

By Sadeq Dehqan
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INTERVIEW

The first deputy chairman of the Health Committee of the Iranian Parliament warned of a humanitarian disaster in the Zionist regime's attacks on Gaza and Lebanon, stating that thousands of Iranian doctors are ready to be dispatched to the region to help those affected by the devastating attacks.

Parliament's Health Committee:

Over 8,000 doctors ready for deployment to Gaza, Lebanon



Fatemeh Mohammad-Beigi

"Over the past year, more than 8,000 Iranian doctors have announced their readiness to be dispatched to Gaza and Lebanon to help the wounded and affected people in the aftermath of these devastating attacks," the first deputy head of the parliament Committee explained.

However, in an interview with Iran Daily, Fatemeh Mohammad-Beigi said "Despite the medical team's full readiness to be dispatched to these areas, unfortunately, the Israeli regime is blocking the entry of any health and medical convoys into the occupied territories and is not allowing the entry of water, food, and medicine into these areas."

"The Israelis have imposed all sorts of sanctions and restrictions on the resistance axis countries and regions, which is a clear indication of Israel's brutal nature and its disregard for international laws and regulations," she added.

As the head of the Women's and Family Fraction of the Iranian Parliament, Mohammad-Beigi declared that "there are over 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza who are being neglected, and they are living in a dire situation. These mothers have been going through their pregnancies under immense pressure, hunger, and severe shortages of food and medi-

cine for many days."

"Many pregnant women, fetuses, newborns, and young children have lost their lives due to hunger and the lack of food and medicine. The occurrence of these incidents has reached a point where the international community can no longer tolerate this situation, and it is imperative that the dispatch of medical teams and family counselors to treat the physical and psychological trauma of the affected people be prioritized," she added.

Warning human rights organizations, Mohammad-Beigi stressed, "It is time to take action and put an end to these atrocities. How long should we continue to just talk and issue empty and ineffective statements? International organizations and assemblies should not fall into the trap of the Zionist regime's deceit and its supporting governments."

"According to divine promises and laws, oppression and supporting the oppressor will not endure. On this basis, I caution strongly against the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and other countries that support Israel's atrocities in any way, that they will soon face severe consequences, including the downfall of their governments."

The parliament member referred to the explosion of thousands of pagers



in Lebanon, saying, "The occurrence of these explosions by Israel is a completely terrorist and unconventional act in international conflicts. The use of electronic devices to injure and kill thousands of people is nothing but a horrific human tragedy that shows the brutality of the perpetrators, as many civilians and non-military areas were severely damaged." She also referred to the recent Zionist regime's attacks on the Dahiyeh region and other areas of Lebanon, saying, "The Zionist regime has no justifi-

Wounded Lebanese child rests at hospital in Sidon on September 27, 2024, after he was injured following an Israeli airstrike that targeted his home village of al-Sharqiyah in southern Lebanon.
● MAHMOUD ZAYYAT/AFP

cation for these attacks, and Lebanon has the right to defend itself against Israel. The Islamic Republic of Iran will support this legitimate defense." Mohammad-Beigi stated, "We urge the international community and human rights organizations to immediately stop supporting this regime,

whether openly or secretly."

She added, "Unfortunately, many international conventions have been violated over the past year, since the start of the Gaza war, and many UN resolutions have been ineffective. One example is the recent resolution that gave the Zionist regime a 12-month deadline to leave Gaza."

The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in September (2024) calling on Israel to end its "illegal presence in the occupied Palestinian territories" within 12 months. The resolution was adopted with 124 votes in favor, 43 abstentions, and 12 negative votes, including Israel and the United States. Mohammad-Beigi emphasized, "This is while not even a single day should be given to a regime that is responsible for the murder of many innocent people every day."

She pointed out that cutting off the Zionist regime's vital economic arteries could prevent further killings, saying, "I urge all countries, especially the Islamic community and countries, to cut off all economic ties with this regime." She added, "Any economic and trade transactions with this regime would be equivalent to providing funds and budget for the procurement of weapons and the continuation of Zionist genocide, and would make other countries complicit in these crimes."

