

UNRWA says fuel shortage will shut down aid work in Gaza within 48 hours



Gaza City, November 14 (RHC)-- The United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees has said that it will be forced to suspend aid work in the Gaza Strip within 48 hours, as an Israeli siege strains access to much-needed fuel.

In a social media post on Monday, Thomas White, the Gaza chief for the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), said that fuel has not been allowed into Gaza for more than a month, as humanitarian conditions reach critical levels.

“The humanitarian operation in Gaza will grind to a halt in the next 48 hours as no fuel is allowed to enter Gaza,” White wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

As Israel continues to hammer Gaza with air strikes amid a ground offensive on the territory, a siege cutting off access to food, electricity, and fuel has overwhelmed organisations trying to assist those displaced and wounded by the fighting.

Palestinian authorities have said that Israeli strikes on Gaza have killed at least 11,240 people, including more than 4,600 children, since fighting began on October 7 when the Palestinian armed group Hamas carried out an attack on southern Israel that killed about 1,200 people, according to Israeli authorities.

The UN said on Monday that 101 workers in Gaza have been killed since the beginning of the fighting. In Gaza, where the health system is being stretched to the breaking point, the collapse of medical and communications services has stymied casualty updates since November 10.

Palestinian doctors have pleaded that hospitals are running out of fuel, leaving them unable to save patients, including newborn children in incubators, as electricity generators stop working.

Israeli forces have closed in around al-Shifa Hospital in northern Gaza, with medical workers and at least 650 patients trapped inside. Health Ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qudra said that 32 patients died in the last three days due to a shortage of power.

Israel says the hospital sits atop a complex of tunnels used by Hamas, an accusation the group denies. “The tanks are in front of the hospital. We are under full blockade. It’s a totally civilian area. Only hospital facility, hospital patients, doctors and other civilians stay in the hospital. Someone should stop this,” Dr Ahmed El Mokhallati, a surgeon, told the news outlet Reuters.

He added that Israel had bombed water tanks, water wells, and water pumps for the hospital and that those remaining were “barely surviving.”

Officials have also warned that the conditions created by the bombing and the siege could lead to the outbreak of disease, with access to clean water severely restricted.

“This morning two of our main water distribution contractors ceased working – they simply ran out of fuel – which will deny 200,000 people potable water,” White said.

Mansour Shouman, a displaced Palestinian who fled northern Gaza and sought refuge at Nasser Hospital in southern Gaza, told Al Jazeera that the conditions at the site were “primitive”. “Let’s leave aside the food and the water, electricity, fuel. There is no safety, there is no security,” he said. “We were told, ‘Go to the south, you’ll be safe there.’ However, every day I’m hearing more ambulances come to the hospital. I’m seeing more people take their loved ones to the graveyard.”



Radio Habana Cuba