

# Israel storms and sets fire to the last hospital in northern Gaza

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Israel Defense Forces (IDF) raided Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia on Friday, forcibly removed patients and staff and then set the facility on fire. The hospital was the last medical facility in northern Gaza that remained open since the Israeli genocide against the Palestinians began in October 2023.

The *New York Post* reported that over 240 individuals were detained, including the hospital's director, Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, whom Israel accused of being an operative for Hamas. The Zionist military sought to cover up the impact of its brutal assault by claiming it had evacuated 350 patients and staff before the raid.

However, the forced evacuation disrupted patient medical care, especially for those who were critically ill or dependent on life-saving treatments. Details about the hospitals or shelters where patients were transferred were not readily available, as the situation remained chaotic with the ongoing military action.

The World Health Organization (WHO) condemned the raid, stating that rendering the last major hospital in northern Gaza non-operational meant that the lives of around 75,000 residents who relied on its services were endangered.

The WHO further criticized the systematic destruction of Gaza's healthcare infrastructure, highlighting that the remaining hospitals are ill-equipped to handle the influx of patients from Kamal Adwan. Medical and humanitarian groups expressed deep concern over the raid, emphasizing Dr. Safiya's dedication to children's health under dire conditions.

Hamas denied Israel's claims that militants were using the hospital as a command center and called for international intervention to protect medical facilities. The incident has intensified debates over the protection of healthcare institutions in the conflict zones and the humanitarian impact of military operations on civilian infrastructure.

A report published on Saturday by the WHO said:

Initial reports indicate that some areas of the

hospital were burnt and severely damaged during the raid, including the laboratory, surgical unit, engineering and maintenance department, operations theatre, and the medical store. Earlier in the day, twelve patients and a female health staff were reportedly forced to evacuate to destroyed and non-functional Indonesian Hospital where it is not possible to provide any care, while most of the staff, stable patients and companions were moved to a nearby location.

Additionally, some people were reportedly stripped and forced to walk toward southern Gaza. Over the last two months, the area around the hospital has remained highly volatile and attacks on the hospitals and on health workers have occurred almost daily. This week, bombardments in its vicinity reportedly killed 50 people, including five health workers from Kamal Adwan Hospital.

Kamal Adwan is now empty. ... The movement and treatment of these critical patients under such conditions pose grave risks to their survival. WHO is deeply concerned for their wellbeing, as well as for the Kamal Adwan Hospital director who has been reportedly detained during the raid. WHO lost contact with him since the raid began.

The Kamal Adwan Hospital has been the target of repeated military attacks and sieges by Israeli forces over the past 14 months.

On October 25, Israeli forces besieged the hospital and trapped approximately 600 patients, companions and staff inside. The WHO reported at the time that medical staff suffered injuries and were detained during this raid. Director Dr. Safiya stated that Israeli tanks surrounded the facility, cut off electricity, and shelled the building, targeting the second and third floors. Following the raid, the hospital suffered significant damage, including the destruction of critical supplies due to bombings.

In early December 2024, the IDF conducted airstrikes near the hospital, resulting in civilian casualties. On December 11, the hospital's maternity ward was targeted, leading to the deaths of two mothers and their newborn babies. The following day, Israeli forces raided the hospital, detaining approximately 70 medical staff members and ordering all males above the age of 16 to leave for searches.

Reports have also emerged that Israeli bulldozers crushed people sheltering outside the hospital, causing numerous fatalities. The Palestinian Health Minister called for an investigation into these incidents, and international organizations expressed deep concern over the humanitarian implications of the attacks on the hospital.

The intensifying attacks and shutdown of Kamal Adwan Hospital are part of the systematic destruction of the medical infrastructure in Gaza by Israel. Since October 7, 2023, numerous hospitals have been targeted, and the sustained assault on healthcare facilities is a central component of the deliberate murder and ethnic cleansing operation of the regime of Benjamin Netanyahu.

Israel has carried out air strikes against the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in central Gaza, the Al-Wafa Hospital in central Gaza City, the Al-Quds Hospital in Gaza City, the Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital in central Gaza and the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis. Dozens were killed in the strikes, and countless others died from lack of access to medical care amid Israel's rampage that has destroyed or damaged two-thirds of all structures in the Palestinian enclave.

Although comprehensive data is limited, a significant number of civilians, including children, have been killed as a direct result of attacks on medical infrastructure, including drone missile strikes on ambulances attempting to reach injured people or transporting victims to hospitals. The airstrikes on October 22, 2023, near the Al Shifa and Al Quds hospitals, for example, contributed to what has been described as the "bloodiest" night of the genocide at the time.

Meanwhile, military operations in Gaza have caused significant casualties among medical personnel. The Gaza Health Ministry has reported that approximately 986 healthcare workers have been killed since October 2023. This includes 165 doctors, 260 nurses, 300 management and support personnel, 184 health associate professionals, 76 pharmacists, and 12 other health workers.

On November 3, 2023, the Gaza Health Ministry reported that 136 paramedics had been killed, and 25 ambulance vehicles had been destroyed since the beginning of the conflict. On the same day, Israel bombed a medical convoy outside of Al-Shifa hospital.

Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, who has been detained in the

latest assault on Kamal Adwan Hospital, was born in 1973 in the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip and is a Palestinian pediatrician and human rights defender. Dr. Safiya has refused to evacuate the hospital, choosing to remain with the patients, despite orders from Israeli military forces.

In October 2024, during an earlier Israeli raid, Dr. Safiya was briefly detained but returned to continue his work. Tragically, during his detention, his 15-year-old son Ibrahim, who was sheltering at the hospital with the family, was killed by an Israeli drone strike.

On December 27, 2024, Israeli forces detained Dr. Abu Safiya again during a raid on the hospital, accusing him of being a Hamas operative. This action has drawn condemnation from medical and humanitarian organizations, highlighting his commitment to children's health under dire circumstances.

Throughout the Gaza genocide, the *World Socialist Web Site* has reported on and analyzed the Israeli government's attacks on medical facilities and healthcare personnel, which has unfolded with the backing of the US government. These deliberately murderous attacks now barely elicit comment from the Biden administration as it focuses on exiting the White House for the incoming second Trump administration.

On Friday, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby made disingenuous comments to reporters, saying, "Hospitals should not be active scenes of combat and conflict. People should be able to feel safe going to a hospital, get the medical care that they desperately need."

Kirby also reiterated Israeli claims that Hamas is using hospitals to "store caches of weapons, to house fighters, to plan and coordinate," allegations that have never been backed up with a single piece of evidence. Kirby then declined to answer specific questions about the strike on the Kamal Adwan Hospital.



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