

# *UN Official Calls for Lifting Israel's Gaza Strip Siege*

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Gaza City, February 11 (RHC)-- The UN coordinator for humanitarian affairs in the Palestinian territories has called for the lifting of Israeli's siege on the Gaza Strip.

"The siege on the Gaza Strip has taken a significant toll on the strip's ability to provide medical and humanitarian services," James Rowley said during a press conference at the al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza on Tuesday.

The UN official also called for the reconstruction of areas damaged during Israel's summer war on the Palestinian coastal enclave. "The Israeli siege on Gaza must be lifted to allow the delivery of proper medical care and end patients' suffering," Rowley added. He also asked countries which had pledged financial aid for the reconstruction efforts in the coastal sliver to fulfill their promises.

Rowley went on to urge the Egyptian government to open the Rafah border crossing "to allow the transfer of patients and medical supplies" into the besieged enclave.

The Gaza Strip has been under a crippling Israeli siege since 2007. Egypt has also kept its border with Gaza mostly sealed, citing political and security reasons. The blockade, which has cut off the territory from the outside world, has led to an economic and humanitarian crisis in the densely-populated enclave.

This situation has been worsened by continued military confrontations. The latest Israeli military offensive on Gaza between July and August 2014 left 2,130 Palestinians dead and cost millions of dollars in material damage.

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