

*Lack of supplies at hospitals and
no shrouds for burial of
Palestinian dead*

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Gaza City, October 27 (RHC)-- Doctors in Gaza report that they no longer have shrouds to bury their dead. One doctor, Hussam al-Madhoun, told reporters that at al-Awda hospital in northern Gaza, there is "no space to walk" as thousands of civilians have also taken refuge there from the Israeli bombing.

Similar to al-Shifa, al-Awda doesn't have enough room for casualties and is suffering a severe shortage of supplies. "In the beginning, there was a scarcity of medical supplies, now there is a scarcity of available beds at the intensive care unit, and of oxygen, medical and sterilization materials," al-Madhoun said.

"There is nothing worse than not finding enough shrouds to cover the martyrs, so you wrap them with garbage bags and old pieces of cloth."

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees faces a critical 24 hours to secure fuel or be forced to close shelters providing crucial aid to hundreds of thousands of people displaced in Gaza. UNRWA is providing shelter and assistance to 600,000 people at its 150 facilities in the Gaza Strip, where Israeli air strikes have displaced about one million people.

"The coming 24 hours are very critical and we have to make some really tough decisions," UNRWA spokeswoman Juliette Touma said. "If we don't have fuel we will not be able to drive our cars and deliver the assistance nor are we able to drive our trucks to the borders to pick up what very little is coming on the convoys," she said.

The agency needs fuel to run water facilities and deliver flour to bakeries amid shortages of food and water. It may also be forced to close health clinics, which are running on electric generators.

Earlier on Wednesday, the agency said its shelters are "four times over their capacities – many people are sleeping in the streets as current facilities are overwhelmed." UNRWA has 13,000 staff in Gaza, with 125 health staff working in rotating shifts at health centers. So far, 29 have been killed by Israeli airstrikes.

Earlier this week, Philippe Lazzarini, the agency's commissioner general, said that "without fuel, we will fail the people of Gaza whose needs are growing by the hour, under our watch. This cannot and should not happen." "No fuel will further strangle the children, women and people of Gaza," he said.

A spokesman for Palestine's health ministry has called on the world to take urgent action, as the death toll in Gaza exceeds 7,000. "The Ministry of Interior is undertaking its role to support our people, where nothing is sacred to Israel, and people, trees, homes, are being destroyed, hundreds are being killed over the past few hours," he said

"Entire neighborhoods have been wiped out in central Gaza, with even civil defense crews being targeted," he stated. "The occupation is carrying out massacres non-stop, and the bombings are increasing overnight. With the cutting off of electricity, it is making treating patients more difficult," he added.

"Israel, with the cover of the US, is targeting civilians. On the 20th day of attacks on Gaza, we call on people all around the world to take urgent action and to break your silence. The United Nations must take action as we are suffocating with no water, fuel, food or electricity."

British doctors fear publicly speaking up about Gaza's worsening humanitarian situation could lead to them losing their jobs. Among those who spoke to MEE were Palestinian doctors who said they had been "forced to hide their grief"

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