



[Gaza's Largest Hospital 'An Empty Shell With Human Graves': WHO](#)

Newstex Blogs

International Business Times Australia

April 6, 2024 Saturday 7:15 PM EST

Delivered by Newstex LLC. All Rights Reserved.

Copyright 2024 International Business Times Australia

Length: 795 words

Body

April 6th, 2024 ([International Business Times Australia](#) - Delivered by [Newstex](#))

The World Health Organization said on Saturday that Gaza's largest hospital had been reduced to ashes by Israel's latest siege, leaving an "empty ***shell***" with many bodies.

WHO staff who gained access on Friday to the devastated facility described horrifying scenes of bodies only partially buried, with their limbs sticking out, and the stench of decomposing corpses.

Israeli forces pulled out of Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City on Monday after a two-week military operation, during which it said it had battled Palestinian "militants" inside what was once the Palestinian territory's most important medical complex.

A WHO-led mission finally accessed the hospital on Friday, after multiple failed attempts since March 25, the United Nations health agency said.

It found massive destruction and heard reports that patients had been "held in abysmal conditions" during the siege and several had died.

"WHO and partners managed to reach Al-Shifa -- once the backbone of the health system in Gaza, which is now an empty ***shell*** with human graves after the latest siege," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

In a statement, WHO said no patients remained in the hospital, where "numerous shallow graves" had been dug just outside the emergency department and the administrative and surgical buildings.

"Many dead bodies were partially buried with their limbs visible," it said.

During their visit, WHO staff witnessed "at least five bodies lying partially covered on the ground, exposed to the heat", it said.

"The team reported a pungent smell of decomposing bodies engulfing the hospital compound."

Gaza's Largest Hospital 'An Empty Shell With Human Graves': WHO

"Safeguarding dignity, even in death, is an indispensable act of humanity," the WHO stressed.

The mission, which was conducted in cooperation with other UN agencies and the acting hospital director, found that "the scale of devastation has left the facility completely non-functional".

"Most of the buildings in the hospital complex are extensively destroyed and the majority of assets damaged or reduced to ashes," Tedros said.

"Even restoring minimal functionality in the short term seems implausible."

WHO said the acting hospital director had described how patients were "held in abysmal conditions during the siege".

"They endured severe lack of food, water, health care, hygiene and sanitation, and were forced to relocate between buildings at gun point," it said.

At least 20 patients reportedly died, it said, "due to the lack of access to care and limited movement authorised for health personnel".

Tedros said efforts by WHO and other aid groups to revive basic services at Al-Shifa after Israel's first devastating raid on the hospital last year "are now lost".

"People are once again deprived of access to life-saving health care services," he continued.

Of Gaza's 36 main hospitals, only 10 remain even partially functional, according to the WHO.

For the past six months, Israel has relentlessly bombarded the besieged, densely populated Palestinian territory, killing at least 33,137 people, mostly women and children, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

The current Gaza war began after a cross-border attack by Hamas fighters on October 7 that resulted in the death of 1,170 people in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP toll from official Israeli figures.

Palestinian militants also took around 250 hostages, about 130 of whom remain in Gaza. The Israeli army says more than 30 are dead.

Tedros said urgent action was needed in Gaza as "famine looms, disease outbreaks spread and trauma injuries increase" among the trapped Palestinian population.

He called for the "protection of remaining health facilities in Gaza... unimpeded access of humanitarian aid into and across the Gaza Strip" and a "ceasefire".

He also called for a "functional deconfliction mechanism", referring to the process of clearing aid missions in advance with the Israeli military to ensure they can go ahead safely and unhindered.

"Despite deconfliction, yesterday's mission faced significant delays at the military checkpoint en route to Al-Shifa hospital," the WHO pointed out.

It said that "between mid-October and the end of March, over half of all WHO missions had been denied, delayed, impeded or postponed" by the Israelis.

"As health needs soar, the lack of a functional deconfliction system is a major obstacle in delivering humanitarian aid -- including medical supplies, **fuel**, food and water to hospitals -- anywhere close to the scale needed," it said.

The dialysis unit at Gaza's Al-Shifa hospital was destroyed in the Israeli siege AFP

'At least 115 beds in the emergency department were burned and 14 incubators destroyed,' WHO said AFP

[Link to the original story.](#)

Notes

The views expressed in any and all content distributed by Newstex and its re-distributors (collectively, the "Newstex Authoritative Content") are solely those of the respective author(s) and not necessarily the views of Newstex or its re-distributors. Stories from such authors are provided "AS IS," with no warranties, and confer no rights. The material and information provided in Newstex Authoritative Content are for general information only and should not, in any respect, be relied on as professional advice. Newstex Authoritative Content is not "read and approved" before it is posted. Accordingly, neither Newstex nor its re-distributors make any claims, promises or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the information contained therein or linked to from such content, nor do they take responsibility for any aspect of such content. The Newstex Authoritative Content shall be construed as author-based content and commentary. Accordingly, no warranties or other guarantees are offered as to the quality of the opinions, commentary or anything else appearing in such Newstex Authoritative Content. Newstex and its re-distributors expressly reserve the right to delete stories at its and their sole discretion.

Load-Date: April 10, 2024

End of Document