

# Gaza's fragile healthcare system buckling under the strain of war

Author:

Hazem Balousha

ID:

1621537004877168600

Thu, 2021-05-20 21:56

GAZA CITY: The Gaza Strip's already dilapidated health sector is being brought to its knees by Israel's current war on the Palestinians.

Hospitals have been overwhelmed with waves of casualties from the Israeli bombardment, and supplies of vital medicines are rapidly running out in the blockaded coastal enclave.

In addition, two leading doctors have been killed: internal medicine consultant Ayman Abu Al-Ouf, who was leading the COVID-19 team at Al-Shifa Hospital, and Health Ministry neurologist Moeen Al-Aloul.

Israeli airstrikes have damaged six hospitals and nine primary healthcare centers in Gaza. The territory's main COVID-19 laboratory and the Ministry of Health offices have also been hit, forcing testing to be halted for several days.

The Rimal Martyrs Health Center in Gaza City was targeted by Israeli bombs last Monday, said Dr. Ayman Al-Halabi, director general of medical support services at the Ministry of Health, which forced the central laboratory to halt all services.

Health Ministry spokesman Ashraf Al-Qidra said: "The war is draining the limited capabilities of the ministry. The healthcare system "will be at a dangerous juncture" if the Israeli aggression continues, he added.

"There is an acute shortage of medical personnel, medicines and medical supplies, as well as ambulances," Al-Qidra told Arab News. He said the ministry is in continuous communication with local and international organizations to ensure the urgent needs of hospitals are met.

"With the continuation of the brutal Israeli aggression, the ministry launched an urgent appeal for \$46.6 million to meet the urgent needs of the health sector in terms of medicines, medical consumables, operating equipment, intensive care, diagnostic radiology, surgical tools, laboratories and other emergency needs to ensure the continuation of health services," he added.

Ezz El-Din Shaheen, an anesthesiologist and intensive-care doctor at Al-Shifa Medical Complex, said the healthcare system in Gaza has had to deal with wars, disasters and other crises for a long time.

"Doctors, nurses, paramedics and technicians working in the health sector are

divided into groups and a 24-hour shift system is adopted, then a rest period, then a 24-hour shift, and so on,” he said.

“There are departments that have a scarcity of health staff, so the work in them is more stressful and the number of working hours is more, as is the case in the surgical departments.”

The Ministry of Health is also concerned about the displacement of more than 60,000 Palestinians who are now living in 58 shelters with inadequate health services. There are fears that this might cause a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and the spread of other infectious and skin diseases that might prove difficult for health workers to deal with.

Before the current conflict the Gaza Strip most recently experienced wars in 2008, 2012 and 2014. In addition there have been many rounds of escalating hostilities that lasted several days and resulted in deaths and injuries among Palestinians.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[East Jerusalem violence](#)

[Gaza](#)

Egyptian banks to receive donations for Gaza UN chief Guterres calls Gaza 'hell on earth' for children

---

# Egyptian banks to receive donations for Gaza

Author:

Mohammed Abu Zaid

ID:

1621536548057132700

Thu, 2021-05-20 21:48

CAIRO: Egypt President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has launched a fundraising account in all Egyptian banks to help support the reconstruction of Gaza following days of conflict with Israel.

The Long Live Egypt Fund, affiliated with the Egyptian presidency, said that the account will receive contributions from inside and outside the country for the rebuilding of Gaza, and to meet the living and medical needs of Palestinians.

This account is separate from the \$500 million Egyptian initiative for the reconstruction of Gaza.

The Long Live Egypt Fund is planning to send more than 100 containers of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip under the slogan "We Share for Humanity."

Earlier, El-Sisi announced the allocation of \$500 million toward Gaza's rebuilding efforts following Israeli airstrikes.

Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly said that the relevant ministries and authorities will begin implementing the Egyptian initiative.

He highlighted the important role played by political leadership to contain the situation in Gaza, end the escalation and restore stability.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[East Jerusalem violence](#)

[Gaza](#)

[Egypt](#)

[Israel](#)

[Palestine](#)

UN chief Guterres calls Gaza 'hell on earth' for children WHO appeals for humanitarian pause to gain access to Gaza

---

## [Question of 'genocide' by Israel against Palestinians must be asked, says legal panel](#)

Thu, 2021-05-20 20:55

LONDON: More must be done by the global community to hold Israel accountable for committing possible "genocide" and breaches of international law against Palestinians, a panel of legal experts said on Thursday.

