

Health impacts of current escalation in the occupied Palestinian territory

- Substantial number of **fatalities and casualties** with 258 killed, including 69 children and 39 women, and 8,130 injured from 7 May to 20 May.
- The severity of injuries is **straining an already overwhelmed health system** facing critical shortages of essential medicines and supplies and confronting the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Closure of entry and exit points** for patients and humanitarian health teams to the Gaza Strip, and severe restrictions on the entry of medical supplies, is severely affecting the functioning of the health system.
- Damage to water and sanitation facilities, the mass displacement of 91,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as of 20 May, and restrictions of the entry of needed supplies for the **COVID-19 response** is exacerbating the ongoing public health crisis.
- **In the Gaza Strip**, there has been damage and destruction of 30 health facilities from 7 to 20 May, including the almost total destruction of Hala Al Shawa primary care clinic and substantial damage to the major COVID-19 testing laboratory at Rimal clinic in Gaza City.
- Destruction of roads in Gaza is **obstructing the access of ambulances** to health facilities, including to Gaza City's main hospital Shifa, while **electricity outages** and the shortages and expense of fuel has led to the cessation of services for a major cancer treatment centre.
- In the **West Bank**, there have been **89 health attacks** involving obstruction of medical teams to accessing casualties; beating and injury of health workers; damage, detention and confiscation of ambulances; and incursion of health facilities.
- As of 20 May, **56 health workers have been injured in attacks** on health care, including the severe injury of a doctor on duty during the attack affecting Rimal Clinic in Gaza City, who was admitted to intensive care unit for treatment.

Health Cluster recommendations and required actions

1. **End the violence** in the occupied Palestinian territory and work towards a situation where Palestinians can enjoy their full rights, including their right to the highest attainable standard of health.
2. Ensure the **respect and protection of civilians and health care**, in line with international law. Health care is not a target.
3. Urgently **facilitate humanitarian access** to the Gaza Strip, to allow the entry of essential medical supplies, the passage of medical teams and humanitarian personnel, and the exit of patients in need of health care outside the Gaza Strip.
4. **Ensure support for the Palestinian health system** for an effective emergency humanitarian response and to maintain and strengthen essential health services. The Health Cluster is launching an urgent appeal for \$11 million so that essential medicines, supplies and services can reach those in need in the occupied Palestinian territory.