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### "A matter of revenge": Israel denying medical treatment to Gaza

Rami Almeghari writing from the Gaza Strip, occupied Palestine, Live from Palestine

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21-day-old Ahmad Abu Nada with his mother in the intensive care unit of the Gaza Children's Hospital. (Rami Almeghari)

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November 22, 2007

"We had been waiting for an urgent referral to an outside hospital for the past six days, until he died today," said Dr. Ismail Yassin Monday, in response to the death of one more patient at the Gaza Children's Hospital.

Tamer al-Yazji, a 12-year-old chicken pox patient, died on Monday on his hospital bed after his referral to an Israeli hospital had been delayed.

Dr. Yassin explained that Tamer's condition had gotten worse over the past few weeks, showing symptoms of blood problems in his brain, so the ill-equipped hospital requested his urgent referral for an MRI scan and follow-up, which meant accessing medical care facilities in Israel or Egypt.

Working in less than ideal conditions with fuel supplies cut and medicine not entering the strip, Gaza Children's Hospital is currently hospitalizing a number of patients, including many infants and 10 cases of cardiac



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[:: Autodeterminazione e resistenza irakena](#)

di Aldo Bernardini, Ordinario di Diritto internazionale all'Università di Teramo

:: ONU - XX Assemblea Generale (1965): La XX Assemblea Generale dell'ONU (1965) dichiara "la legittimità della lotta da parte dei popoli sotto oppressione coloniale, per esercitare il loro diritto all'autodeterminazione e all'indipendenza". Inoltre, l'Assemblea invita "tutti gli Stati a fornire assistenza morale e materiale ai movimenti di liberazione nazionale nei territori coloniali".

:: ONU - Risoluzione 1514 "L'Assemblea Generale dichiara che: la soggezione dei popoli a dominio straniero, conquista e asservimento costituisce una negazione dei diritti umani fondamentali, è contraria alla Carta delle Nazioni Unite ed è un impedimento alla promozione della pace e della cooperazione mondiali. Tutti i popoli hanno diritto all'autodeterminazione; in virtù di tale diritto essi devono liberamente determinare il loro status politico e liberamente perseguire il loro sviluppo economico, sociale e culturale".

:: Convenzione di Ginevra, Protocollo Addizionale I (1977):

disease patients.

Director of the hospital's infant intensive care unit, Dr. Shirin Abed, said that her unit provides care to a number of infants who are in bad need of medication.

Ahmad Abu Nada, a 21-day-old infant, Dr. Abed said, has been suffering from poor suckling since was born and that his condition is getting much worse.

"This baby's condition has been deteriorating and unless he is referred for [outside] medical care, his brain could be damaged in the course of few days or few weeks, so we ask for help. We filed a request to the concerned authorities for his referral, yet we have not received any response," she stated.

According to the health care workers at the hospital, usually the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza determines to where a patient will be referred: either to the Israeli Hadasah hospital or to the Palestinian-run al-Maqased hospital in East Jerusalem.

Now that the Hamas government has been in complete control of the Gaza Strip since June, the processing of such medical care transfer requests is taking longer than ever.

Earlier this month, a breast cancer patient died as her entry to Israel for treatment was delayed.

According to hospital officials, Gaza hospitals in general lack basic equipment such as MRI scanners or dialysis machines; therefore, many cases are being referred to outside Gaza every month.

In addition to the delay of access of Gaza patients to outside hospitals, mainly Israeli ones, the internal Israeli intelligence agency, the Shabak (Shin Bet) is reportedly pressuring applicants to give information in exchange for permission.

"Upon arrival at the Erez crossing in northern Gaza, the Shabak officers start interrogating patients, demanding them to give the Shabak information about friends and neighbors. When a patient refuses to give such information, the Shabak sends him back to Gaza," explained Miri Weingarten of Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR), based in Tel Aviv.

Weingarten said that PHR had filed a petition to the Israeli high court requesting three demands: allowing treatment for 11 patients enlisted in the petition, allowing all those in need for referral outside Gaza to travel and stopping the Israeli Shabak's interrogation of Gaza patients who cross the Erez checkpoint.

"Among the eleven patients we requested for their entry, was Na'el al-Kordi, 21, who died early this week after having been denied access, while four others got the permission, with only two of them managing to enter the Erez checkpoint," Weingarten added.

Neither the Israeli government, nor the Israeli high court, has yet responded to PHR's petition or to any other appeals by various local and international bodies to allow smooth access of Gaza patients to treatment outside Gaza.

According to PHR, Israel delays the access of 40 patients every month, thus causing death or deterioration of health condition in many cases.

In September, Israel declared Gaza a "hostile entity," stepping up attacks on the coastal strip and cutting large quantities of fuel supplies to the 1.4-million-strong population which is dependant on Israel for many



L'Impero si è fermato a Baghdad, by Valeria Poletti

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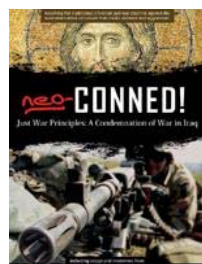
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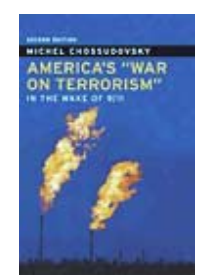
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"Neoconned" and "Neoconned Again", two new collections of essays



America's "War on Terrorism", book by Michel Chossudovsky

La lotta armata può essere usata, come ultima risorsa, come mezzo per esercitare il diritto all' autodeterminazione.

:: Tribunale penale internazionale  
In base allo Statuto del Tribunale penale internazionale, sono definiti "crimini di guerra":  
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(4) attacchi lanciati intenzionalmente nella consapevolezza che gli stessi avranno come conseguenza la perdita di vite umane tra la popolazione civile, e lesioni a civili o danni a proprietà civili ovvero danni diffusi duraturi e gravi all'ambiente naturale che siano manifestamente eccessivi rispetto all'insieme dei concreti e diretti i vantaggi militari previsti.

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basic needs, from water to medication.

Israel cites security reasons for all its actions against the Gaza Strip, namely preventing Palestinian resistance factions from firing homemade rockets onto nearby Israeli towns.

However, in the words of Weingarten, "It is not a matter of security, it's rather a matter of revenge."

*Rami Almeghari is currently contributor to several media outlets including the Palestine Chronicle, aljazeera.info, IMEMC, The Electronic Intifada and Free Speech Radio News. Rami is also a former senior English translator at and editor in chief of the international press center of the Gaza-based Palestinian Information Service. He can be contacted at rami\_almeghari at hotmail.com.*

### Related Links

- [Israel to heart patient: "Go die in Gaza"](#), PHR-Israel (20 November 2007)
- [Israeli closure claims cancer victim](#), PCHR (18 November 2007)
- [Mother dies after being denied access to health care](#), Rami Almeghari (12 November 2007)

:: Article nr. 38481 sent on 22-nov-2007 18:57 ECT

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