



22/10/2023

## For the Purpose of Killing Wounded, The Occupation's Army is Targeting Paramedics and Civil Defense Workers

**Ramallah: Human Rights and Democracy Media Center- SHAMS, affirms** that there is a diversity in the crimes committed by the Israeli army against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip since the seventh of the current month (October 2023). The Israeli army is targeting civilians directly as well as civil establishments. Hospitals, houses, churches, mosques, bakeries, and other civil facilities are heavily targeted by shelling. In addition to that, the Israeli army is targeting the medical teams working in the hospitals and medical centers as well as the crews of ambulances and civil defense. As a result of these attacks, many of the medical teams' members were either killed or wounded. In addition to that, the hospitals were targeted directly by the Israeli air strikes killing hundreds of citizens and wounding other hundreds. Some medical facilities were entirely demolished and are out of functioning currently. Moreover, the Israeli army targeted and demolished the headquarters of the civil defense.

The Israeli crimes are a clear violation of international humanitarian law, which affirmed special protection for the health facilities and medical teams, and the teams of civil- defense. It is prohibited to attack these facilities and teams and ensure that they are not subject to shelling or stealing. These facilities should not be subject to siege or any obstacles that hinder their work. Additionally, these facilities should not be denied the resources needed to enable them to function such as fuel, water, electricity, and food. The parties in the conflict should ensure the protection of the mentioned institutions to enable them to perform their roles in all circumstances including times of war and armed conflicts<sup>1</sup>. Article 20 of the Geneva Fourth Convention states: "Persons regularly and solely engaged in the operation and administration of civilian hospitals, including the personnel engaged in the search for, removal and transporting of and caring for wounded and sick civilians, the infirm and maternity cases, shall be respected and protected"<sup>2</sup>. Article

<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch

<sup>2</sup> Geneva Fourth Convention



eight of the Optional Protocol annexed to the Geneva Fourth Convention affirmed the necessity to protect the medical teams<sup>3</sup>.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the Israeli army targeted the medical teams and the civil- defense teams directly. The number of violations against the health sector mounted to 250 violations including 69 attacks against the hospitals and medical centers as well as against ambulances. 24 vehicles stopped functioning as a result to the attacks. 37 members of the medical teams were killed while 7 hospitals are out of functioning now<sup>4</sup>.

On a related level, the General Assembly Resolution number (2675/ 1970) affirmed the necessity to ensure the neutrality of the hospitals under armed conflicts. The venues of the hospitals and any other shelters should not be targeted by the military acts". For that, arbitrary attacks are banned, and attacking the hospitals and medical units as well as the medical teams, should not be subject to attacks"<sup>5</sup>.

On a related level, according to the spokesperson of the Civil Defense, Mr. Mahmoud Bassal, declared on Saturday 21/10/2023, there were 12 martyrs and 42 wounded of the teams, alongside with demolishing 62 governmental facilities and tens of other facilities, including those of the civil- defense<sup>6</sup>.

In this context, humanitarian and legal organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and human rights groups, should actively fulfil their responsibilities by pressuring the occupying state to halt its aggression in Gaza. Additionally, the political parties, CSOs, trade unions, and syndicates are demanded to lobby their national governments to press towards ending Israeli aggression. The United Nations and its specialized agencies should initiate to fulfill their responsibilities to end the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip and save Palestinians. The Israeli attack threatens international peace and stands as a clear violation of the United Nations Charter, principles, and objectives. All parties should press on the occupation state to stop the aggression and end its profound violations of international law and international human rights law, especially the violations

<sup>3</sup> Optional Protocol of the Geneva Fourth Convention

<sup>4</sup> Palestinian Ministry of Health.

<sup>5</sup> General Assembly Resolution 2675/ 1970

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.net/news>



against the medical teams and civil-defense teams, to enable those groups to resume duty in supporting and rescuing the victims of the Israeli aggression.

What the Israeli occupying forces are committing in terms of crimes against humanity and war crimes in the Gaza Strip reflects the instinct of aggression and vengeance by the Israeli occupying state. This is evident in their direct targeting of medical personnel, ambulance crews, and civil defence teams, who are afforded protection by international conventions against any attacks by conflict parties during armed operations. It underscores the Israeli occupying state's disregard for the international human rights framework and humanitarian institutions. It solidifies the fixed and prevailing notion that the world is governed by the theory of power. Moreover, it goes beyond that, with the unequivocal support from European countries and the United States for the acts of aggression committed by the state of Israel, the occupying state, against the unarmed Palestinian people, as well as against humanitarian institutions, facilities, and medical teams, and civil defence personnel who carry out humanitarian work in accordance with established international regulations and laws