Speakers from across the legal and human rights sectors were discussing the latest violence in Gaza and East Jerusalem between Israel and Palestinian group Hamas during a Cambridge Centre for Palestine Studies panel.

Palestinian human rights advocate Raji Sourani said too little action was

being taken by global governments to assist ordinary Palestinian people, who he said were being killed by "one of the most technically advanced armies in the world," in spite of a wave of international grassroots solidarity movements with Palestine and protests against Israel's actions in recent days.

The question of whether Israel's conduct in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Jerusalem should be constituted legally as genocide had to now be seriously discussed at a high level, according to Prof. John Dugard, emeritus professor of international law at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

He also called into question the complicity of the US and other Western governments in Israel's actions by their continued silence and inaction on the global stage.

Israel had been emboldened to act in an increasingly aggressive way against Palestinian people because the Israeli-Palestinian crisis has for a long time been "distorted and decontextualized" globally on a "legal, political and moral basis," said Princeton University Prof. Richard Falk.

He also echoed Dugard's disappointment at the apparent lack of condemnation of Israel from the US but also the UN Security Council.

Prof. Christine Chinkin, a leading expert on international and human rights law, said she felt "ashamed" about working in the international legal profession at the moment, when the law is clear but not being applied and the international community appears to be allowing Israel to "act with impunity."

Sourani said any potential cease-fire agreed in the coming days would mean nothing to the long-term prospects of ending the crisis, or the future of the Palestinian people, and would be almost like "rewarding" Israel for its actions, while Falk added that a cease-fire could not underwrite any of the "previous illegality" of Israel's actions.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Israel](#)

[Palestine](#)

[East Jerusalem violence](#)

Pro-Palestine protesters occupy UK drone factory  
Escalation of violence in Israel-Palestine conflict must stop, says Saudi Arabia's Prince Faisal bin Farhan

---

## [Iran-Argentina relations bedeviled by deadly legacy of 1990s terror attacks](#)

Wed, 2021-05-19 21:43

RIYADH: In January 2015, Alberto Nisman, a public prosecutor, was found dead from a gunshot wound to the head at his home in Buenos Aires. The discovery of the body came hours before Nisman was due to outline allegations against a former president of concealing Iran's involvement in two deadly terrorist attacks on Argentinian soil.

Nisman had accused Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner of covering up Tehran's role to preserve the relationship between the countries. The public prosecutor had previously suggested the attack was likely related to a

decision to halt Argentina's cooperation with Iran's nuclear program.

The circumstances of Nisman's death have never been explained. A new report by the Arab News Research and Studies unit, the third of its "Iran in Latin America" series, examines the steady decline of the Iran-Argentina relationship – and its possible resuscitation.

After a period of nuclear cooperation that began in the mid-1980s, relations were set back by the bombings in Buenos Aires in the early 1990s during the era of President Carlos Menem, who was in power from 1989 to 1999.

## **TRIPLE FRONTIER: BRAZIL, ARGENTINA AND PARAGUAY**

The tri-border area is said to be a hotbed for Hezbollah and Iranian operatives



**ARAB NEWS**

Those bombings, the first of the Israeli embassy in 1992 and the second that of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) in 1994, destroyed what had previously been a close and mutually beneficial relationship between two medium-sized powers.

To understand how these events developed and the effect they had on the nature of bilateral relations, it is necessary to analyze the historical context and the role of the main party involved in the implementation of

these terrorist operations.

Iran has supported Hezbollah since the movement was established in Lebanon in 1985, and has worked to expand its network across five continents. Hezbollah began its operations in Latin America in the early 1990s, using the region's lucrative illegal economy as a basis to launch terrorist attacks. In particular, it has been able to exploit lawlessness in the Tri-Border Area where Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay converge.

The area has a substantial Muslim population that Hezbollah has exploited directly or which its agents have used as cover. Brazil and Argentina are home to an estimated 5 million people of Arab descent, including prominent personalities such as Carlos Menem himself.



A man walks over the rubble left after a bomb exploded at the Argentinian Israeli Mutual Association (AMIA in Spanish) in Buenos Aires, 18 July 1994.  
(AFP/File Photo)

In Argentina, Hezbollah identified two Israeli/Jewish locations as targets. The first attack, on March 17, 1992, was against the Israeli embassy, which was hit with a car bomb that killed 29 people and injured hundreds. On July 8, 1994, a second bomb exploded at the AMIA Jewish community center, which killed 85 people and wounded hundreds.

