

GAZA

Violence between Gaza and Israel: explosive weapons cause serious injuries

More than 30 people were killed in the exchanges of rocket fire and airstrikes between Gaza and Israel over the weekend. In Gaza, this escalation of violence could lead to a new wave of injuries, with surgical and rehabilitation services already overwhelmed.

Bruno Leclercq, HI Head of Mission in Palestine:

"Images provided by the international media show the use of mortars, rockets and drones that endanger civilians and damage vital civilian infrastructure such as schools and hospitals. According to last news on Monday morning, 31 people have been killed - including 27 Palestinians and 4 Israelis - over the weekend. 154 Palestinians and several Israelis were also injured.

Bombardments in populated areas are indiscriminate and primarily affect civilians. Injuries caused by explosive weapons are often extremely complex to heal and can lead to permanent disability. These types of injury require a long and painful rehabilitation process that is usually provided in accessible health facilities – that may not be available in the country or have been destroyed after continuous bombardments.

In Gaza, medical services have struggled with a constant flow of injured people since the beginning of the demonstrations a year ago. An upsurge in violence will have serious consequences for the population. HI is already treating many people injured in the leg by explosive bullets. Their rehabilitation can take several years. These injuries lead to permanent disability with serious social and professional consequences."

2,225 people cared for by HI

Since April 2018, HI and its local partners **have provided rehabilitation care to more than 2,225 people and their caregivers through 10 teams of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, psychologists and social workers.** In all, **more than 60 people** are involved in the field on a daily basis. HI plans to strengthen its teams in the coming weeks to increase care available for injured people and to anticipate new victims.

Soaring number of injured

From March 2018 to March 2019, **277 people were killed and 31,214 injured** during demonstrations in Gaza (WHO figures). Of these, **more than 6,800 people were injured by live ammunition; 91% of them have limb injuries.**