

*Over one million Gaza children  
facing death if not vaccinated  
amid Israel's weaponization of  
sanitation*

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Gaza City, July 31 (RHC)-- A human rights organization has warned that over one million children in Gaza are at risk of dying if not vaccinated amid Israel's "weaponization" of sanitation facilities, which has led to the classification of the region as a "polio epidemic zone."

The Gaza-based Al Mezan Center for Human Rights also said in a post on X on Tuesday that thousands of individuals are in jeopardy as a result of Israel's weaponisation of water and hygiene, calling for the international community to "ensure Israel immediately ends its genocide."

"Over 1 million children in Gaza are at risk of dying if not vaccinated. To prevent thousands of deaths, the international community must ensure Israel immediately ends its genocide, including the weaponization of water and sanitation facilities," the rights groups said.

Al Mezan called for immediate help following Gaza Health Ministry's declaration of a "polio epidemic" across the Gaza Strip, raising concerns for the health of Gaza residents and neighboring nations despite

previous eradication in Palestine.

“Gaza is now classified as a "polio epidemic zone" by the Palestinian Ministry of Health after traces of the virus were found in sewage samples in Khan Yunis and the Middle Area (the most densely populated areas of Gaza). Polio had been eradicated in Palestine for years,” the statement said.

The statement added that the Ministry of Health alerts that the joint program with international organizations like UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) to tackle the epidemic requires urgent action to stop the aggression and implement lasting solutions to address water scarcity, hygiene products shortage, and sanitation issues.

The World Health Organization recently warned of a high risk of the polio virus spreading across the Israeli-bombarded Palestinian region. The WHO emphasized that a ceasefire is necessary for delivering the polio vaccine to Gaza and ensuring it reaches the region’s vulnerable children.

The world health agency also warned that if the polio virus spreads across the war-wracked strip, it may spill over internationally at a very high rate. The World Health Organization warns of a high risk of the polio virus spreading across the war-wracked Gaza Strip due to the poor sanitary conditions.

Even before the recent Israeli war on Gaza began on October 7, 2023, nearly all water sources in Gaza were already contaminated, with 97% containing high levels of nitrates, salt, or bacteria. Israel's total siege of Gaza has now barred most fuel and water from entering Gaza, leading to a dire situation.

Since wastewater treatment plants have run out of fuel, sewage is now mixing with hospital waste and toxic remnants from missiles. The lack of sterilized tools is hindering medical procedures, while parents are risking their lives to find water for their children. Thousands of toddlers are suffering from acute diarrhea and hepatitis A due to the contaminated environment.

Although UN Security Council Resolution 2573 adopted in 2021 makes it clear that critical civilian infrastructure must be protected under all circumstances, Palestinians endure harsh living conditions in makeshift tents lacking basic amenities such as bathrooms, proper sanitation, and access to clean water. Sewage is widespread in the area, posing a threat to public health.

So far, the Tel Aviv regime has killed at least 16,000 children as part of the overall death toll of more than 39,363 Palestinians, while about 21,000 are missing.

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