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Iran FM: US humanitarian aid in Gaza mere gesture

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Israel Storms Shifa Hospital

If Israel Doesn't Stop the Genocide of Palestinians, War Will Escalate

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Israeli soldiers raid Shifa Hospital in the Gaza Strip on November 15, 2023. REUTERS

International Desk

Two and a half weeks after sending tanks and ground troops into northern Gaza, Israeli forces entered a hospital early Wednesday that they claim Hamas operates out of.

Mohammed Zaqout, the director of hospitals in Gaza, said Israeli tanks were inside the medical compound and that soldiers had entered buildings, including the emergency and surgery departments, which house intensive care units.

Shifa Hospital has become a symbol of the widespread suffering of Palestinian civilians during Israel's war on Gaza.

The Israeli Army claims Hamas uses hospitals as cover for its fighters, and has set up its main command center in and beneath Shifa Hospital, the largest in the besieged territory. Both Hamas and hospital staff have repeatedly denied the Israeli claims.

US responsible for raid

Hamas said US President Joe Biden was "wholly responsible" for the assault, accusing his administration of giving Israel "the green light... to commit more massacres against civilians".

Hours before Israel's raid, the US said its own intelligence indicated Hamas fighters have used Shifa and other hospitals — and tunnels beneath them — to support military operations and hold captives.

Dozens of Israeli soldiers, some wearing face masks and shooting in the air, ordered young men to surrender, a journalist in contact with AFP reported, as the army said it conducted a "precise and targeted" operation at the facility.

Violation of int'l law

The West Bank-based Palestinian Authority denounced the raid as a "flagrant violation of international law".

Witnesses described conditions inside the hospital as horrific, with medical procedures taking place without anesthetic, families with scant food or water living in corridors, and the stench of decomposing corpses filling the air.

International concern over the fate of the people inside the hospital has been steadily increasing.

Citing the Gaza Health Ministry, UN humanitarian agency OCHA said 40 patients had died in Al-Shifa on Tuesday, while hospital director Abu Salmiya said 179 bodies had been interred in a mass grave inside the complex. The situation in Gaza's other hospitals is also dire, with the World Health Organization saying 22 of 36 are not functional due to a lack of generator fuel, damage or combat.

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