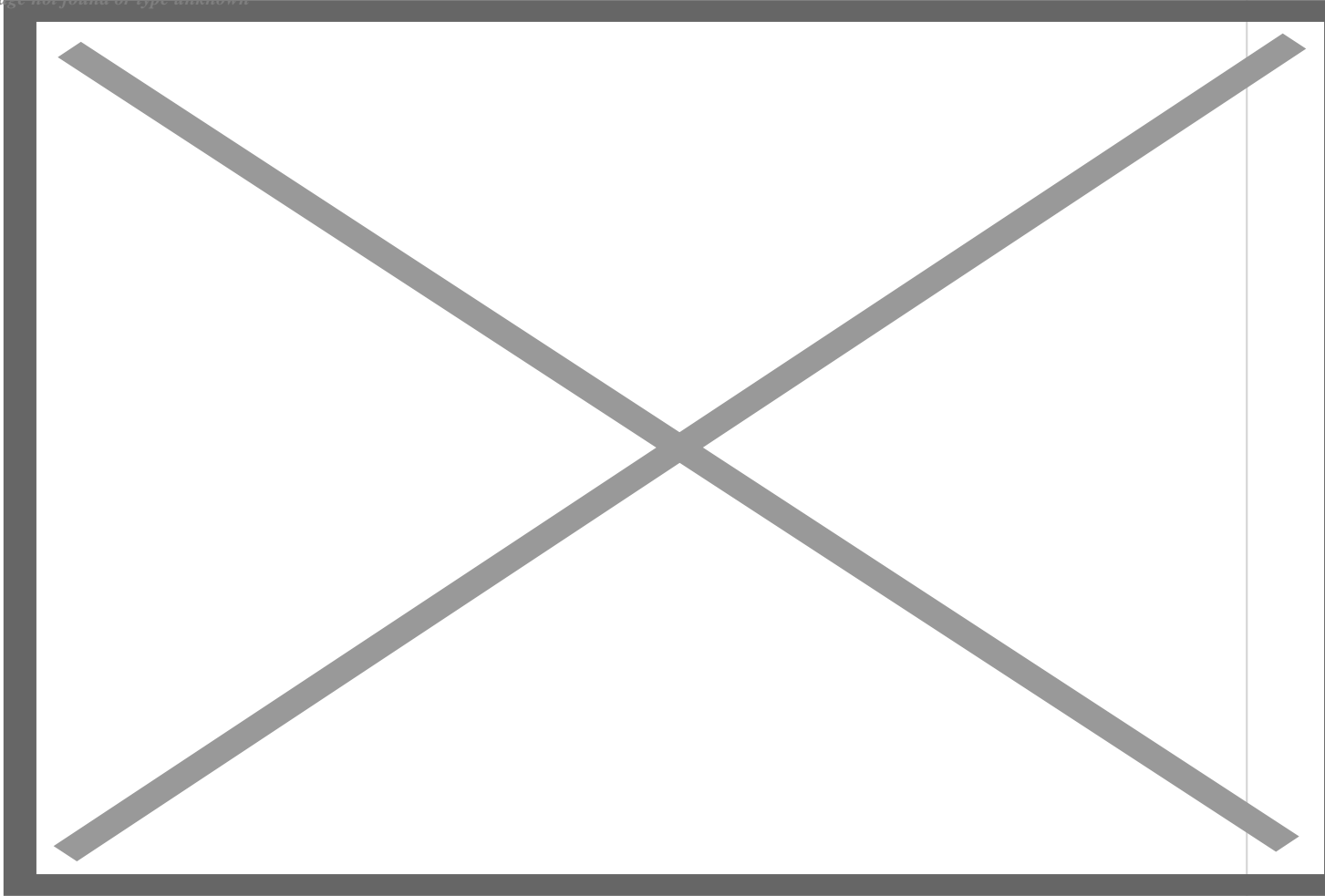


Gazan hospitals overwhelmed with victims of Israeli aggression

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?Gaza hospitals are overwhelmed with wounded from Israeli aggression

Gaza City, May 16 (RHC)-- Medical workers are overwhelmed by the number of wounded at Gaza's biggest hospital after a night of ferocious air raids killed and injured dozens of Palestinians.

Shaima Ahmed Qwaider, 23, a nurse at al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, described on Sunday horrific scenes of severely injured people arriving, some of them bombing victims missing limbs. "I have never seen anything like this in my life," she told Al Jazeera. "There were body parts collected on hospital beds and unbearable scenes."

As rescuers struggled to pull victims from the debris of destroyed buildings, many of those rescued could not reach the hospital as the main road leading to al-Shifa – the largest medical centre in the Gaza Strip – had been hit as well.

Dr Midhat Abbas from the Gaza health ministry said 1,200 Palestinians had been wounded during the seven days of attacks, about half of whom were women and children. He accused the Israeli military of deliberately targeting health facilities with air strikes and bombing the roads surrounding al-Shifa.

“They are targeting mainly civilians, these are the victims of this aggression,” said Dr Abbas. “[Israeli Prime Minister] Benjamin Netanyahu wants to save himself from jail and so he decided to kill Palestinian children.”

Israeli air raids killed 33 Palestinians, including 13 children, in Gaza on Sunday, Gaza health officials said. The attacks brought the death toll in Gaza to 181, including 52 children. Israel has reported 10 dead, including two children.

Dr Abbas said staff were setting up beds in reception areas as the hospital filled up, adding that there were shortages of medicine and equipment as a result of the 15-year siege of Gaza by Israel and the coronavirus pandemic. “We hope patients will be going to Egypt [for medical care] because our capacity is very limited,” Dr Abbas told Al Jazeera.

Nurse Amal Badawi described the overcrowding as more wounded were brought in. “The hospital is filled with people and relatives. It was difficult to work and conduct the needed treatment in light of this overcrowding. The number of injured or killed is huge and they just keep arriving,” Badawi told Al Jazeera.

Among those killed in Sunday’s air raids was Dr Ayman Abu Auf, a physician at al-Shifa, the health ministry said.

Fahad al-Haddad, an emergency medicine specialist at al-Shifa, said most of the dead brought to the hospital showed no external signs of injuries, meaning they were killed by the rubble that collapsed on them while they were still alive.

Egypt has opened the Rafah border crossing a day earlier than planned to allow the passage of students, people needing medical treatment and other humanitarian cases, two sources at the border told Reuters on Sunday. The border had been closed for the Eid al-Fitr holiday and was due to reopen on Monday.

Egypt has so far sent 16 ambulances into Gaza to pick up casualties of Israeli bombardments for treatment in Egyptian hospitals, a medical source said. The source said a bus with 95 people on board had arrived from Gaza on Sunday morning.

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