

Health Situation in Gaza

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Medical Aid for Palestinians-MAP

- A British charity
- Established in 1984 by Dr. Swee Chai Ang who witnessed the Sabra and Shatila massacre
- Upon her return to the UK, established, with colleagues, Medical Aid for Palestinians, “in order to send out doctors and nurses to provide front -line care in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon”
- Started work in Palestine in 1989
- In addition to the UK office, MAP has three field offices; Gaza, WB and Lebanon

MAP

- Mission: To work for the health and dignity of Palestinians living under occupation and as refugees
- Goal: To improve the health and well-being of Palestinians and the capacity of local partners
- Works on 5 thematic areas: Emergencies and complex medical care, Women and Child health, Disability, MHPSS and Advocacy
- MAP support the implementation of 20 projects in Gaza and works in partnership with local partners and in cooperation with local hospitals and PHC centers

Overview

- Population nearly **2 million**, **1.4** registered refugees, live in **365 Km²**, **5,500** inhabitant/square km.
- Over **68%** are severely or moderately food insecure (around **1.3 million**).
- Blockade imposed since **2007**, impacting the economic situation (**\$16.7 billion** loss in 10 years- UN General Assembly report)
- Unemployment rate is **45%**, **69.5%** among youth
- Electricity deficit chronic since **2007** with impact on health and Wash.
- No access to potable water with **97%** of ground water in Gaza unfit for human consumption.

Overview

- Security situation unstable with unpredicted spikes
- GRM demonstrations left 34,000 injuries, 315 deaths, 1200 in need of complex LR services combined with other sub-specialities such as neuro and plastics interventions.
- Limited fund in comparison to the needs; cut of US fund
- Within COVID 19 context; rising poverty, unemployment and household debts

Key Humanitarian Health Issues

- Protracted emergency, the UN warned that Gaza health system was on the brink of collapse
- Gaza Health system lacks adequate medical supplies, severe and long-term Shortages in medicine and disposables; 30-50 at zero stock
- Fragmented PHC system between MOH, UNRWA and local NGOs
- Reduced number, skilled and motivated health workers, more than a 200 left Gaza (looking for opportunities & salaries)
- 1870 Palestinian health workers infected with COVID 19 in Gaza
- Need for medical referral out of Gaza

Key Humanitarian Health Issues

- More than 11,500 patients are on the waiting lists for elective surgeries (due to COVID, suspension of MTs, lack of supplies etc.)
- Trauma casualties are in need for long term and expensive treatment
- Prevalence for key forms of malnutrition (wasting, stunting, etc.) recording steady deterioration.
- Psychosocial well-being, GBV and mental health impacted by closures, instability, hostilities, deteriorated socio-economic status, lockdown etc.
- PWDs still neglected and have poor access to basic needs

Medical Referral

- Before COVID 19: 1200 referral to WB and east Jerusalem hospitals
- Since March; significant drop of cases being referred 700 in March, 113 in April and 105 in May patient only through referral abroad department
- Due to the annexation which followed by the suspension of coordination between PA and Israel, PCHR and WHO were coordinating for urgent cases
- The total number of patients permit applications was 24,300 in 21019 with approval rate 65%
- In 2020 the number of applications dropped to 8000 with approval rate of 67% while it was 45% for their companions.

Current Health situation

- MOH is the key health provider for Primary and secondary care, supported by UNRWA and few health NGOs
- Total bed capacity at Gaza hospitals is 3000 beds (2300 at MOH)
- Number of ICU ventilators by the start of COVID 19 was 63 at MOH and 13 at NGOs hospitals
- Designated two field hospitals for COVID 19 (EGH and Turkish hospitals).
- Allocated a medical team to work in these hospitals, trained and redeployed them
- Increased testing capacity for COVID 19, roughly 2000 test per day

Current Health Situation

- Positivity rate reached 37% but dropped recently to 16%
- Health services for non COVID patients were interrupted
- Emergency response from Donors is focused on COVID 19- increasing the zero stock items for non COVID cases.
- No vaccines for COVID 19
- accumulative cases 52,747, the active cases are 3502, 36 critical cases and 64 moderate, 531 deaths
- Exhausted health system doesn't allow preparedness for new strains

Key challenges

- Human Resources
- Infection control supplies and disinfectants
- Personal Protective Equipment for the health workers
- ICU equipment and oxygen generators
- Diagnostic kits, lab reagents
- Severe shortages of drugs and consumables as well as essential medical equipment
- Long lists of postponed elective surgeries including patients in need for cardiac catheterization

Key messages

- The 13-year illegal closure and blockade has critically undermined Gaza's preparedness to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and increased the susceptibility of Palestinian communities
- Immediate international aid should urgently support testing, infection control, and essential medical supplies, and this aid must be sustained for the duration of the pandemic if disaster is to be averted
- International Aid should attempt to support sustainable development to the Palestinian health care system.
- Israel as an occupying power has a responsibility in coordination with the national authority to ensure medical and hospital establishments and services, public health and hygiene in the occupied territories

Key messages

- The international community should also demand the protection of Palestinian health workers and seek accountability where they are attacked, and urge the removal of other barriers to healthcare including Israel's permit regime
- Immediate solution for patients who need referral for medical treatment
- International Community must play their part in enabling the Palestinians to access COVID 19 vaccination programme
- MAP's position paper on equal access to vaccines: <https://www.map.org.uk/downloads/map-position-paper---equal-access-to-covid-19-vaccines-.pdf>



Thank you 😊

Any question?