Many sources identify the regime in Tehran as the main suspect behind both attacks. This includes the US authorities who have for years shared suspicions about the involvement of Hezbollah and Iran.



Religious organizations affiliated with Hezbollah in Argentina – namely the Islamic Jihad Association and the Islamic Society in Argentina – claimed responsibility for the embassy attack, saying it was in response to the assassination of former Hezbollah leader Abbas Al-Musawi and members of his family by Israel in February 1992.

There is evidence that suggests Iran and Syria were involved as well. According to testimony from Abu Al-Qasim Mesbahi, an Iranian defector who worked for the country's intelligence service, the idea of carrying out an attack in Argentina was a fundamental part of Tehran's plans to export the Iranian revolution to other countries.



Firemen search for wounded people after a bomb exploded at the Argentinian

Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA in Spanish) in Buenos Aires. (AFP/File Photo)

Mesbahi said the AMIA attack was planned during a meeting in Mashhad, Iran, in August 1993, which senior Iranian officials attended, including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei; President Hashemi Rafsanjani; Intelligence Minister Ali Fuleihan; Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati; and Mohsen Rabbani, who was later appointed cultural attache at the Iranian embassy in Argentina.

In 2004, while Nestor Kirchner was president, Argentine authorities appointed Nisman as a special prosecutor to investigate the AMIA bombing, including the role of Iran. He partially succeeded. In 2007 relations between Argentina and Iran deteriorated when Argentine authorities obtained arrest warrants from Interpol for five Iranians suspected of involvement in the attack.

Although Kirchner sought justice in the case while he was in office, the investigation was neglected for a number of years after he stepped down in 2007, and in particular, while his wife, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, was president from 2007 to 2015.

The Argentine Congress has for years passed resolutions calling for justice for the victims of the AMIA bombing and demanded that Iran be held accountable. When President Mauricio Macri was in power, from 2015 to 2019, the government restored what had become a hardline policy on Iran. Last year, Argentina's current president, Alberto Fernandez, told Jewish leaders he wanted to bring a decades-long court case that followed the attack to a conclusion.



Nuclear cooperation had long been the basis of the relationship between Argentina and Iran. (AFP/File Photo)

Resolution of the case has been complicated, however, by allegations of corruption and by Nisman's alleged assassination.

Nuclear cooperation had long been the basis of the relationship between Argentina and Iran. Argentina's nuclear ambitions evolved from unilateral activities in the 1970s and 1980s into bilateral and multilateral commitments in the 1990s and beyond. Even before it became the first country in Latin America to use nuclear energy, in 1974, it defended the right of nations to use nuclear development as a tool for peace.

Argentina's efforts to advance its own nuclear research and development included establishing cooperation agreements and mechanisms with a number of countries, including Brazil, Australia and the Caribbean nations.

International cooperation also included joint projects with Iran in the 1980s. In 1967 the US had supplied Iran with a nuclear research reactor which was built in Tehran. However, Washington halted the export of the enriched uranium needed to power it after the Iranian revolution in 1979.



Argentine federal policemen escort one of two Iranian citizens arrested after entering the country with forge Israeli passports, while taken to Comodoro Py court in Buenos Aires, on March 18, 2019. (AFP/File Photo)

By order of Ayatollah Khomeini, the supreme leader, the Iranians asked Argentina for help to revive and develop its nuclear program, and complete work on a large-scale nuclear power plant under construction near the southern port of Bushehr.

On May 5, 1987, Argentine company INVAP signed an agreement worth \$5.5 million with the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran to provide Tehran with a new core for the research reactor given to the Tehran Nuclear Research Center by the Americans 20 years earlier. In 1992, however, cooperation in the nuclear field was suspended following the attack on the Israeli embassy.

Since 1994, Argentina has been an outspoken critic of Iran's nuclear program, and all trade in nuclear resources has ceased. Nevertheless, Iran is still interested in expanding cooperation with Argentina. In February 2008, the idea of resuming the supply of nuclear fuel from Argentina was raised.

However, during his investigation of the 1992 and 1994 bombings, Nisman suggested the attacks were likely related to the president's decision to halt Argentina's cooperation with Iran's nuclear program.



