

# *Report reveals 50% of cancer patients don't get treatment in Gaza due to Israel's blockade*

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**Palestinian cancer patients take part in a protest to demand travel for treatment as Israeli authorities often refuse. (File photo)**

Ramallah, July 20 (RHC)-- The Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza has said that 50 percent of cancer patients do not receive treatment due to Israel's now-17-year-old brutal blockade of the Palestinian territory.

During a press conference, the ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qidra warned of the "dangerous consequences" of the severe shortage of medicines needed for cancer patients. "The 17-year-old Israeli siege imposed on Gaza has led to the death of dozens of patients due to the lack of medicines and medical equipment," the spokesman said.

"About 40 percent of the total numbers of cancer patients are deprived of getting travel permits to receive treatment outside the besieged Gaza Strip." Elsewhere in his remarks, al-Qidra called on the international community "to move to save the lives of cancer patients and to provide the treatment and services that they deserve."

Meanwhile, Sobhi Skaik, the Director of a hospital in Gaza appealed for help to save more than 9,000 cancer patients in the besieged Palestinian enclave. He also highlighted the issue of "the lack of radiotherapy for cancer patients in Gaza, the lack of diagnostic and therapeutic nuclear treatment capabilities and the lack of some important medical tests needed for diagnosing cancer."

The Israeli regime refuses to allow the entry of medical equipment as well as spare parts for devices that are needed to treat thousands of patients in Gaza. Hospitals in the besieged coastal territory are in dire need of such equipment.

Gaza's health sector has been suffering under years of the Israeli blockade. Israel refuses to allow new medical equipment as well as spare parts to fix vital equipment especially those that are needed to treat cancer patients and diagnose severe illnesses.

The territory's biggest medical center, Gaza's Shifa Hospital, is struggling to provide health services due to a lack of medical equipment. Hundreds of medical devices are currently out of order due to a lack of spare parts. The Israeli regime prevents the entry of badly needed hospital equipment allegedly for security reasons.

The lack of medical equipment is endangering the lives of Palestinian patients in Gaza. Hundreds of them have already lost their lives under the ongoing Israeli blockade.

Israel occupied Gaza and the nearby Palestinian territory of the West Bank during a heavily-Western-backed war in 1967. The regime withdrew its forces from Gaza in 2005 but has been keeping the territory under an all-out land, aerial, and naval siege that has turned it into the world's largest open-air prison.

According to the United Nations, as a result of the siege, about 2.1 million Palestinians in the besieged sliver are locked in, with the vast majority of them unable to access the remainder of the occupied Palestinian territories and the outside world.

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