

For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE

MERCY Malaysia begins immediate humanitarian aid in Palestine

Gaza Strip, 16 May 2018... Massive unrest in the Gaza Strip of Palestine in the last 2 weeks culminated in the worse violence and bloodshed yesterday since the 2014 Gaza War. In immediate response, Malaysian-based humanitarian organisation MERCY Malaysia has stepped up humanitarian aid to render assistance to affected hospitals and communities.

According to the Palestinian Health Information Center (PHIC), a department within the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH), the total number of casualties stood at 2771, including 225 children and 79 women. The death toll, estimated at 107 is expected to rise, with 133 patients in critical condition. The main cause of injuries was from live ammunition and tear gas, which were targeted at protestors participating in what is termed the 'Great March of Return'.

Civilians had earlier participated in a six-week peaceful demonstration to demand for their homeland which is now Israel to be returned, and protest the United States' recognition of Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel. An estimated 35,000 Palestinians, consisting men, women and children, who had participated in the demonstration in the last fortnight were subjected to gunfire and tear gas yesterday to disperse the intensifying protests.

"We have mobilised our emergency medical team in Palestine to begin with humanitarian assistance immediately, as hospitals are deluged with injured patients," says Dato' Dr Ahmad Faizal Mohd Perdaus, President of MERCY Malaysia. "Working with our local partner, Islamic University Gaza, we will assist in augmenting medical supplies in hospitals who are already struggling with acute shortage of medications before the recent eruption of violence."

Access to healthcare in the Israel-occupied territories had been dismal since 2007, with many hospitals ceasing operations when power cuts and structural instability made it unsafe to continue treating patients. Reconstruction of medical infrastructure is hampered by limitations in medical supplies and equipment, as well as construction materials brought in to Gaza through Egypt.

As a result, the remaining hospitals left standing are easily overwhelmed when there is a sudden influx of patient load following attacks or military crackdowns. "The protracted crisis in Palestine has caused immense suffering to its people. We are constantly working to provide humanitarian assistance, and have previously worked with Al-Shifa Hospital, European Gaza Hospital and Nasser Hospital in the Gaza Strip to provide medical supplies and equipment," says Dr Faizal.

He adds that MERCY Malaysia has also conducted various capacity-building activities in the hospitals by bringing Malaysian specialists to provide medical training in Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) and vascular diseases. These trainings prove to be invaluable to healthcare practitioners

in Palestine, who are not permitted to travel overseas to upgrade their skills and keep abreast with the latest developments in the medical field.

With water supply and water contamination being major problems, MERCY Malaysia has also dug wells and built piping systems to improve the health and sanitation of Palestinians in the recent years, as well as supported schools, one of which is Basma School, the only school for special children in Gaza Strip.

“With Ramadhan just 24 hours away, we will be distributing food parcels to families, many of whom are still staying in refugees camps or makeshift houses after their homes were destroyed in the war,” says Dr Faizal, noting that 22.5% of the population have no access to nutritious food due to high poverty levels. “The recent unrest will unsettle even more people, worsening food security in a country saddled with over 60% of unemployment and 25% living in poverty.”

“We appeal for kind donations to help our fellow humans in war-torn Palestine. The problem is massive, but we are committed to do whatever possible to allay the sufferings of our brothers and sisters,” he adds. Donations can be made through MERCY Malaysia’s website www.mercy.org.my. All contributions are tax-exempted and will be channeled to the ‘Palestine Relief Fund’ for medical relief and food supplies in the holy month of Ramadan.

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About MERCY Malaysia

MERCY Malaysia is a non for profit organisation focused on providing medical relief, sustainable health-related development and risk reduction activities for vulnerable communities in both crisis and non-crisis situations, both locally and internationally. MERCY Malaysia recognises the value of working with partners and volunteers as well as providing opportunities for individuals to serve with professionalism. We uphold the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief and hold ourselves accountable to our donors and beneficiaries. For more information, please proceed to www.mercy.org.my

How is MERCY Malaysia funded?

To ensure independence and impartiality, MERCY Malaysia relies on donations from the general public for financial support. A portion of our income is obtained from institutional donors, individual government grants and other international organizations, which are given on project basis. MERCY Malaysia spends 80% if its income in carrying out its relief operations and support.

Important Note to Media: Usage of Wordmark MERCY Malaysia

In order to avoid confusion with other organisation(s) that uses “Mercy” as the organisation’s name or part of the organisation’s name, please take note that in addressing the name of our organisation, the wordmark for MERCY Malaysia is with capitalised “MERCY”, followed by the word “Malaysia”. When describing the organisation, the term “MERCY Malaysia” must always be used in full, and should not be partially referred to as “MERCY”, or “Mercy”. Thank you for your cooperation.