

Minister of Defence

Mr. Yoav Gallant
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Mr. Yoav Gallant,

I am writing to urge you to immediately rescind the forced evacuation orders you issued to hospitals in northern Gaza and in Gaza City and to ensure unconditional protection of patients, health workers and the tens of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) seeking shelter in these hospitals and their premises.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed that 23 hospitals in Northern Gaza and Gaza City have received repeated orders to evacuate. These hospitals currently treat more than 2,000 patients and serve as the only safe haven for tens of thousands of civilians who sought refuge from Israeli air strikes. Forcing these patients to evacuate and relocate to southern Gaza, where health facilities are already on the brink of collapse and beyond maximum capacity, is tantamount to a death sentence, according to the WHO.

Hospitals in northern Gaza and Gaza City are already overloaded with patients and are struggling to deal with the humanitarian crisis caused by Israel's incessant bombardment and exacerbated by Israeli authorities' decision to tighten the existing blockade by cutting Gaza off from electricity, fuel, water and medical supplies. These hospitals are treating hundreds of wounded each day, in addition to pregnant women, babies in incubators and severely ill patients, forcing doctors to operate in corridors and tents outside the premises. As the fuel reserves are running out and electricity cuts are more frequent, the lives of thousands of patients are at imminent risk. The exclusion of fuel from the scant and grossly insufficient humanitarian assistance that has recently entered Gaza through Rafah will have devastating consequences for Gaza patients.

Some of these 23 hospitals have already been attacked and sustained damages. While Amnesty International is still investigating the 17 October attack on the al-Ahli Arab Baptist hospital, it has already verified that this very hospital had been deliberately targeted by two Israeli artillery shells on 14 October. And on 22 October, the Israeli army sent a new warning to Al-Quds hospital, run by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society to evacuate and on the same day proceeded to bomb the vicinity of the hospital.

In light of the imminent danger to the life of tens of thousands of patients, displaced civilians and health workers, I urge you to immediately rescind the order and ensure that health facilities, health workers, patients, and IDPs are protected against attacks, as required by international humanitarian law.

Yours sincerely,