



MSF press release | 16 april 2025

## **MSF: Gaza has become a “mass grave” for Palestinians and those helping them**

As Israeli forces resume and expand their military offensive by air, ground and sea on the Gaza Strip, Palestine, forcibly displacing people and deliberately blocking essential aid, Palestinian lives are once again being systematically destroyed, warns Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders (MSF). A series of deadly attacks by Israeli forces have shown a blatant disregard for the safety of humanitarian and medical workers in Gaza. We call on Israeli authorities to immediately lift the inhumane and deadly siege on Gaza, protect the lives of Palestinians, humanitarian and medical personnel, and for all parties to restore and sustain the ceasefire.

"Gaza has been turned into a mass grave of Palestinians and those coming to their assistance. We are witnessing in real time the destruction and forced displacement of the entire population in Gaza." says Amande Bazerolle, MSF emergency coordinator in Gaza. "With nowhere safe for Palestinians or those trying to help them, the humanitarian response is severely struggling under the weight of insecurity and critical supply shortages, leaving people with few, if any, options for accessing care."

Over 50,000 people have been killed since October 2023, nearly a third of whom are children, according to the Ministry of Health. Since the resumption of hostilities on 18 March, more than 1,500 people have been killed, according to local authorities.

According to the United Nations, at least 409 aid workers, most of whom were UNWRA staff, the main provider of humanitarian aid in Gaza, have been killed since October 2023. Eleven MSF colleagues, some while on duty, have been killed since the start of the war, including two in just the past two weeks.

In the latest instance of a ruthless attack by Israeli forces on aid workers, the bodies of 15 emergency responders and the ambulances they were traveling in were found in a mass grave on 30 March in Rafah, southern Gaza. The group was killed by Israeli forces while trying to assist civilians caught in shelling on 23 March. Recent publicly shared

evidence has shown that the workers and their vehicles were clearly marked and identifiable, challenging the initial claims given by Israeli authorities.

“This horrific killing of aid workers is yet another example of the blatant disregard shown by Israeli forces for the protection of humanitarian and medical workers. The silence and unconditional support of Israel's closest allies further emboldens these actions,” says Claire Magone, General Director of MSF France.

MSF considers that only international and independent investigations can bring to light the circumstances of, and the responsibilities for, these attacks on aid workers.

Although the situation has already been catastrophic for over 18 months, over the past three weeks, MSF has witnessed several incidents involving the killing of humanitarian and medical workers. The coordination of humanitarian movements with Israeli authorities, known as the Humanitarian Notification System (HNS), an already imperfect mechanism, has become more unreliable and is now barely affording any protection guarantees. Notified locations, in which humanitarians have informed Israel of their presence, such as health facilities where we work, compounds of humanitarian stakeholders, and MSF offices and guesthouses have been hit by shells or bullets. Areas near healthcare facilities have been subjected to strikes, fighting and evacuation orders.

Medical facilities are not exempt from attacks and evacuation orders by Israeli forces. MSF teams have had to leave many facilities, while others continue operating with staff and patients trapped inside, unable to leave safely for hours at a time. On 7 April, MSF teams and patients found themselves trapped in the MSF field hospital in Deir Al-Balah, central Gaza. Rockets were launched by Hamas in close proximity to our field hospitals in Deir Al-Balah endangering both patients and staff and leading to an evacuation order of the area by Israeli forces, who also carried out strikes near the compounds of Al Aqsa and Nasser hospitals. We strongly denounce these actions by the warring parties and call on them to respect and protect healthcare facilities, patients and medical staff.

Since March 18, MSF has not been able to return to Indonesian hospital in northern Gaza where our teams were set to begin pediatric care but had to flee the field hospital, which was set up right next to the compound. MSF mobile clinics in North Gaza were suspended, and in the south, teams have been unable to return to Al-Shaboura clinic in Rafah.

The full siege on Gaza has depleted food, fuel and medical stocks. MSF is especially facing shortages in medications for pain management and chronic illnesses, antibiotics and critical surgical materials. The lack of fuel replenishment across the Strip will lead to

the inevitable suspension of activities as hospitals rely on generators for electricity to keep critical patients alive and conduct lifesaving operations.

“Israeli authorities have deliberately blocked all aid from entering Gaza for over a month. Humanitarians have been forced to watch people suffer and die while carrying the impossible burden of providing relief with depleted supplies, all while facing the same life-threatening conditions themselves,” explains Bazerolle. “There is no way they can carry out their mission under such circumstances. This is not a humanitarian failure — it is a political choice, and a deliberate assault on a people’s ability to survive, carried out with impunity.”

Israeli authorities must end their collective punishment of Palestinians.

We urge Israel's allies to end their complicity and stop enabling the destruction of Palestinian lives.

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