

**GAZA
UNLOCKED**



PHOTO: ANNE PAQ



Health care jeopardized in Gaza

The fuel and electricity crisis in Gaza impacts every individual and service provider in Gaza, but none more vital than the health sector. Like the rest of Gaza, hospitals and medical clinics have only six hours of power per day, requiring them to rely much of the time on generators, which are expensive and provide irregular electricity. Fluctuations in the electrical supply impact sensitive medical equipment including ultrasounds, X-rays, laboratory machines, cardiac monitors, sterilizing machines and infants' incubators, putting patients' lives at risk.

Gaza doesn't have the means to treat cancer patients, people who need complex heart surgery, and other serious cases. These patients require access to medical care in Israel or the West Bank. But under the blockade, movement restrictions delay and block access to treatment for patients, at times with fatal results.

The blockade also prohibits the import of vital medical equipment, including X-ray, MRI, and other laboratory machines. Imports of life-saving medicine as well as basic medical supplies are also often delayed or blocked, leading to severe shortages. Israeli officials have also repeatedly turned away World Health Organization trucks full of medical supplies without explanation.¹

And during Israel's repeated attacks on Gaza, hospitals and clinics have been damaged and destroyed, ambulances have been made targets, and medical personnel have been killed.

All of these actions are violations of international law which guarantees a right to health and protects medical providers.

Quick facts

Impacts of the health crisis

- Over 30 percent of patients from Gaza seeking treatment outside of Gaza are denied permits to travel to obtain treatment.
- As of January 2014, over 300 medical machines at hospitals were out of order, including the only MRI machine at the Gaza European Hospital.²

¹ Suffocating: The Gaza Strip Under Israeli Blockade," Amnesty International (January 2010), 15/002/2010.

² UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Brief report to UNRWA: The Gaza Health Sector as of June 2014 (3 July 2014).

- On average, 30 percent of essential drugs and 50 percent of essential medical disposables are out of stock each month in Gaza.³
- Due to insufficient power supply, the waiting time for some types of elective surgery at Gaza's largest hospital (Shifa Hospital) is over a year.⁴
- Health personnel and doctors are blocked from exiting Gaza, limiting training opportunities and impacting quality of care in Gaza.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 360,000 people—20 percent of Gaza's population—are suffering from a variety of mental health challenges due to the blockade, with treatment options limited.⁵
- During Operation Protective Edge in 2014, the Israeli military destroyed Gaza's only rehabilitation hospital (Al Wafa Hospital) and three primary healthcare clinics (Atta Habeeb, Johr al-Deek and Khuza'a). Many of these and other severely damaged medical centers have yet to be fully repaired due to the lack of resources.⁶

3 Occupied Palestinian Territory Situation Reports, World Health Organization <http://www.emro.who.int/pse/palestine-infocus/situation-reports.html>

4 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "The humanitarian impact of Gaza's electricity and fuel crisis" (March 2014).

5 "Shell-shocked Gazans seek to expand mental health services in wake of conflict," World Health Organization (WHO) (September 2014).

6 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "Gaza two years on: the impact of the 2014 hostilities on the health sector" (4 July 2016), The Monthly Humanitarian Bulletin: June 2016. <http://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-two-years-impact-2014-hostilities-health-sector>

What can you do?

Demand an immediate end to the blockade on Gaza

U.S. government policy officially supports Israel's continued blockade on Gaza—and it is the blockade that has resulted in this crisis facing Gaza's population. The blockade is illegal and immoral and must end.

Contact your government representatives, and demand that they call for an immediate change in U.S. government policy and support the complete end to Israel's blockade on Gaza.

Take action: afsc.org/endtheblockade



**American Friends
Service Committee**

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace, and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the Quaker belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. Since 1948, AFSC has worked in the U.S., Israel, and the occupied Palestinian territory with Palestinians, Israelis, and other committed activists to support nonviolence, challenge oppression, and—since 1970—to end Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory. This work is guided by our "Principles for a Just and Lasting Peace in Palestine and Israel." These principles support the implementation of international human rights and humanitarian law and call for an end to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory, implementation of refugees' right of return, equality, and justice for Palestinians and Israelis. More: afsc.org

LEARN MORE

The following organizations in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel address and challenge Israel's policies on Gaza:

Al-Mezan
www.mezan.org/en

Palestinian Center for Human Rights
www.pchrgaza.org/portal/en

Gaza Community and Mental Health Program
www.gcmhp.net/en

B'Tselem
www.btselem.org

Gisha
www.gisha.org

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
www.ochaopt.org