



Weekly Press Review

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EGYPT

Egypt Gets Creative to Provide Necessary Aid to Civilians in Gaza



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Egypt continues to play a crucial role in the efforts to provide aid to civilians in Gaza, after Israeli strikes destroyed approximately 450 buildings. According to a report by the U.N., six hospitals and nine primary care centers were also destroyed during the attacks which has left civilians with an already strained physical infrastructure and vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. The conflict also left about 52,000 people displaced, which the U.N. is currently hosting in agency-run schools.

Yet, as many countries struggle to provide aid to Gaza because of the fear that funding will be funneled to Hamas, Egypt has found creative ways to provide aid. During the 11-day conflict, Egypt sent 130 trucks into the Gaza strip with 2,500 tons of food, medicine, baby formula, clothes and appliances, which were welcomed in an environment in which the basic necessities were lacking.

Now, Egypt's most recent aid provision comes in the form of \$500 million for the reconstruction of Gaza's infrastructure. The Egyptian's government has committed to securing the allocation of funds and seeks to do so by using Egyptian construction firms and managing the projects directly. Some countries, like the United States, will independently develop their own plans to aid Gaza, while others will follow Egypt's leadership. The heads of state of Egypt, Jordan, and France met in Paris, where this reconstruction plan was first drafted.

The Egyptian state was also the primary mediator for the truce achieved between Hamas and Israel which ended the most recent hostilities. Unlike Israel, however, Egypt did not make the aid conditional on prisoner swaps. The immediate economic relief for the people of Gaza is imperative due to the low quality of life which they face de facto. At the same time, while Egypt's aid is impactful in these dire conditions, and welcomed by Gazan citizens, the Egyptian state must halt the food blockade on the border with Gaza and stop coordination with Israel to decrease Gazan's resources and freedom of movement.

Brief review

Yemen – Entesar Al-Hammadi, the 20-year-old Yemeni model who was abducted this past February by the Houthi group, is now being processed in a Houthi-run court in Sanaa, the capital of Yemen. Since the beginning of her detention no charges have been officially brought against her, but human rights advocates fear that the charges might be heavily reliant on Shari'ia law, under which "immorality" could be punishable by death. ACHRS demands quick provision of her rights as well as full transparency on the charges pressed against her.

Syria – Syrian army artillery attacks and Russian air raids have spiked recently in the Idlib area, including the indiscriminate use of force in residential areas. This week, at least ten were killed, seven of whom were civilians. Among those killed were a woman and child, who died when their home in southern Idlib received Syrian artillery fire. Four additional rebels were killed by a Russian jet when attempting to rescue survivors.

Palestine - Palestinian activist Mona al-Kurd was arrested from her home in the contested Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. Mona and her twin brother, Mohammad al-Kurd, have played a crucial role in exposing Israel's forced evictions in the neighborhood through the use of social media platforms. Israel's latest intimidation efforts came a day after they arrested an Al-Jazeera reporter who had been covering a protest there. Israel's attack on journalists and independent activists is a clear threat to democratic freedoms.

Israeli Army Forces Shut Down Palestinian Health Work Committees



Copyright: Health Work Committees Facebook Page

On June 9, Israeli forces raided the Palestinian Health Work Committees' (HWC) headquarters in Ramallah. After breaking down the door and confiscating computers and memory drives, they issued a military order forcing the office to close for six months. This is not the first time the organization has faced opposition. Its Jerusalem office was shut down in 2015, and the Ramallah office was raided in 2019 and again in March 2021. Additionally, employees have faced harassment and arrest due to its alleged affiliation with the Popular Liberation Front for Palestine.

Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa described the potential impacts of the shutdown: "The Health Work Committees is one of the main providers of health services in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, running hospitals and health clinics providing medical care to marginalized communities. Israel's shut down of its headquarters will have major consequences for the provision of essential health services to thousands of Palestinians, a program for women's health that was at the headquarters has now stopped."

Israel's treatment of Palestinians during the Covid-19 pandemic has failed to fulfill their responsibility under international law. The occupation's obligation to uphold Palestinians' right to health has been violated by a discriminatory vaccination policy and is furthered by the shutdown of HWC. HWC has been at the forefront of Covid-19 response in the occupied territories by raising awareness, offering public health guidance, providing medical care in its health facilities, and serving hard-to-reach communities through mobile clinics. HWC also leads advocacy efforts to improve the Palestinian health system.

The decision to shut down HWC will have immense consequences for the health needs of Palestinians throughout the West Bank and Gaza, reducing access to health care, public health information, and Covid-19 resources.

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