



A group of siblings were transferred to International Medical Corps' field hospital in mid-February after a missile struck the top floor of their apartment building, severely injuring them and killing three members of their family. The children have embarked on a journey toward physical and emotional healing at the field hospital, which has included engagement in activities inside the child-friendly tent, as shown.

It has been six months since the conflict in Gaza began, and heavy bombardment and intensive fighting between forces continue. As of April 5, 33,091 Palestinians had been killed and 75,750 injured. In addition to civilian casualties and injuries, the ongoing violence has resulted in mass displacement and the destruction of homes and civilian infrastructure.¹

Approximately 75% of the population, or 1.7 million people, have been internally displaced and are now living in emergency shelters and informal sites.² It is estimated that half of Gaza's prewar population of 2.3 million people has been pushed into Rafah, whose population has increased by more than 3.5 times. Insufficient water supply, fuel shortages, lack of sanitation facilities and overcrowded conditions have led to the spread of disease and infection. Little medical infrastructure is available to treat those in need of services.³ The WHO has documented more than 400 health attacks in the Gaza Strip, affecting about 100 ambulances and nearly 100 health facilities.⁴

Al Shifa Medical Complex in Gaza city, the largest hospital in Gaza, has been decimated and is no longer operational. In addition to the destruction of healthcare infrastructure, hundreds of healthcare workers have been killed. Only 10 hospitals remain partially functional in the Gaza Strip and are struggling to keep up with the increasing needs of the population. The risk of infectious diseases is particularly high, with cases of acute respiratory infections (ARI), scabies and lice, skin rashes and chickenpox being reported. Though healthcare staff in Gaza have been working relentlessly to provide care,

FAST FACTS

- Heavy bombardments from air, land and sea have continued across much of the Gaza Strip, leaving more than 33,000 dead and 75,750 injured.
- Currently nearly 1.7 million people—approximately 75% of the population—have been internally displaced and are now living in shelters.
- Of the 36 hospitals that used to serve Gaza, only 10 remain partially functional. More than 400 healthcare-related attacks in the Gaza Strip have been reported, affecting about 100 ambulances and nearly 100 health facilities.

OUR FOOTPRINT

- International Medical Corps has worked in Gaza since 2008, providing health, protection and disaster risk reduction services in all governorates.

OUR RESPONSE

- Since the opening of the field hospital in January, we have provided critical medical assistance to more than 41,000 people.
- With more than 500 dedicated staff, we are able to serve an average of 650 patients a day. Our teams have performed 3,250 surgeries and delivered more than 500 babies.
- The field hospital also provides a range of integrated services, including nutrition, child protection, gender-based violence prevention and support, mental health and psychosocial support, and water, sanitation and hygiene services.

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-150>

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/unrwa-situation-report-98-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem-all-information-31-march-1-april-2024-valid-01-april-2024-2230-enar>

³ <https://www.npr.org/2024/03/15/1233158434/rafah-gaza-population-crowding-israel-hamas>

⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-148-enarhe>

they are faced with chronic shortages of some of the most essential medical supplies and lack the appropriate infrastructure to be able to deliver optimal healthcare services.

Severe prevalence of malnutrition, the destruction of critical infrastructure and dire shortages of fuel, food and medical supplies have pushed the population of Gaza into an unimaginable humanitarian crisis.⁵ Furthermore, recent airstrikes on an international aid organization operating in Gaza have created ramifications that have imposed further constraints on humanitarian efforts.⁶

International Medical Corps Response

International Medical Corps has operated in Gaza since 2008, implementing emergency preparedness and coordination projects, and providing primary and secondary healthcare, mental health and psychosocial (MHPSS), protection programs, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. Amid the ongoing challenges and demands related to the conflict, International Medical Corps has remained resolute in delivering high-quality care and support to those in need.

After overcoming months of logistical challenges, International Medical Corps opened a field hospital to Rafah in southern Gaza on January 6. The 140-bed facility covers an area close to 12,000 square feet and provides a range of services, including surgical care for trauma, physical therapy and rehabilitation, comprehensive emergency obstetric and newborn care, screening and treatment of malnutrition, protection, advanced mental health care, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and support, WASH services and more. It is equipped with two operating theaters, 24 emergency room beds, 96 post-operative care beds, nine labor and delivery beds, and 11 intensive-care unit (ICU) beds. The field hospital also includes a laboratory, ultrasound machines, blood-transfusion services, a blood bank and fully stocked pharmacy.

With more than 500 dedicated staff, the field hospital serves an average of 650 people a day—performing an average of 12 complex surgeries a day and delivering some nine babies a day. Emergency and inpatient services are provided around the clock, seven days a week, and essential outpatient services during daylight hours. The field hospital coordinates with other health facilities to facilitate patient referrals and continuity of care. The primary reasons for referral are further post-surgical care, CT scans and lab cultures. As of March 31, the field hospital's staff had served the needs of 41,563 people, performed more than 3,250 surgeries and delivered more than 500 babies.

