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Latest report on ICRC activities in the field

Medical facilities overwhelmed with patients wounded in the fighting

The large-scale clashes of the past week in Gaza have ceased and a certain calm has returned although there are still sporadic incidents of gunfire. In Gaza City, cars and pedestrians are circulating in the streets once again, and shops have started to reopen. All access points into and out of the Gaza Strip are closed.

"Hospitals, with the exception of Beit Hanoun and the Al Quds hospital in Gaza City, are functioning, but their resources are stretched by the large number of patients wounded in the past week's fighting coupled with the fatigue of hospital staff who have been working around the clock", said Eileen Daly, the ICRC's medical coordinator for the Westbank and Gaza. "The surgeons are overwhelmed with wounded patients, and some hospitals are reporting blood shortages", she added.

Based on figures provided by hospitals and emergency services on 15 June, the ICRC estimates that over 550 people have been wounded and at least 116 killed in the fighting of the previous week.

The population, whenever an area was calm, have been able to leave their homes and restock their supplies. Parts of Gaza City experienced electricity shortages and cuts which affected the water pumping.

ICRC medical teams visit hospitals

ICRC expatriate and national staff continue to work in Gaza and are now able to move around within Gaza City. The ICRC's main concern is related to the capacity of the medical structures to treat the wounded. Several hospitals are stretched to capacity and at some hospitals, staff had been on duty for four straight days because their fellow colleagues could not get to work.

Since the afternoon of 14 June, ICRC medical teams started visiting the hospitals to ascertain needs and discuss how further assistance can be provided. Contact with the hospitals and emergency medical services had been maintained throughout the week.

Shortage of blood supplies and medical material

Some hospitals have reported a shortage of blood supplies and the ICRC is working with local authorities to organize blood collections and ensure the proper equipment is available for transportation and storage. On 14 June, the ICRC assisted the Palestine Red Crescent Society in the transfer of blood from Ramallah to Gaza.

The ICRC is providing medical material to hospitals from its emergency stocks in Gaza and is making arrangements to replenish these stocks. Drugs and consumables have been delivered to Al Shifa and Al Ali hospitals in Gaza City. Dressing kits and other supplies to treat wounded persons are distributed to hospitals and other emergency services whenever necessary. The ICRC is also assisting in repairs to the roof of the Shifa hospital in Gaza City and providing extra beds. Bread deliveries to hospitals were facilitated in cooperation with the World Food Programme.

Most of the ICRC's efforts over the past few days have been aimed at coordinating matters with the medical authorities, ambulance services and the various factions to allow medical and other humanitarian evacuations as well as the delivery of medical supplies and the movement of personnel to and from medical facilities. Throughout the fighting, all factions had acknowledged the ICRC's humanitarian role, in particular that of neutral intermediary and facilitator for medical evacuations.

The ICRC continues to remind all parties of the need to refrain from acts of violence against medical facilities, their patients and their staff. Ambulances must be allowed to reach the victims and transport them to hospital. Medical facilities must not be used for belligerent purposes.

The ICRC calls on all parties to take every precaution to ensure that persons not, or no longer, taking part in hostilities are spared. In particular, the ICRC reminds all concerned that extra-judicial killings are prohibited.

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