

International Desk

The World Health Organization said Gaza's Shifa hospital "is not working at all any more as it should. It's nearly a cemetery."

"Around the hospital there are dead bodies which cannot be taken care of or not even be buried, or taken away to any sort of morgue," WHO spokesman Christian Lindmeier told the BBC.

The director of the hospital, encircled by Israeli tanks, said on Tuesday that the facility has been forced to bury scores of dead patients in a mass grave. Israeli forces were at the gates of Shifa hospital they claim sits atop an underground Hamas command base, but the resistance fighters deny the charge and doctors say thousands of people are stranded inside in



Men check the bodies of people killed in bombardment that hit a school housing displaced Palestinians, as they lie on the ground in the yard of Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City on November 10, 2023.
● AFP

horrific conditions.

"There are bodies littered in the hospital complex and there is no longer electricity at the morgues," said Shifa hospital director Mohammad Abu Salmiyah, adding that 179 bodies had been interred so far.

"We were forced to bury them in a mass grave," he said, adding that seven babies and 29 intensive care patients were among those who had died after fuel for the hospital's generator ran out. The United Nations believes that thousands, and perhaps more than 10,000 people – patients, staff and displaced civilians – may be inside and unable to escape because of fierce fighting nearby.

International aid agencies also speak of hundreds of thousands of people displaced and a rolling humanitarian catastrophe.

The Israeli Army has launched a ground invasion in the north of the Palestinian territory and is forcing Palestinians to leave for the south. It has agreed to daily pauses in military operations around specified "corridors" to allow the passage of fleeing civilians.

But escaping the fighting is dangerous and wounded Palestinians told AFP how they were hit by a strike on their way south. The southern part of the besieged territory is not much safer. Israel carries out frequent airstrikes throughout Gaza, hitting what it says are Hamas targets but often killing women and children.

UN-run shelters in the south are severely overcrowded, with an average of one toilet for 160 people. In all, some 1.5 million Palestinians, more than two thirds of Gaza's population, have fled their homes.

Mounting int'l pressure

Israel is facing mounting international pressure over the

human cost of its onslaught on Gaza.

Israel's top diplomat acknowledged Monday that the regime has "two or three weeks until international pressure really steps up".

Quoted by his spokesman, Foreign Minister Eli Cohen added that Israel is working to "broaden the window of legitimacy, and the fighting will carry on for as long as necessary".

As Israel's ground campaign advanced, Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant claimed Hamas had "lost control" of Gaza.

The Israeli Army claimed on Tuesday that it had captured parliament and other government institutions run by Hamas in Gaza City.

Military units took over the Hamas parliament, the government building, the Hamas police headquarters and an engineering faculty, the Israeli Army said in a statement.

Fuel shortage

The regime has also imposed a near-total siege on the Palestinian territory, restricted the entry of food, fuel, electricity and other basic supplies.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees warned on Monday its Gaza operations might shut down due to fuel shortages.

"The humanitarian operation in Gaza will grind to a halt in the next 48 hours as no fuel is allowed to enter," UNRWA's Gaza chief Thomas White wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

Israeli leaders have so far insisted there will be no broader cease-fire until hostages are released, but Qatar is mediating talks on a possible deal to free hostages.

Abu Obeida, a spokesman for Hamas's military wing, said Monday that a possible deal would involve the release 100 Israeli hostages in return for

200 Palestinian children and 75 women held in Israeli prisons.

Israel's relentless strikes on the besieged territory have so far killed more than 11,240 people – mostly women and children.

The Israeli Army also confirmed on Tuesday the death of one of its woman soldiers held captive in Gaza. Israel's military said 47 of its troops have been killed in Gaza since the beginning of its ground invasion.

Meanwhile, the regime has been increasing its deadly raids in the occupied West Bank since the beginning of the conflict. The Palestinian Health Ministry said on Tuesday that eight Palestinians were killed in Israel's attacks on the northern city of Tulkarem and the southern city of Al-Khalil in West Bank.

