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**REGION**

MIDDLE EAST

Published: 07/11/2006 12:00 AM (UAE)

# Israel 'is using chemical ammunition'

By Duraid Al Baik, Foreign Editor

Dubai: A doctor at a Palestinian hospital has accused Israel of using a type of chemical ammunition which causes burns and injuries in soft tissue and cannot be traced by X-ray.

Chemical or depleted uranium could have been used in producing the new type of ammunition according to Dr Jomaa Al Saqqa, head of the Emergency Unit at Gaza's main medical facility, the Al Shifa Hospital.

In a telephone interview, Al Saqqa told *Gulf News* that operation Summer Rain was not just the code name of a military operation launched by Israel against Gaza since June 26.

"It is a live exercise on a new ammunition that, so far, has resulted in killing 50 Palestinians and injuring 200," he said.

He said he was not yet sure about the kind of chemical being used because the Israeli Army had bombed the only criminal laboratory in Gaza on the first day of the assault.

Dr Saqqa who has been working in the Al Shifa Hospital for almost 10 years said he had never seen such wounds before.

At the beginning of the Summer Rain operation I noticed that people's wounds looked strange.

I thought it was just because the attack was from a close distance or that the temperature of bullets penetrating the bodies of injured or killed people were so high they were causing burns.

I later found out that all wounds referred to the hospital since the start of the operation were very similar.

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"I also noticed that despite the damage in internal soft tissue in the bodies of injured people, the fragments were not detected by X-ray. In other words, they had disappeared or dissolved inside the body."

Al Saqqa urged the international health authorities to come to Gaza and check the wounds of people in Al Shifa Hospital.

"The situation is very bad because out of the 200 injuries there are 50 children who are suffering badly because of their internal wounds caused by the new kind of ammunition," he said.

*Gulf News* contacted the spokesman for the Israeli Army but he was not available for comment

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