

WHO voices concern about al-Shifa Hospital director arrested by Israel



Geneva, November 27 (RHC)-- The World Health Organization (WHO) has voiced concern about the fate of the director of al-Shifa Hospital in the Gaza Strip who was detained by Israeli military along with several other senior doctors this week.

In a statement issued in Geneva, the WHO said that Mohammad Abu Salmiya has been arrested along with five other medical staff from the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the Ministry of Health while they were evacuating patients from the hospital as part of a United Nations mission.

The UN agency went on to say that two of the six medical personnel have reportedly been released, but there is no information about the well-being of the four remaining health staff, including Abu Salmiya, calling for “their legal and human rights to be fully observed during their detention.”

Israeli military spokesperson Doron Spielman said over the weekend that Abu Salmiya was being questioned following the regime’s allegations that the hospital houses a “command center” belonging to the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas.

Meanwhile, WHO spokesperson Christian Lindmeier voiced fears for the safety of those remaining in al-Shifa Hospital, saying the UN agency is “extremely concerned” about the safety of the estimated 100 patients and health workers remaining at the facility. He also noted that the UN agency is working on further evacuations from northern Gaza hospitals as soon as possible as a truce gets under way in the blockaded enclave.

Al-Shifa Hospital, the largest medical complex in Gaza, has been a major focus of Israel’s offensive since the regime began it was on Gaza on October 7. The WHO has already described as “desperate” the situation in al-Shifa, saying the medical complex has become a “death zone.”

The situation has forced scores of sick and injured, some of them amputees” to flee the hospital towards the south without ambulances, along with displaced people, doctors and nurses.

Tel Aviv has long accused Hamas of using hospitals for housing Palestinian resistance fighters and their equipment and as an alleged launchpad for directing military operations against the occupying regime.

Hundreds of patients have evacuated the al-Shifa hospital in Gaza Strip, after Israel ordered people to leave the facility amid its ongoing attacks on hospitals and medical centers across the besieged enclave. Under such pretexts, the regime has been targeting hospitals in the besieged enclave since the beginning of its war on Gaza last month.

Hamas has dismissed Israel’s allegations, saying it runs a vast network of underground tunnels and doesn’t need to use hospitals in any manner.

The Palestinian resistance group has called on the UN to form an investigative team in order to debunk Tel Aviv’s allegations.

According to the Gaza-based health ministry, nearly 15,000 Palestinians have been killed in the strikes, most of them women and children, and injured around 36,000 others since October 7. Tel Aviv has also imposed a “complete siege” on Gaza, cutting off fuel, electricity, food, and water to the more than two million Palestinians living there.

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