

# *Al-Awda Hospital remains under Israeli military siege*

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Gaza City, December 15 (RHC)-- Israeli forces have laid a heavy siege on Al-Awda and Kamal Adwan hospitals in northern Gaza, with several Palestinians killed and injured.

In the latest update, Gaza health ministry spokesperson Ashraf al-Qudra said that Israeli forces continue to detain the entire medical staff of Kamal Adwan Hospital, including director Ahmed al-Kahlout.

Civilians who took shelter in the hospital were ordered to leave, and then the Israeli forces opened fire on them. As a result, five of them were injured.

Health authorities say that the entire northern part of the Gaza Strip is now without any type of medical service. And the few hospitals that remain operating in the south can no longer cope with the massive number of victims, forcing medical staff to make hard decisions about who to treat and who to leave to die.

Meanwhile, at least 38 medical staff remain detained by Israeli forces, including al-Shifa Hospital director Muhammad Abu Salmiya.

WHO has reported a sharp uptick in acute respiratory infections, diarrhea, lice, scabies and other fast-spreading diseases. “WHO and partners remain firmly committed to staying in Gaza and assisting the population,” said Richard Peeperkorn, WHO representative on the occupied Palestinian territory.

“But as hostilities increase across Gaza, aid falls short of needs. The humanitarian support system is on the verge of falling apart.”

“Northern Gaza looks like a wasteland,” he said. “The devastation is simply enormous. We were still surprised that we saw so many people who were in the streets, lying on the streets.”

Peeperkorn has been on a medical mission to Gaza for the last two weeks. Peeperkorn said the mission visited Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City, the only partially functioning hospital in the north. He said the hospital corridors and grounds — the courtyard, every room, the library, even the chapel — were full of patients and internally displaced people.

“We saw many trauma patients in donkey carts, dead people, unfortunately, and seriously injured people on foot and in personal vehicles,” he said. “We cannot afford to lose any more health facilities.”

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