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ISRAEL OPT RESCIND EVACUATION ORDER AGAINST GAZA HOSPITALS

On October 13, 23 hospitals in the north of the Gaza Strip and Gaza City received forced evacuation orders from the Israeli army. Since then, hospitals continue to receive phone calls from the Israeli army pressuring them to comply. These hospitals provide life-saving treatment for more than 2,000 patients and serve as the sole haven for tens of thousands of internally displaced families.

Amid the humanitarian catastrophe engulfing the Gaza Strip, these forced evacuation orders are virtually impossible to implement as transferring patients across destroyed areas and without fuel is an unreasonable prospect. If implemented, these “evacuations” will lead to the complete collapse of Gaza’s healthcare system. They will also constitute, in the words of the World Health Organization, a “death sentence” against those with serious wounds or illnesses.

Considering the imminent danger to the life of tens of thousands of patients, displaced civilians and health workers, write to the Israel Minister of Defense urging him to:

- Immediately rescind the order and ensure that health facilities, health workers, patients, and IDPs are protected against attacks, as required by international humanitarian law.

Write to:

Minister of Defense
Mr. Yoav Gallant
Ministry of Defense,
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Salutation: Mr. Yoav Gallant,

And copy:

His Excellency Iddo MOED
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as of October 22, over 4,650 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza including 1,8732 children, and over

14,245 wounded during the ongoing Israeli strikes that began on October 7, 2023. OCHA also estimated that over 1.4 million people have been internally displaced since the outbreak of the recent hostilities.

In the early hours of October 13, the Israeli army issued an initial announcement ordering more than 1.1 million people living north of Wadi Gaza have to leave for the south within a day. Regardless of the deadline, which even the Israeli army acknowledged was not feasible, this order cannot be considered an effective warning and may amount to the forced displacement of civilians, a violation of international humanitarian law. The subsequent order to hospitals to forcibly evacuate should be seen in the context of these threats of forced displacement.

“Evacuating this hospital is virtually impossible since moving patients from the Intensive Care Unit, moving the incubated newborn babies, the injured who number more than fifty, is just impossible,” a doctor at Al-Quds hospital, one of the 23 hospitals threatened with forced evacuation which is also sheltering over 8,000 IDPs, told Amnesty International.

Israel cannot consider the whole of the Gaza Strip, including its hospitals and civilian infrastructure, a military target. Doctors, nurses, and medical staff in Gaza have been heroically working to save people’s lives, working amid unthinkable horror. Many of them have lost family members, friends and colleagues but are persevering in providing their services while under attack in an awe-inspiring commitment to humanity.

As such, Israeli authorities must respect international humanitarian law, including by immediately rescinding forced evacuation orders against hospitals and allowing the prompt and unconditional supply of humanitarian aid and medical supplies into Gaza. Israeli authorities must also resume the supply of water and fuel into Gaza as an initial step towards ending the collective punishment measures that for the last 16 years they have imposed on the civilian population.