

*WHO is extremely concerned as
Gaza hospitals resemble a horror
movie*

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Gaza City, December 2 (RHC)-- The World Health Organization warns that the Gaza Strip cannot afford to lose more hospitals as the health care system there was already "catastrophic," with hospitals resembling a "horror movie" even before Israel resumed its attacks on the besieged Palestinian territory.

Israel resumed its brutal bombing campaign on the Gaza Strip after a week-long truce, early on Friday.

WHO's representative in the Palestinian territories Richard Peeperkorn told reporters in Geneva via video-link from Gaza that "the health system in Gaza has been crippled by the ongoing hostilities." "We are extremely concerned about the resumption of violence," he said adding that Gaza "cannot afford to lose more hospitals."

Peeperkorn said only 18 of Gaza's 36 hospitals are even minimally to partially functional, with the three main hospitals in the north barely operative.

In the south of Gaza, 12 hospitals are partially functional but are "extremely overwhelmed," he said.

Several explosions and gunfire have been reported in northern Gaza as Israel said it has resumed its attacks on the besieged strip after a temporary ceasefire expired.

All the hospitals were suffering shortages of supplies, fuel, food and even water, Peeperkorn said, adding that there was an "urgent need" for a sustained flow of aid "to keep them functional." Hospital bed capacity across Gaza has fallen from 3,500 to just 1,562 even as needs have skyrocketed, he said, adding that at least 5,000 beds were needed.

The truce, which was extended twice, had paused Israel's relentless attacks on the besieged territory on November 24th. The week-long ceasefire saw the release of 105 Israeli captives held in Gaza and 240 Palestinian prisoners. It also allowed some humanitarian aid into Gaza but the aid supplies were far below what is needed, according to aid workers.

Meanwhile, a WHO senior emergency officer Rob Holden, who was speaking via video-link from Gaza, told reports in Geneva that as Israel has resumed bombing of the populated territory, medics are expected to be grappling with "the most horrific scene" in the hospitals. He said that "casualties probably in their tens if not hundreds turn up at" a relatively small hospital, which he visited days before in Gaza City.

Holden said he and other WHO staff had in recent days visited the Al Ahli Hospital, which he described as a "horror movie." Patients were covering the floor "with the most traumatic injuries that you can imagine," he said, adding, "The floor is just awash with blood and patients lying waiting to receive life-saving care."

Holden emphasized that hospital staff were struggling to deal with the growing number of dead. "It is done with the best possible dignity but still the bodies are lined up in the car park outside." He also warned that Gaza "healthcare service is on its knees."

Gaza health ministry confirmed on Friday that more than 180 people lost their lives after the regime began bombing the territory again. Spokesman Ashraf al-Qudra said in a statement that hundreds have been wounded in the Israeli aggression.

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