Given the deterioration of the humanitarian situation and the increasing needs in the region, International Medical Corps is in the process of expanding services to a second field hospital in middle Gaza. Though this field hospital is not yet operational, we hope to begin providing services—including outpatient consultations, neonatal intensive care, pediatrics, emergency services, and comprehensive emergency obstetric and newborn care services—on April 20.

Through the outpatient department at the current field hospital, International Medical Corps is providing consultations on primary care, sexual and reproductive health, pediatrics, orthopedics and general surgery. The teams are also providing patient and caregiver sessions, wound dressing and pain management, and laboratory, X-ray and pharmacy services. Six general practitioners, two pediatricians, one general surgeon and one orthopedic surgeon provide consultations, and a dressing nurse provides wound care and dressings. The primary healthcare consultation concerns reported have been ARI, acute watery diarrhea, minor injuries, skin diseases, hypertension, obstetric complications and moderate injuries.

The inpatient department provides surgical, obstetric and postnatal services, as well as integrated post-surgical interventions, including nutrition, mental health, physiotherapy and caregiver training. Most of the surgeries taking place are emergency trauma surgeries, such as bone fixations, amputations, emergency laparotomies, thoracotomies and other damage-control surgeries. The majority of overall inpatient cases are trauma patients who have had orthopedic surgeries and need critical rehabilitation therapies to preserve the functionality of affected limbs. Other common cases include pregnant women coming in for delivery and non-emergent surgical cases. As of March 31, we have provided 3,223 surgical and emergency trauma care consultations.

International Medical Corps' nutrition team is conducting activities in two locations within the field hospital. The first location is the triage area, where they complete mid upper arm circumference (MUAC) screening for children. The second location is the nutrition tent, which is made up of a registration area, a treatment and dispensing area, an infant and young-child feeding (IYCF) in emergencies area and a storage supply area. As of March 31, International Medical Corps has screened 2,841 children under 5 for malnutrition, identified and treated 149 cases of moderate acute malnutrition and 58 cases of severe acute malnutrition, identified and treated 1,363 cases of malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women, provided IYCF counseling services to 1,699 people and provided ready-to-eat meals to 29,430 people.

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/25/gaza-medical-crisis-hospitals-aid-agencies>

⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/04/middleeast/gaza-wck-aid-suspended-famine-intl/index.html>

International Medical Corps' Child Protection team continues to conduct activities in the field hospital's outdoor courtyard and inside the emergency tent, inpatient tents and the Nutrition tent. The teams have encountered a variety of cases with significant protection concerns, including children with urgent medical emergencies, unaccompanied and separated children, children with disabilities, and children who have developed psychological and behavioral symptoms.

In response to the needs of these children, International Medical Corps is conducting child protection activities at the field hospital. As of March 31, we have hosted 1,272 children in our child-friendly space, provided psychological first aid (PFA) to 468 children, managed care plans for 38 children through our case management program, trained 127 caregivers on identifying and responding to signs of child abuse and abnormal child behavior, provided individual counseling sessions for 196 children who showed signs of psychological trauma and hosted an Open Recreation Day for 72 children, where they had the opportunity to engage in games, art and group meals. In addition to child protection, we are providing GBV services, including PFA for women and girls, awareness-raising sessions and dignity kits for women and girls.

International Medical Corps' MHPSS team is operating within the hospital's inpatient departments and utilizing adapted areas for services, treating cases ranging from moderate trauma to acute psychological distress. To address growing mental health needs, we have reached 1,304 people with PFA services, conducted 128 individual mental health counseling sessions, hosted 35 group therapy sessions and reached 674 people through awareness-raising sessions, covering topics such as stress management and how to deal with grief. We also provided a number of cases with essential needs, such as blankets, clothes and food assistance.

Our solar-powered water desalination plant has produced more than 1 million liters of clean water, providing healthcare staff, patients, caregivers and community members with access to clean drinking water. We also have improved sanitation services for 21,600 people at the field hospital. Our health and hygiene sessions have reached 16,200 people and promoted better hygiene practices, enhancing community resilience against waterborne illnesses and encouraging infection prevention. We have safely disposed of 23,400 kg of medical and domestic waste, safely disposed of 922,500 liters of wastewater using ground bladders and cesspit tanks, and leveraged our relationships with trusted local partners to set up biowaste disposal, laundry services and disinfection procedures for the field hospital.

Given the likelihood of continued violence in the near future, the need for health and related services in Gaza remains high. International Medical Corps will continue to collaborate with local partners, government authorities and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the continuity of care for those impacted by the conflict.



4-year old Mayar participates in an activity in the child-friendly tent. After receiving a winter jacket at the field hospital, she said, "I felt so cold at night without it. But now, I feel safe and warm, thanks to everyone here."