

***Palestinian doctor braves Israeli
sniper fire to save a bleeding man***

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Khan Younis, February 14 (RHC)-- In an extraordinary act of bravery, Palestinian physician Amira al-Assouli ran toward an injured man, with her back bent, braving the Israeli sniper fire outside the Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis.

According to eye-witnesses, the doctor risked her own life to save a man who was bleeding profusely at the entrance of the hospital that has become a new flashpoint in the Gaza Strip amid the four-month Israeli genocidal war.

A viral video showed al-Assouli taking off her winter coat and bending to avoid sniper shots as she dashes from the hospital compound's inner gate to save a man hit by an Israeli sniper's bullet. She managed to reach the small tent outside the hospital and together with other medics placed the injured Palestinian on a stretcher and took him inside the hospital for treatment.

"God removed fear from my heart when I felt that someone needed help. I did not think about myself, I thought about saving people," she told the Palestinian Wafa News Agency after the heroic act.

Al-Assouli, who hails from the eastern region of the city of Khan Younis, is an Arab board-certified specialist in obstetrics and gynecology.

She retired from Nasser Medical Hospital, the biggest hospital that remains partly functional in Gaza but returned to work as a volunteer since the beginning of Israel's genocidal war on the territory. "I returned to work as a volunteer at the Nasser Complex. My message to the world is, we have taken physician oath, it is our duty to help any human in need of medical help," she said in the interview.

"Saving others is programmed inside us. When I see a patient in need of my help, I will not think for a second about myself but will be there to save the life of the person."

While talking about the desperate situation in various hospitals in the southern area of the besieged strip, al-Assouli said a young man was martyred under the hospital window moments before. "I went to him and found that Dr. Muhammad Abu Lihyah who had gone to rescue the man was also killed by an Israeli sniper. I heard Dr. Lihyah reciting the two Shahadas before his death," he said. "We carried both the bodies to the morgue."

Al-Assouli is a displaced refugee herself. Her home in Abasan Al-Jadeeda, east of Khan Younis, was destroyed in an Israeli bombing a few months ago. She has been living at the al-Nasser Hospital and working around the clock.

Nasser Hospital is the largest equipped medical facility in south Gaza's Khan Younis, which currently shelters at least 300 medical personnel, 450 wounded, and around 10,000 displaced Palestinians.

Israeli snipers have been loitering around the hospital complex for over 20 days, according to local sources, shooting at everyone venturing in or out of the hospital.

The Israeli snipers killed at least 21 Palestinians after opening indiscriminate fire on displaced civilians who were trying to reach Nasser Hospital on February 9. The spokesman for Gaza's health ministry, Ashraf al-Qudra, said Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis is enduring a "humanitarian catastrophe" as a result of the Israeli siege and targeted attacks.

"[There are] 300 medical staff, 450 wounded, and 10,000 displaced people in the Nasser Medical Complex being killed and starved," Qudra said.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general of the WHO, said on Sunday that the world body is deeply "concerned about the safety of patients and health personnel due to the intensifying hostilities in the vicinity of the [Nasser] hospital."

Ghebreyesus added that Israeli forces denied the WHO mission entry to the hospital on Sunday, which remains partially functional. "We urge for patients and health workers' immediate release. Health personnel, patients and facilities MUST be protected at all times," the chief of the UN health body added.

Al-Amal Hospital in Khan Younis has also been under siege for over 20 days as the Israeli army said it “encircled” the area and ramped up its offensive from air, land and sea.

In January, Israeli forces raided the al-Amal Hospital and detained dozens of medical staff, and patients and seized medical equipment, including the hospital director.

On Sunday, the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), which runs the al-Amal Hospital, said three patients died after Israel blocked the delivery of oxygen cylinders to the medical facility.

“The reports of raid into al Amal hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza, detention of health personnel and patients, damage to the facility, and confiscation of hospital assets and personal belongings are extremely concerning. We urge for patients and health workers' immediate release. Health personnel, patients and facilities MUST be protected at all times,” the WHO chief said on February 11.

Meanwhile, people took to various social media platforms to hail the brave Palestinian physician, who risked her own life to save another life. She has been widely commended for her heroics.

Basant Lashin, a physician from Egypt in a post on X, formerly Twitter, celebrated her “courage.”

“On Women’s in Science Day, I celebrate the courageous Dr. Amira Al-Assouli, who risked her own safety to save a patient. In this region, we witness acts of heroism on a daily basis,” he wrote.

Neha Naqvi, a Pakistan medical worker, praised the Palestinian doctor for the “brave and heroic act.” “The brave, heroic doctor is Dr. Amira Al-Assouli, a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology. She was in Egypt when the war broke out and insisted on returning to the Gaza Strip to fulfill her role. Her house was bombed during the war,” she wrote.

Many social media users called Dr. al-Assouli a superhero in real life.

“You want a superhero? Here she is. Meet Dr. Amira al-Assouli, a physician at Nasser Hospital in Gaza...she risks her life for theirs and runs towards danger. Her team follows her, Israel took her family and home,” Dr Mansour Mansour wrote on his X account.

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