



Dr Iain Lennon, an emergency medicine consultant at the Royal Derby Hospital, has spent weeks working at the World Health Organisation field hospital in southern Gaza

34 Palestinians and Israeli soldier killed in latest attacks

ISRAELI strikes pounded the Gaza Strip on Wednesday and Thursday, killing at least 34 Palestinians, including 10 people waiting for care outside a medical clinic, according to local hospitals and aid workers.

The Israeli military also announced a soldier was killed.

The fighting in Gaza has shown no sign of slowing as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets with US President Donald Trump in Washington this week to work on a US-led ceasefire plan.

Hopes for an agreement in the near term appeared to be fading as Mr Netanyahu prepared to return to Israel. Mr Netanyahu is holding firm to the idea that Hamas must be destroyed, while Hamas wants a complete end to the war following the proposed 60-day truce.

Gaza's Nasser Hospital reported a total of 21 deaths in air strikes in the southern town of Khan Younis and the nearby coastal area of Muwasi. It said three children and their mother, as well as two other women, were among the dead.

In central Gaza, at least 13 people were killed in the city of Deir al-Balah, including at least 10 people waiting to receive nutritional supplements at a medical clinic early on Thursday, according to Project Hope, an aid group that runs the clinic.

Two women and five children were among the dead.

"This is just a tragedy, it is a violation of the humanitarian laws. No child waiting for food and medicine should face the risk of being bombed," said Dr Mithqal Abutaha, the group's project manager, who was at another clinic at the time.

"It was a horrific scene," he added. "People had to come seeking health and support, instead they faced death."

He said the clinic, a humanitarian facility well known to all parties, was mildly damaged and will be closed for several days.

The Israeli military said it struck near the medical centre when it was targeting a militant who had infiltrated into Israel on October 7 2023. It said it was investigating.

Additionally, the military said Israeli troops have been working in Khan Younis to dismantle more than 130 Hamas infrastructure

sites over the past week, including a 500-metre tunnel, missile launch sites, and weapons storage facilities.

Massive explosions in Gaza sent plumes of smoke into the sky and were visible from the border with Israel.

On Thursday, the Israeli military announced a soldier was killed in Khan Younis a day earlier after militants burst out of an underground tunnel and tried to abduct him. The soldier was shot and killed, while troops in the area shot the militants, hitting several of them, the military said.

Eighteen soldiers have been killed in the past three weeks, one of the deadliest periods for the Israeli army in months, putting additional public pressure on Mr Netanyahu to end the war.

Two attackers killed a 22-year-old Israeli man at an Israeli supermarket in a settlement in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Thursday afternoon, according to Israel's Magen David Adom emergency rescue services.

Israeli police said two people in a stolen vehicle began attacking a security guard at the supermarket. Paramedics said people on site shot and killed the two attackers.

Police did not release information about the attackers, but the Israeli military said forces were setting up roadblocks around the Palestinian town of Halhul, which is around 10 kilometres (six miles) from the supermarket.

Earlier on Thursday, a 55-year-old Palestinian man was killed in the West Bank, the Palestinian Health Ministry said. The Israeli military said the man was shot after stabbing a soldier in the village of Rumana. The soldier suffered moderate wounds.

The war began after Hamas attacked Israel in 2023, killing around 1,200 people and taking 251 others hostage.

Most have been released in earlier ceasefires.

Israel responded with an offensive that has killed more than 57,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

The ministry, which is under Gaza's Hamas-run government, does not differentiate between civilians and combatants.

The UN and other international organisations see its figures as the most reliable statistics on war casualties.

staggering obstacles. They are travelling to work on motorbikes and donkey carts, carrying out three-hour transits in order to commute to work.

Dr Lennon said UK-Med's presence in Gaza is vital, as the hospital treats up to 500-600 patients a day, support for the charity is more important than ever.

He said: "It's really important to reflect that if people want to donate something then they should donate to UK-Med. It will keep the hospital running and that will definitely make a difference to people in the longer term."

He added that money sent to the region via other routes often struggles to reach its destination.

He said: "There are some other organisations in Palestine, similar stuff, but just to give money for food. It's not getting there."

Dr Lennon said he was thankful rather than proud to be part of the humanitarian effort.

He said: "I'm thankful to have the opportunity to be a part of it because it means I'm able to do some good, where donating to organisations may not in the current circumstances actually get anywhere to the people who really need it."

Having returned to the UK recently, he has now resumed work at the Royal Derby Hospital and is reflecting on the stark contrast between the NHS and the field hospitals of Gaza.

He said he would likely be back on call with UK-Med within the next 12 months, depending on the situation and his NHS commitments.

Dr Lennon said: "I'd like people at home to know that the people in Gaza are almost exactly the same as them. If they imagined some of the horrors happening to their own family, I suspect the voices of the people would be louder about trying to get something done, and get these people aid, because they need aid now."

ing people better but you can't improve their social circumstances."

In the chaos of the hospital, there are still moments of resilience and humanity among both patients and colleagues. Dr Lennon said colleagues sourced rusty weights and skipping ropes so they could exercise in their compound, and also staged a planking competition - holding a push-up position, maintaining a straight line from head to heels, while supporting your body weight on your forearms and toes.

In addition, on a few occasions the staff were able to set up a projector for local children to watch films.

Dr Lennon said: "As you go around Gaza, you see kites everywhere and the children are still building kites in the most awful circumstances and still flying them."

"They're still trying to have as normal a life as they possibly can."

He also recalled a moment during the Islamic festival of Eid, in March, when the hospital staff managed to gather together to share pastries and

mark the celebration despite the lack of traditional food.

He said: "The staff who come into the hospital each day, they try to be extremely positive, and they are. It's cultural for the Palestinians to share food with people."

"We found ourselves in a really difficult position where they're the people that need to eat it but they get quite offended if you don't at least share with them in some way."

"It becomes - although that sounds like a bit of an odd thing - really positive, because despite everything, they're not to the point where they won't offer a stranger some hospitality."

Warmth and generosity remained deeply embedded in local culture, noted Dr Lennon.

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