*, by Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), the Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, and Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR), expands on the findings of the UN investigation, to which these organisations contributed through submissions based on field research in Gaza. The authors have welcomed the Commission's recognition of the "unprecedented" extent of the devastation and human suffering last year, and support its call for accountability for violations of international humanitarian law during the attacks.

Introducing the report, Baroness Helena Kennedy QC called for *"unequivocal commitment from all states for the protection of medical infrastructure and its importance in ensuring the fulfilment of the right of all Palestinians to the highest attainable standard of health."*

Seventeen hospitals, 56 primary healthcare facilities and 45 ambulances were damaged or destroyed by Israeli strikes. The report provides detailed accounts of some of these incidents, including the complete destruction of Al Wafa, Gaza's only rehabilitation hospital, and an attack on the Mebarret Al Rahma Centre for People with Disabilities in which two patients were killed and three injured. Sixteen health workers, many of them ambulance drivers, were also killed while on duty treating, transporting or trying to reach the injured.

New data revealed in the report show that 511 of the 2,217 Palestinians killed last summer died without ever receiving medical assistance, due to obstruction of ambulances trying to reach the wounded or carry them to hospitals. In one particularly shocking case, ambulances did not reach Anas 'Bader' Qdieh, a seven-year-old boy from Khuza'a with a serious shrapnel wound to his abdomen, for nearly four hours. When paramedics eventually found him, they were held at an Israeli checkpoint for a further 27 minutes on the way to hospital, during which time he died.

Tony Laurance, CEO of Medical Aid for Palestinians, said: *"The scale of the attacks on health facilities and personnel have had a devastating impact in Gaza, and are deeply troubling. There must be a full and impartial investigation of what happened, and accountability for violations of international law."*

Issam Younis, General Director of the Gaza-based Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, said: *"This report reaffirms that as long as Palestinians are denied justice and perpetrators advance with impunity, prospects for Palestine remain bleak. No peace is attainable without justice. The accession of the State of Palestine to the ICC must serve as an avenue for victims to be redressed and to hold the perpetrators to account."*

Tareq Shrourou, Director of LPHR, said: *"This report highlights the horrors that occur when there is a status quo of systemic impunity for serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Achieving full accountability, justice and respect for the rule of law must now be given primacy by all relevant actors to deter further grave violations and to secure the rights of victims."*

MAP, Al Mezan and LPHR jointly urge governments at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva to ensure accountability for apparent deliberate or reckless attacks on medical infrastructure and personnel during last summer's military offensive on Gaza. With Gaza having endured three large-scale military attacks in six years, continuing impunity for these attacks and a lack of action to resolve the root causes of the conflict between Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory could put the lives of medics and civilians at risk again in future.

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Notes for Editors:

The final report, and associated videos detailing some of the cases contained therein, will be available [here](#) from Friday 26th June.

Photos for media use, associated with the cases in the report, are available [here](#).

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