

Rafah residents face further danger as Israel hits city's two hospitals

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Medics care for patients at a clinic set up by Doctors Without Borders at Rafah's Indonesian Field Hospital, treating severe injuries and burns sustained in Israeli bombardments [File: Mohammed Abed/AFP]

Rafah, May 28 (RHC)-- The Gaza Strip's collapsing health system is under further strain after the Israeli army intensified bombing in Rafah's Tal as-Sultan area and other parts of the enclave, a day after an attack on a camp in Rafah killed 50 Palestinians.

The Indonesian Field Hospital is the latest medical facility in Rafah to be hit with the attack on Monday causing damage to the hospital's upper floors.

Medical staff and patients are reportedly trapped inside the facility, where many Palestinian families are also taking shelter. Earlier on Monday, Rafah's Kuwaiti Speciality Hospital was forced to shut down after an Israeli attack just outside the gates of the hospital killed two of its medical staff.

Witnesses said the victims were hit by fire from an Israeli aircraft. The hospital was treating most of the 249 wounded in Israel's attack on Sunday night on a camp for displaced people.

The director of the hospital, Dr Suhaib al-Hams, said the facility was put out of service over "Israeli occupation forces' expansion of their military operation in Rafah and their repeated and deliberate attacks on the hospital and its vicinity".

Dr Mohammed Tahir, an orthopaedic surgeon who volunteered to work in Rafah's European Gaza Hospital, told Al Jazeera the closure of Kuwaiti Speciality Hospital puts the people in Rafah in severe danger.

"What we're experiencing here is a multipronged attack unfortunately where not only are the people being attacked directly, they are also being blocked from receiving critical medical services," Tahir said.

"The Kuwaiti Hospital was evacuated – that is the main hospital – and they are moving to al-Mawasi, where they have a field hospital, which is not quite ready. And in the meantime, quadcopters ... are restricting the movements of ambulances, so those who are injured cannot even receive help," he added.

In central Gaza, hundreds of Palestinians receiving care at Deir el-Balah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital are also believed to be in imminent danger as the facility is on the verge of shutdown due to Israeli forces blocking its fuel supply.

Israeli forces have damaged, destroyed or occupied 24 hospitals in the Strip since October 7, leaving only six partially functioning facilities out of Gaza's 36 hospitals.

Israel has been blocking lifesaving supplies reaching health facilities across the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the war.

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