



The Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) calls on the international community and all fellow allied health professionals for support and to stand up against humanitarian crimes continuing in Gaza.

In the early hours of Tuesday morning (09/05/2023) Israeli occupying forces, escalated their violence and crimes against humanity, deploying 40 war planes to bomb residential areas populated by civilians - mostly children- killing 13 of whom were mostly women and children, and injuring 20.

Since Tuesday the attacks have continued, with unarmed civilians being attacked by warplanes, whilst attempting to take shelter in their homes. Overall according to the Ministry of health's latest report (11/05), within 2 days, 26 Palestinians have been killed and 84 injured.

In addition to these egregious crimes, continuing fuel shortages mean that hospitals and healthcare facilities are at risk of completely shutting down due to a lack of power essential for lighting and medical equipment.

Further to the air strikes, Israeli forces have closed the Erez crossing between Gaza and Israel resulting in 142 Palestinians being unable to seek specialist treatment in hospitals outside of Gaza. 5 of these patients are in urgent need and their lives in jeopardy as a result of this closure.

These attacks follow recent attacks in the Gaza Strip, including missiles that were heavily fired into the densely populated Gaza Strip last week.

In the last 12 months, in the Gaza Strip alone, 58 people have been murdered, most of them children and women, and more than 284 injured in airstrikes. All acts committed are in direct contradiction to humanitarian and international laws.

Due to the 15 year blockade, which also contravenes international laws, Gaza, the most densely populated area on earth (World Bank), is often referred to as an "open air prison". With 50% of it's population under the age of 18 years, this means that Israel has been attacking mostly children, in an area where there is no chance to escape or access essential services such as healthcare, therefore violating several human rights. Furthermore, with 1.4 million of the 2.1 million Gazan population being refugees, Israel is deliberately targeting the most vulnerable of Palestine's population.



As a result of the blockade the people of Gaza, are subsisting on severely reduced power averaging a maximum of 6-hours a day, with many homes, hospitals and other facilities depending on unreliable generators that work intermittently. The majority of the time, they are attempting to survive on no power.

Of particular concern is the heightened vulnerability and immediate impact on the health sector. Without power, not only are emergency services either hindered or ceased completely, but so too are other essential services for chronic patients such as kidney patients needing regular dialysis treatment, which is now rendered virtually impossible.

Further, **it is important to recognise that the number of recorded injuries, do not include the thousands of Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip experiencing trauma related health concerns,** including but not limited to mental health disorders, which include traumatic stress, anxiety and depression as a direct result of the blockade and constant bombardment with missiles and air strikes. Currently statistics indicate that suicide rates amongst men and youth are at an all-time high, with many people in Gaza losing all opportunities to self-determine and hope. 7 out of 10 children in Gaza have reported they suffer from mental health concerns. Additionally the documented statistics also do not include those Palestinian who die or suffer from complications due to being denied travel to seek specialist care.

Under the declaration of Universal Human Rights and International Laws these acts are illegal. For 15 years the people of Gaza have been stripped of every basic human right.

PMRS calls for the international community to actively denounce the unrelenting human rights abuses and massacres occurring right now in Gaza and to work to support the people of Gaza in having access to vital emergency healthcare and their human rights and dignity restored.