

UN says Israel systematically hinders Gaza access as ICRC warns healthcare obliterated



United Nations, January 1 (RHC)-- The UN's humanitarian agency (OCHA) has raised concern over Israel's "systematic" obstruction of humanitarian access to Gaza, as the International Committee of the

Red Cross (ICRC) warned that the “obliteration” of Gaza’s healthcare system puts civilians at an “unacceptably grave risk.”

OCHA has said that Israeli authorities have denied over 150 humanitarian missions access to Northern Gaza since October. “Between Friday and Sunday, three of four attempts to access the area were denied by Israeli authorities,” it said.

On Sunday, OCHA, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme, the Palestine Red Crescent Society, and the UN Department for Safety and Security delivered basic medical and hygiene supplies, food, and water to critical patients, caregivers, and staff who were evacuated from Kamal Adwan to the non-functional Indonesian hospital in North Gaza.

Kamal Adwan Hospital is now out of service, following an Israeli raid on Friday that forced patient and staff evacuation and the detention of the facility’s director.

OCHA described the Sunday mission as “exceptional” but noted the few missions that were initially agreed have faced heavy impediments. “It should not require breaking a siege to help survivors in critical need. Aid workers must be granted safe and unhindered access to assist people wherever they are,” OCHA emphasized.

It warned that “humanitarian access remains systematically hindered across the Gaza Strip.” In the past three days, according to OCHA, over 60 percent of the 42 UN-coordinated movements were denied, interfered with or impeded on the ground across Gaza.

ICRC also in a press release on Monday warned that repeated Israeli attacks on hospitals have “obliterated” the health care system in Northern Gaza.

“[The raids are] putting civilians at an unacceptably grave risk of going without lifesaving care,” it added.

According to ICRC, the Kamal Adwan and Indonesian hospitals in Northern Gaza are now “completely inoperable.” “For months, these medical facilities have struggled to provide care for patients as ongoing hostilities have damaged hospitals and endangered or harmed staff, patients, and civilians,” ICRC said.

It went on to add that al-Awda Hospital is now undergoing more pressure as one of the few functioning medical facilities in Northern Gaza.

ICRC also cautioned that, amid the overwhelming influx of patients, caregivers, and displaced civilians seeking refuge, no patient can expect their medical needs to be completely fulfilled, and medical personnel are rendered helpless in addressing these needs.

“The increasingly dangerous situation comes in addition to more than a year of insufficient provision of medical equipment and supplies, fuel, food, and specialized healthcare capacities,” it said.

Since the onset of the genocidal war against the Gaza Strip in October, which has killed over 45,500 Palestinians, Israel has been systematically targeting medical facilities across the coastal territory under the pretext of attacking alleged “ Hamas command centers.”

However, the Zionist regime has consistently failed to present any evidence to substantiate such unfounded claims.

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