Israeli troops sow terror during raid on Gaza's al-Shifa Hospital

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Gaza City, November 15 (RHC)-- Israel's raid on Gaza's al-Shifa Hospital has brought "terror and death" to the thousands trapped inside, witnesses say. The Israeli military has acted brutally during its assault on Wednesday, visiting violence and humiliation on patients, staff and displaced people, those inside Gaza's largest hospital told Al Jazeera.

Thousands have been caught in al-Shifa for days as Israeli forces have focused attacks on the area around the complex, which it has asserted harbours a Hamas base. Reports say food and water have been scarce while decomposing corpses have been accumulating.

Omar Zaqout, an emergency room employee at al-Shifa, said that Israeli soldiers have "detained and brutally assaulted some of the men who were taking refuge at the hospital".

"Israeli forces took the detained men naked and blindfolded. [They] did not bring any aid or supplies, they only brought terror and death," he said, adding that the army has surrounded every building within the hospital complex.

"More than 180 dead bodies are deteriorating and are still lying in the hospital's yard," he said. "The situation is very terrifying, gunshots are heard everywhere in the hospital's perimeters."

Ahmed El Mokhallalati, a surgeon, told Al Jazeera from inside the hospital that the occupying army brought tanks within the hospital after "continuous, aggressive gunshots, bombardments and attacks since yesterday evening."

"It's a totally scary time; it's a horrible time for the families, the civilians sheltering in the hospital with their kids. It's terrible for the staff who are taking care of their patients and the patients themselves," he said.

"Imagine being in a hospital where the water is not there, the basic hygiene of the people going to the toilet is a challenge. Food and drinking water haven't come to the hospital for the sixth day now, with no way of getting anything in the hospital," El Mokhallalati added. He also said that the oxygen station was not working, and in general the staff was not able to care for their patients.

The surgeon expressed shock that "the whole world has been witnessing this crime and seeing everything that is happening and no one has stopped it. No one has said loudly this is not allowed." "Where is the international community? Where is the international organization which is made to help and support the health system in the war areas to make sure that humanitarian needs are met in the war areas in war times?" he asked.

"We are all within the building now. We can't even check through the window what's outside, we can't get anything to eat or drink, we can't get anything to our patients, and we can't move between the building at all," he said.

The raid on the Palestinian enclave's largest medical facility came after five days of attacks. It has become the center of Israel's war in Gaza as the occupying forces, along with the United States, claim that Hamas, the group that rules the territory, hides a military command centre underneath it.

Hamas and the medical staff inside al-Shifa have been rejecting the allegations as a "big lie."

Israel has killed more than 11,300 people in Gaza in the war that started on October 7 after Hamas attacked southern Israel.

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