Nuclear bomb threat

China, Iran and a multitude of Arab nations condemned an Israeli minister's statement that a nuclear bomb on the Gaza Strip was an option, calling it a threat to the world.

At Monday's long-planned opening of a United Nations conference whose goal is to establish a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, many ambassadors expressed condemnations and criticisms of comments by Israel's Heritage Minister Amihai Eliyahu, who later called his remarks in a radio interview Sunday "metaphorical." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu quickly disavowed the comments and suspended him from cabinet meetings.

Israel has neither confirmed nor denied its nuclear capability. It is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons, and a former employee at its nuclear reactor served 18 years in Israeli prison for leaking details and pictures of Israel's alleged nuclear arsenal program to a British newspaper in 1986.



US Pleads with Axis of Resistance

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The United States, as the main supporter of Israel in attacking the people of Gaza, has, on the one hand, provided all kinds of military equipment to the Israeli regime and neutralized any plan and proposal for a cease-fire in international institutions and, on the other hand, not kept its fears of the spreading of the war secret.

In the latest example of Washington's moves to prevent the escalation of the war and its scope, it has sent a secret message to Lebanon's Hezbollah. Iran's foreign minister revealed that the US has been sending messages to Tehran as well.

The Lebanese newspaper Ad-Diyar quoted informed sources that the United States sent a message to Hezbollah through a third channel, stressing that the US Army would not participate in field operations alongside the Israeli Army.

In the message, it is stated that their dispatch of about 2,000 military personnel, most of whom are advisers, was not aimed at participating in the field operations of the Israeli Army in the Gaza Strip and the northern front. Rather, their mission purportedly is to provide security and protect the nuclear facilities in the occupied territories. The first facility in question is in the Dimona region and the second one is in the Tibnah desert region.

This message also states that the mission requires that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his right-wing cabinet are not allowed to use these facilities, either on a small tactical level, or on a large regional level, against Iran. It was also emphasized that the cutting-edge air defense technologies that were implemented in these two facilities will prevent any party in the axis of resistance from targeting them.

Ad-Diyar newspaper added that these clarifications were conveyed to the resistance leadership, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, exclusively through a Lebanese channel trusted by all parties. It is believed that the channel is linked to the former director of Lebanon's General Directorate of General Security Major General Abbas Ibrahim.

Earlier, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, also said that the Americans have sent a message to Iran at least twice, and that this message makes two points. The first point is that we in the White House do not want to expand the war, and the second point is that we want Iran to exercise restraint. In some messages, it was emphasized that Iran should advise other countries, parties, and activists to also exercise restraint.

On November 5, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani in an unexpected trip to Baghdad. A day after the meeting, Al-Sudani visited Tehran, which fueled suspicion that the Iraqi PM was the bearer of a message from the US to Tehran about the war in Gaza.

Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh also announced in a recent speech that the Americans have sent messages to Iran. He denied the rumor of threats made by Washington against Iran, saying "The Americans have not threatened Iran. Their correspondence — and sometimes they corresponded with Iran three times in one day — was all in the language of pleas and requests." He underlined that Iran is not in a position in which anyone wants to threaten it. "We are at the peak of power and have prepared ourselves for all conditions."

The reports suggest that the main point of the US's pleading messages to the various sides of the resistance, including Iran and Hezbollah, is the demand for restraint in order to prevent the expansion of the war. It seems that the Americans are better aware of the ability of the resistance to create problems for Israel than the Israelis are. However, as Iran's foreign minister has emphasized, the expectation of restraint from the resistance must be accompanied by pressure on Israel to accept a cease-fire and end the killing of the people of Gaza.

Otherwise, the US will be responsible for unexpected conditions on the battlefield.



US forces patrol the countryside of Rumaylan in Syria's northeastern Hasakeh Province on Dec. 4, 2022.
● DELIL SOULEIMAN/AFP