



# **Continuity of Health Services and Safety of Health Workers within the Framework of International Agreements**



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International humanitarian law aims to ensure the continuity of health services and the safety of health workers in environments of occupation, war and conflict. The Geneva Conventions (1949) contain important regulations in this context.

International agreements require the protection of health workers in times of war or conflict. Healthcare workers should be protected against all kinds of attacks while performing their duties; accordingly, necessary measures should be taken for the safety of healthcare personnel.

The parties are obliged to ensure the uninterrupted continuation of health services. Healthcare facilities and ambulances should be recognized as inviolable in occupied territories and any action that may hinder the provision of healthcare services should be avoided. The safety of physicians and health workers must be one of the main priorities for the continuation of health care and access to health care for civilians.

Sadly in Gaza, Israel is violating an international agreements and ignoring rules such as the safety of health workers, the continuity of health services and the protection of humanitarian values.

International organizations have an important role created in ensuring to respect these obligations and rights and a created safe healthcare environment in Gaza and all occupied and conflict zones around the world.





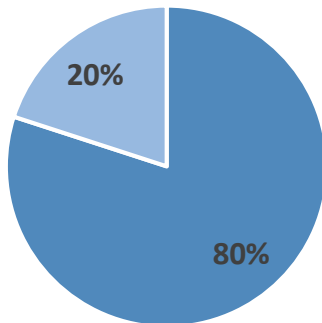
## **Report on the Health Sector Situation During Israeli Attacks on Gaza**

The Gaza Strip has been under blockade for over 17 years and this causing serious humanitarian and health issues. This blockade has caused the destruction of essential infrastructure and a significant decrease in vital resources like food, medicine, and medical supplies. With the latest Israeli attack that began on October 7, the humanitarian situation and the daily life of the people in Gaza has reached unprecedentedly bad levels. Especially with the collapse of health services.

The war has caused widespread destruction, particularly in health facilities. 23 of 38 public and private hospitals are completely out of service, and the remaining hospitals are operating at minimal capacity. Additionally, 88% of



## HOSPITALS & CENTERS



■ NON-OPERATIONAL   ■ PARTIALLY OPERATIONAL

health centers are non-functional (80 out of 90 centers). Health workers have also been affected by these brutal attacks, with 986 healthcare workers passed away and at least 310 healthcare workers has been very much detained.

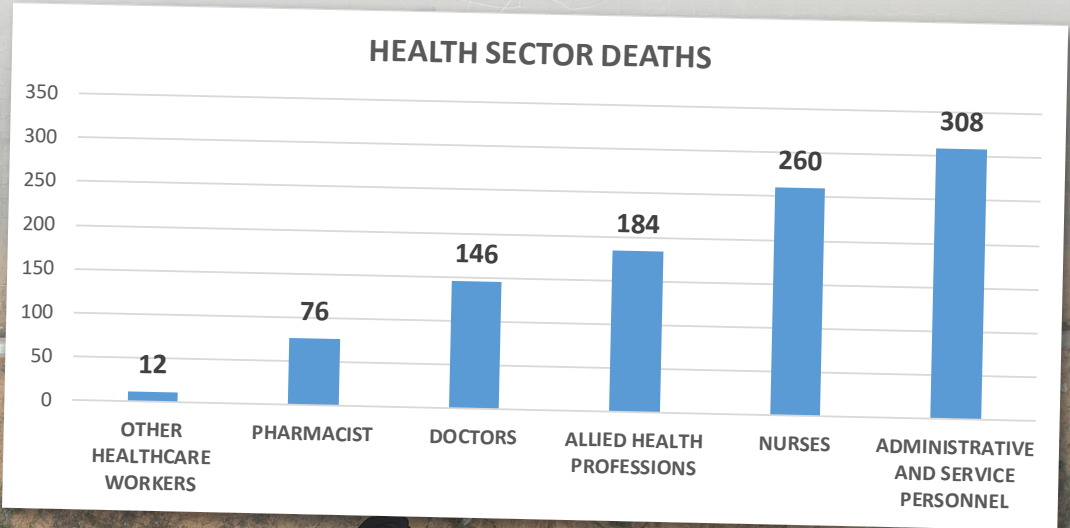
The available medical services for citizens has greatly restricted with the severe collapse in healthcare services. The hospitals that remain partially operational are overwhelmed with injured and sick patients, making it extremely challenging to provide effective medical care.

This situation reveals that the health system is under huge pressure and the challenges faced by health workers have become a nightmare.

Most of workers continue to work without receiving salaries, without access to proper food, and without being able to see their families. They lack access to safe shelter and sufficient water for drinking or washing. A doctor working in the intensive care unit at Al-Aqsa Hospital stated that the number of patients and the severity of injuries have exceeded their capacity to intervene. Even simple cases have resulted in death due to a lack of space and basic medical supplies.



The Human Rights Watch has called on the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to investigate Israeli attacks on healthcare personnel in Gaza and the violations they face in detention. The organization emphasized that the detention of healthcare workers during military operations has contributed to the catastrophic collapse of Gaza's health system. Statements from doctors, nurses, and emergency medical technicians who were released from Israeli prisons have revealed mistreatment, including humiliation, beatings, forced positioning, handcuffing, prolonged blindfolding, denial of medical care, and sexual assault.



