

WHO slams Israeli bloodbath in Gaza's al-Shifa hospital

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Geneva, December 18 (RHC)-- The World Health Organization has voiced grave concern over the condition of the al-Shifa hospital in northern Gaza, which has been devastated by Israeli bombardments. In a statement released on Sunday, the WHO described the emergency department of the hospital as a "bloodbath."

The world health body said tens of thousands of displaced people are using the hospital building and grounds for shelter, and that there's a severe shortage of drinking water and food. The statement comes

after a team from the WHO and other United Nations agencies was able to deliver medical supplies Saturday to the hospital, the largest in the Palestinian territory.

"The team described the emergency department as a 'bloodbath', with hundreds of injured patients inside, and new patients arriving every minute," the organization said, adding that "patients with trauma injuries were being sutured on the floor... (and) no pain management is available." It added that patients with trauma injuries were being sutured on the floor and that no pain management was available.

According to the organization, the hospital is functioning on a minimal scale with very few staff. It said operating rooms are not working due to a lack of oxygen and supplies, adding that al-Shifa is a hospital in need of resuscitation.

The WHO said that the emergency department at the al-Shifa hospital in northern Gaza, devastated by Israeli bombardments, is "a blood bath" and is "in need of resuscitation." The UN health agency said that "tens of thousands of displaced people are using the hospital building and grounds for shelter," and that there is "a severe shortage" of drinking water and food.

The hospital is functioning at a minimal scale with very few staff and the WHO said that "critical patients are being transferred to Al Ahli Arab Hospital for surgeries." Operating theatres are not working due to a lack of oxygen and supplies, and according to the WHO team, it is a "hospital in need of resuscitation".

The WHO said it would reinforce Al Shifa "in the coming weeks" for it to resume basic services. "Up to 20 operating theatres in the hospital, as well as post-operative care services, can be activated if provided with regular supplies of fuel, oxygen, medicines, food, and water," the WHO said, along with the necessary staff.

Currently, Al Ahli Arab is the only hospital "partially functioning" in the entire north of Gaza, while three hospitals -- al-Shifa, al-Awda, and al-Shaba Medical Complex -- are functioning at a minimum. Before the war, there were 24 operational facilities.

The WHO has also expressed concerns about the Kamal Adwan hospital, where the Hamas health ministry said on December 13 that the Israeli army had fired on patient rooms in the besieged facility.

Israel has launched new airstrikes on the Gaza Strip with the genocidal war in its 72nd day. Palestinian sources said on Sunday that at least "24 Palestinians were killed this morning in Jabalia camp by an Israeli bombardment. Many are still missing under the rubble".

A dozen others were also killed in Israeli strikes on the central city of Deir al-Balah, while witnesses reported bombardment of Bani Suhaila east of Khan Yunis, Gaza's second city

The territory also remains under a communications blackout. Israel's bombardment of Gaza has left much of the territory in ruins, with the UN estimating that 1.9 million Gazans have been displaced.

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