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Israeli medical doctor laments effects of war on patient care for Israelis and Palestinians

"All the children in Gaza that needed dialysis or kidney transplant, it was done here."

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Beth Baisch
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In the Israeli port city of Haifa lies Rambam Hospital, the largest hospital in Northern Israel and also home to the largest underground hospital in the country.

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Following rocket attacks from Lebanon in 2006, the Sammy Ofer Fortified Underground Emergency Hospital was opened in 2014 and is designed to care for patients while withstanding conventional, chemical, and biological attacks. When not in use, it serves as a parking garage.



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The underground hospital has been cleared of cars and has been on standby since October 7.

"It's going to be used. We know that," said medical director and anesthesiologist Dr. Avi Weissman.



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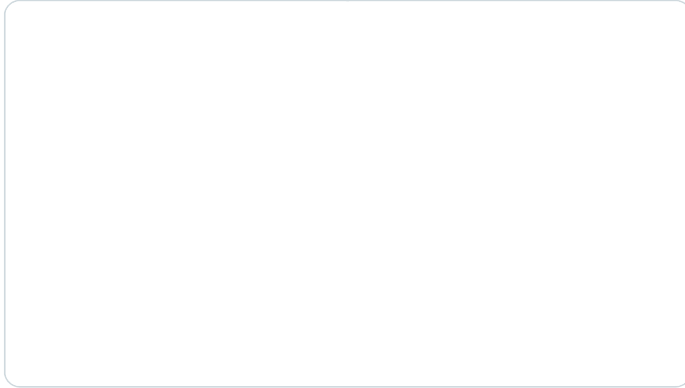
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The Sammy Ofer Fortified Underground Emergency Hospital in Haifa is Israel's largest underground hospital.

With space for 2200 beds, it can withstand conventional, chemical, and biological attacks.

Normally used as a parking lot, the hospital has been on standby since Oct 7.



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Beyond being prepared for war in the future, the Rambam Hospital is seeing how war affects healthcare in the present.



Weissman said the hospital has rented a space that they are renovating to "make it beautiful" in response to "expecting major, major issues with PTSD" since October 7. He said among psychiatric patients, PTSD has one of the poorest outcomes.

"The secret to success is treat soon. Sooner than later. Don't wait."



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"I mean, those scenes are in your head forever."



The hospital also treats very sick patients from the West Bank, including children with cancer. Since October 7, the number of patients from the West Bank have dropped 50–60 percent. Weissman said that he doesn't know if they're afraid to ask for help.

He noted that "Medical wise, we have a very good relationship. And there's no political issues because people are sick, we provide care, they go back home, and there's no issues."



Prior to October 7, the hospital also treated patients from Gaza.

"All the children in Gaza that needed dialysis or kidney transplant, it was done here."



Some of the Israelis who drove patients from the Gaza border to Rambam Hospital—for free—to receive treatment were among those kidnapped or murdered by Hamas.

The hospital has not had patients from Gaza since the war with Hamas began, although a small number who were

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rened stayed.
:k, they die," Weissman said.

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thanking us. Some of them, I think it was before they die."

When asked how that makes him feel, Weissman said "Terrible. Terrible. I mean, we treated them. I mean, those are chronic patients. Kidney patient, chronic patient, they're very attached to the staff here. Very attached."

"And those are the side effects of war that people don't see or hear."

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