

Doctors report Israeli fragmentation bombs cause horrific injuries to children in Gaza



New York, July 13 (RHC)-- Foreign surgeons in the Gaza Strip say they have seen numerous severe injuries in Palestinian children caused by Israeli fragmentation weapons.

Six volunteer doctors, who had worked at Gaza's European and al-Aqsa hospitals in the past three months, said a majority of their operations were on children hit by small pieces of shrapnel that leave barely discernible entry wounds but create extensive destruction inside the body.

Speaking to the London-based The Guardian, they added that the Israeli fragmentation bombs, which are loaded with shrapnel, contribute to alarming rates of deaths and amputations among Gaza children.

Feroze Sidhwa, a trauma surgeon from California, who worked at the European hospital in April, said that he had encountered "splinter injuries." "About half of the injuries I took care of were in young kids. We saw a lot of so-called splinter injuries that were very, very small to the point that you easily missed them while examining a patient. Much, much smaller than anything I've seen before but they caused tremendous damage on the inside," he added.

"Children are more vulnerable to any penetrating injury because they have smaller bodies. Their vital parts are smaller and easier to disrupt... The artery that feeds the leg, the femoral artery, is only the thickness of a noodle in a small child. It's very, very small. So repairing it and keeping the kid's limb attached to them is very difficult."

Mark Perlmutter, an orthopaedic surgeon from North Carolina, said children hit by fragmentation shards often died and many of those who survived lost limbs. "X-rays showed demolished bones with a pinhole wound on one side, a pinhole on the other, and a bone that looks like a tractor trailer drove over it. The children we operated on, most of them had these small entrance and exit points," noted Perlmutter, who had worked at the European hospital.

"Most of the kids that survived had neurologic injuries and vascular injuries, a major cause of amputation. The blood vessels or the nerves get hit, and they come in a day later and the leg is dead or the arm is dead."

Meanwhile, The Guardian spoke to explosives experts who reviewed pictures of the shrapnel found by medical staff and the doctors' descriptions of the wounds they had treated, and said the accounts were consistent with the bombs the Israeli military fits with "fragmentation sleeves" around warheads.

Amnesty International first documented the Israeli army's use of fragmentation bombs in the 2009 Gaza offensive and said the explosives "appear designed to cause maximum injury".

Israel unleashed a genocidal war on the Gaza Strip on October 7 after the Hamas resistance group carried out its historic operation against the occupying entity in retaliation for the regime's intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

According to the Gaza Health Ministry, the Tel Aviv regime has so far killed at least 38,345 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in Gaza, and injured 88,295 others.

Recently, The Lancet, a leading general medical journal, estimated that the death toll from the Israeli aggression could be 186,000 or even more as many Palestinians have succumbed to indirect impacts of the Gaza war.

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