Argentina's Public Prosecutor Alberto Nisman, who on January 14, 2015 accused President Cristina Kirchner of obstructing a probe into a 1994 Jewish center bombing, was found shot dead on January 19, 2015, just hours before he was due to testify at a congressional hearing. (AFP/File Photo)

In 2011, US congressional leaders called for the State Department to investigate whether Iran and Argentina had renewed nuclear cooperation in a deal brokered and paid for by Venezuela. Some reports claimed that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, then the president of Iran, had asked authorities in Venezuela to intervene in an effort to persuade Argentina to share technology with Tehran and assist with its nuclear program.

During the Fernandez de Kirchner presidency, diplomatic relations between Iran and Argentina strengthened. Hugo Chavez, Venezuela's president at the time, reportedly mediated talks between Tehran and Buenos Aires.

As successive governments have come and gone, Argentina has waited for substantive cooperation from Iran to resolve what happened in the bombings. Identifying those responsible, along with their backers, and bringing them to justice is a critical aim of Argentina's foreign policy. Such an outcome could constitute an element of a political rapprochement with Iran. If the issue remains unresolved, however, it will continue to bedevil relations.

- *Dr. Hamdan Al-Shehri is a political analyst and international relations scholar. Twitter: @drhamsher7*



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Middle East](#)

[Iran](#)

[Argentina](#)

[Arab News Research and Studies](#)

[Editor's Choice](#)

Iran foreign minister arrives in Venezuela to start Latin America tour  
Former Argentine president of Syrian descent Carlos Menem dies

---

## [Airstrikes kill six in Gaza as Israeli barrage enters 10th day](#)

Author:

Wed, 2021-05-19 21:03

GAZA CITY: At least six people died in airstrikes across the Gaza Strip on Wednesday as the relentless Israeli bombardment entered its 10th consecutive day.

The latest attacks came from warplanes and artillery stationed on Gaza's

northern and eastern borders, as well as from warships offshore.

Houses and apartments were targeted in addition to military sites belonging to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, forcing more families from the border areas to flee their homes and seek shelter in UN-run schools.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health said that 227 Palestinians, including 64 children and 38 women, have been killed since the beginning of the fighting, while 1,620 others have been injured.

Among the latest victims was Yusef Abu Hussein, a journalist for the Hamas-affiliated Al-Aqsa Radio, who was killed when his home was bombed early on Wednesday.

The government media office in Gaza said that 107 Palestinians evacuated their homes, adding to the 58,000 Palestinians left homeless or seeking refuge in UN schools and shelters.

Three mosques were destroyed and 40 others damaged in the bombing, the Palestinian Ministry of Waqfs said.

Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, and Al-Quds Brigades, the armed wing of Islamic Jihad, said that artillery fire had been directed at military sites around the Gaza Strip and rockets fired at Israeli cities.

The number of attacks launched from the Gaza Strip has decreased in recent days amid growing talk about a cease-fire agreement with Israel.

Initially rockets were fired toward Tel Aviv and cities in central Israel, but the latest missile attacks have been directed at urban areas adjacent to the Gaza Strip, as well as Ashkelon and sometimes Ashdod.

Dawood Shehab, an Islamic Jihad official, said that an understanding brokered through Egypt meant that rocket attacks on Tel Aviv were halted in exchange for an end to the destruction of residential towers in Gaza.

"We received a proposal on Wednesday morning from Egypt, which is currently being drafted by Egypt, and will be discussed in an effort to reach a cease-fire agreement," Shehab told Arab News.

"Our demands are to stop the Israeli violations of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque, and to ensure the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip after the end of the war," he added.

Shehab appeared satisfied with the factions' achievements. "The battle set its goals for us, and the issue of Jerusalem was revived in the world again, and it became known to all parties that Jerusalem is a red line that cannot be crossed."

The fighting followed clashes between Israeli police and Muslims in Al-Aqsa Mosque and the planned eviction of Palestinians from Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. In response, Hamas and Islamic Jihad fired rockets at Jerusalem.

Mkhaimar Abusada, a professor of political science at Al-Azhar University in Gaza, believes that Hamas has achieved success in its latest clash with Israel and that its popularity has grown.

“Hamas’s popularity has increased in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and even in the Gaza Strip, despite the bombing. It was the people of Jerusalem who asked Hamas to intervene at the beginning,” Abusada told Arab News.

“The Palestinian issue was marginalized, especially during the time of former US President Donald Trump, but it has become the No. 1 issue today. There have been three Security Council sessions. Jerusalem has become an important issue on the politicians’ table, and this is a good thing politically,” he added.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Israeli airstrikes](#)

[Gaza](#)

Biden tells Netanyahu he wants ‘de-escalation’ of Israel-Gaza fighting