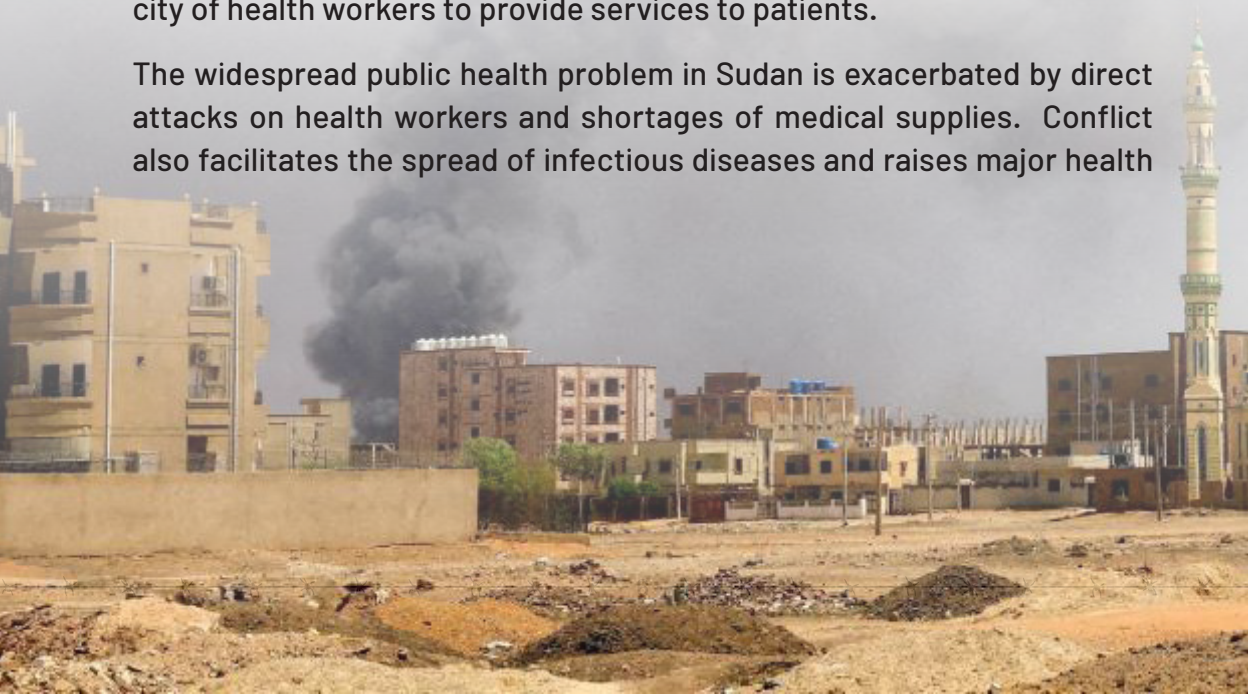
## **Situation of Health Services and the Health Sector in Sudan During the War**

The ongoing armed conflict in Sudan is creating major challenges for health workers and physicians and significant difficulties in health service delivery. The World Health Organization has reported that in the nearly 18 months since the beginning of the war, the health system in Sudan has reached “catastrophic” levels. The country's weak finances and shortage of medical personnel have exacerbated the negative impact of the current conflict on health care.

More than 18,800 people have lost their lives, around 10 million people have been displaced and more than 25 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance as a result of the conflict in Sudan, where the world's largest displacement and hunger crisis has occurred as a result of the war. Access to humanitarian assistance and health services in Sudan is extremely limited, with an estimated 15 million people in need of emergency health services.

Direct attacks on hospitals and health institutions in Sudan have been reflected in international reports. It is reported that 70 percent of health facilities are unusable, while health institutions in areas remote from the conflict have also been severely affected. This situation limits the capacity of health workers to provide services to patients.

The widespread public health problem in Sudan is exacerbated by direct attacks on health workers and shortages of medical supplies. Conflict also facilitates the spread of infectious diseases and raises major health





concerns such as cholera and dengue fever. Health officials have stated that 5081 cases of cholera have been detected since the start of the war and warned that diseases may increase with the onset of the rainy season.

The World Health Organization has noted that the health system in Sudan is at the point of collapse and that some areas are still being served by the dedicated efforts of health workers. However, the current security situation makes it extremely difficult for health workers to carry out their work and increases the need for humanitarian assistance. This serious crisis in the Sudanese health system poses a grave danger to both health workers and patients.





Although health workers try to provide services with great dedication due to the current war conditions, they are challenged by the current working conditions and concerns for their relatives.

Physicians' ability to provide health care to patients is limited due to factors such as security concerns and lack of supplies.

As a result, the health crisis in Sudan puts the population at grave risk and the situation for both the population and health workers is becoming intractable in terms of the spread of infectious diseases and the sustainability of health services. The support of the international community is critical to overcoming this crisis.





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