

Israeli Forces Ramp Up Attacks on Kamal Adwan Hospital and its Medical Personnel Despite ICC Arrest Warrants

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Gaza, 24 November 2024 — Israeli forces have escalated deliberate attacks on medical personnel and health facilities in Gaza, with the latest wave of attacks concentrated on Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya, North Gaza. Al Mezan strongly condemns Israel's deliberate targeting and destruction of medical facilities and personnel. These grave violations come against the backdrop of the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant, highlighting the persistent impunity that enables such crimes to continue.



Dr. Hossam Abu Safiya

Al Mezan's monitoring and documentation indicate a pattern of escalating attacks on healthcare infrastructure, systematically obstructing access to medical care for Gaza's wounded, sick, and medical patients. This involves the direct targeting of ambulances, blocking roads leading to hospitals, and the arbitrary detention of medical and civil defence personnel. In recent days, Al Mezan has documented a sharp escalation in Israeli attacks on Kamal Adwan Hospital, following the crippling of Al-Awda and Indonesian Hospitals. These facilities were rendered unable to operate effectively after weeks of relentless Israeli sieges and attacks and are now no longer admitting new patients or newly injured persons.

On 21 November 2024, an Israeli drone strike injured two pregnant women as they exited Al-Awda Hospital in northern Gaza. The following day, 22 November 2024, an Israeli drone targeted Kamal Adwan Hospital's emergency entrance while medical staff were attending to wounded patients, injuring four healthcare workers. Subsequent Israeli drone strikes hit nurses transporting casualties to the radiology department, critically wounding two staff members who are now in intensive care. Dr. Hossam Abu Safiya, the director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, reported that Israeli forces bombed areas near critical infrastructure, including the hospital courtyard housing the power generators and the oxygen supply station. The attacks caused severe damage to the oxygen lines and a diesel leak from the main generator, creating a high risk of a catastrophic fire and threatening a total power outage.

Currently, the Kamal Adwan Hospital cares for 85 injured individuals, eight patients in the intensive care unit, 14 children in the pediatric ward, and four newborns in the neonatal unit. Dr. Abu Safiya emphasized that each attack exacerbates the hospital's struggle to function and causes injuries and severe damage to its infrastructure. At approximately 11:30 pm on 23 November 2024, Israeli forces struck the hospital again, injuring Dr. Abu Safiya himself. He sustained moderate shrapnel injuries to his left thigh.

Kamal Adwan Hospital, along with other hospitals in northern Gaza, faces a critical shortage of medicines, medical equipment, essential supplies, and specialized staff. The denial of entry for medical teams, the scarcity of resources, and the targeting and restriction of ambulances and civil defence vehicles collectively impose life-threatening conditions on patients and the injured, amounting to a death sentence.

Dr. Saeed Joudeh, an orthopaedic specialist, shared his account with Al Mezan: "At approximately 16:00 on 22 November 2024, while working at Kamal Adwan Hospital and wearing my medical uniform, I was near the destroyed hospital gate when I felt something strike my body and noticed it hitting the ground around me. The source was aerial. I collapsed, and hospital staff carried me to the emergency department. It was confirmed that I had sustained shrapnel injuries from live ammunition to my legs, right forearm, and face. My colleagues provided me with the necessary treatment. I later learned that several staff members were also injured in the incident, as a drone directly fired at the hospital and those inside."

Al Mezan underscores that Israeli forces' actions targeting Palestinian medical facilities, healthcare workers, and ambulances represent serious and systematic violations of international humanitarian law. These actions flagrantly disregard the protections granted to civilians and civilian infrastructure and violate key provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which obliges occupying powers to ensure the delivery of food and medical supplies to civilians in occupied territories, safeguard shipments of essential goods, and take all necessary measures to ensure the proper functioning of medical facilities.

International law prohibits targeting medical facilities, even in cases of alleged misuse for non-medical purposes. Claims by Israeli authorities about medical facilities like Al-Shifa Hospital have been thoroughly debunked, revealing them as baseless fabrications intended to justify the deliberate targeting and destruction of Gaza's hospitals.

Al Mezan strongly condemns Israel's ongoing crimes against the Palestinian people in Gaza, emphasizing that international inaction and the ongoing failure to hold Israel and its leadership accountable have allowed such violations to persist.

Accordingly, we call for the international community to take decisive action to end Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza, lift the siege and blockade of Gaza, and ensure the delivery of critical humanitarian aid, including food, medicine, and essential supplies. The international community must exert pressure on Israel to restore and increase electricity and water supplies to Gaza, while international organizations must take action to equip Gaza's hospitals with the essential diagnostic tools and medical equipment destroyed by Israeli attacks.

The High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide are urged to take immediate and effective measures to stop Israel's targeting of hospitals, ambulances, and medical personnel. These measures should include ensuring the release of arbitrarily detained medical staff, whose absence disrupts critical healthcare services, and facilitating the entry of specialized volunteer medical teams to provide urgently needed life-saving care.

Lastly, States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) are urged to support the ICC in enforcing arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Gallant, while intensifying efforts to hold all individuals involved in acts of genocide accountable.

Al Mezan

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