By Ahmed Abu Abdu
Head of Health and Environment management at Gaza City Municipality

REPORT

As head of Health and Environment management at the Gaza City municipality, I am responsible for processing and disposing of all types of waste, including household, medical, industrial, agricultural, and marine waste. With a population exceeding 800,000 people, our city generates over 700 tons of waste daily. Before the Israeli genocide began on October 7 almost a year ago, managing this volume of waste in a city under siege was already challenging. The Israeli occupation systematically prevented us from importing or building the necessary equipment to carry out our work, including garbage trucks or waste treatment facilities, over nearly two decades. After the Israeli occupation launched a war on all our sanitation facilities and waste management systems, with the objective of creating an environmental and health crisis in Gaza.

Waste piling up in Gaza

Public health implications are disastrous

Over the years, I have lived through several Israeli assaults on Gaza — in 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2021. Each time, we adapted and continued our essential services. But this war is unlike anything we have ever seen. It is not just another assault, but a genocide aiming to take away our city's ability to function. Every day feels like a Sisyphean race against time to maintain essential services for a city being systematically obliterated.

The occupation targeted our teams in East Gaza where our landfill is located, making it impossible to transport waste there and forcing us to pile it in the middle of the city, creating hazardous conditions for Gaza residents.

From the very beginning of the war, I constantly worried about my family's safety. When the Israeli army ordered evacuations, I took my family to Khan Younis in the south as instructed. The image of my mother's tearful plea for me to stay with them when I decided to go back north will forever haunt me. Yet, I felt compelled to return to Gaza City to continue my work for those still there.

Driving back alone, I passed a vehicle hit by an airstrike. I saw bodies scattered across the road, and rubble was everywhere. I pressed on despite my fear.

Upon my return to Gaza, I was alone. We struggled to salvage what remained of the waste management system and to keep basic services operational for those who remained. Amid the dire conditions, I lost over 8 kilograms within a month. My mother almost didn't recognize me when we spoke together on a video call.

Managing solid waste during a genocide

Before the genocide, the blockade had already prevented us from importing proper equipment like compactors or incinerators. Our entire system was already fragile as a result of the 17-year-long siege.

Waste management is supposed to take place in three stages — collection, transportation, and disposal. The blockade forced us to resort to makeshift solutions, such as using 300 carts pulled by animals, which for years kept the city functional until the genocide started.

On the first day of the genocide, Israeli forces targeted our workers at the landfill, injuring many and destroying \$1.5 million worth of equipment. We had no choice but to dump waste in the city center at makeshift locations like Yarmouk market and the open spaces in al-Feras market.

Waste management facilities and vehicles were destroyed during the Israeli genocide in Gaza.
● COURTESY OF AUTHOR

These areas, once lively, are now overwhelmed with rotting garbage, posing severe health risks to the few residents who remain. Managing over 500 workers became nearly impossible. Half of my team lives in northern Gaza, where they continued to use carts in the early days of the war. As the fighting intensified, even this method was no longer safe. The northern part of Gaza faced heavy bombardment, and many of the workers were displaced, taking refuge in school shelters. Their carts were parked in nearby yards, but those were destroyed by airstrikes. Many workers lost their livelihoods and means of survival. In one strike, we lost over 40 staff mem-

bers who had been sheltering in our main garage. Eight missiles destroyed over 120 vehicles used for waste collection, wastewater management, and water distribution. Half of my team was injured, many of whom will never be able to return to work.

A city drowning in its own waste

With over 150,000 tons of waste piling up in Gaza City, the environmental and health consequences are dire. As we approach winter,

these waste piles will block drainage systems, leading to potential floods in an already devastated city. Many displaced residents living in makeshift shelters will face the added horror of flooding. The air is thick with the stench of burning garbage as desperate residents try to manage the waste by setting it on fire. The toxic fumes are worsening the situation, causing an increase in respiratory illnesses. The Gaza Ministry of Health has reported over 250,000 cases of skin diseases due to exposure to waste. With medical and hazardous waste accumulating alongside household trash, we are on the brink of a catastrophic health crisis.

Our waste management system, once fragile but functional, is now in ruins. Over 150,000 tons of waste are poisoning the city, and the rainy season will only exacerbate the situation. We urgently need assistance. Gaza's infrastructure is collapsing, and its people are overwhelmed by the weight of genocide. We cannot endure this much longer. The world must act before Gaza becomes uninhabitable, its people left with nothing but memories of a once proud city now buried beneath its own waste.

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