Gaza Strip, a doctor's testimony: "Hospitals are becoming cemeteries"

"It's a humanitarian disaster. Hospitals are increasingly turning into cemeteries." One of the doctors at the **Al-Ahli Arabi Baptist Hospital** - run by the Anglican Church and located in the Zeitoun district of Gaza City - spoke to SIR from the hospital where a massacre took place on 18 October, leaving hundreds dead and wounded in an attack for which Israeli and Hamas blame each other. "Many hospitals in the Strip are practically closed," said the doctor, who spoke on condition of anonymity, "The medical staff are trying to provide care where there is room, with what is left of medicines and medical supplies. Everything is in short supply, including drinking water. We need drugs, antibiotics, anaesthetics for surgery, syringes, bandages, fuel and electricity to run the intensive care unit."

"Countless dead and wounded. It's a catastrophe",

he repeats over the phone. To make matters worse, there is a shortage of the electricity and fuel needed to run the machines that keep the most critical patients alive. "There are many sick and injured people, many of them children, who cannot be transported or moved because it is too dangerous for them," the doctor adds. "They need care, they need oxygen, and so they need to be treated in hospital. The Israelis are telling us to evacuate and go south. Where should we take these people? Where should we treat them?" "Moving these people means certain death for them. That is why I say that the hostilities around the hospitals, which are turning into graveyards every day, must stop immediately."

, who said there were 600 hospitalised patients and 150 unburied corpses. Three nurses have also died as a result of bombings and armed clashes around the hospital, which Israel has besieged because it believes it is a Hamas hideout. Clashes have also been reported around other hospitals in the Strip, according to the regional directors of UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO, who are calling for urgent international action to end the ongoing attacks on hospitals. "We are appalled by the latest reports of attacks on and surrounding Al-Shifa Hospital, Al-Rantissi Naser Children's Hospital, Al-Quds Hospital and others in Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip, resulting in many casualties, including children. Safe access for medical staff, the wounded and other patients is being hampered by ongoing hostilities in the vicinity of several hospitals in northern Gaza. Over the past 36 days, the WHO has recorded at least 137 attacks on health workers in Gaza, resulting in 521 deaths and 686 people wounded, including 16 deaths and 38 wounded among health workers on duty." **Israel ready to help.** For its part, the Israeli army announced on its social media pages that it was "doing everything possible to minimise damage to civilians, to help with evacuations and to provide medical and food aid. Our war is not against the people of Gaza." These words are illustrated by pictures of baby incubators destined for al-Shifa hospital. "The children's ward at Shifa Hospital in Gaza City needs help," a spokeswoman says in the video, "Israel is ready to help. We have made a formal offer to the Gaza health authorities to transfer incubators to the Gaza Strip in order to provide assistance to the children's ward at Shifa Hospital. Major efforts are underway to ensure that these incubators reach the children of Gaza without delay. Our war is against Hamas, not against the people of Gaza."