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## Gaza Evacuee Dies in Italy Following Severe Malnutrition

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A 20-year-old Palestinian woman evacuated from Gaza to Italy for urgent medical care has died just days after her arrival, Italian health officials confirmed on Saturday.

The woman, identified as Marah Abu Zuhri, was flown to Pisa on Wednesday as part of a humanitarian mission organised by the Italian government. She was among 31 severely ill patients transported on three Italian Air Force flights. According to Italy's foreign ministry, the group included people suffering from congenital conditions, war injuries, amputations, and severe malnutrition.

Doctors at the University Hospital of Pisa reported that Abu Zuhri was in a highly fragile state on arrival. In a statement, the hospital described her as presenting a “very complex clinical picture” and being in a “profound state of organic wasting.” Despite immediate treatment, she suffered sudden respiratory failure and cardiac arrest on Friday and died shortly afterwards.

Her death comes as international organisations continue to warn of worsening conditions in Gaza. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has recorded at least 227 deaths from malnutrition-related causes since October 2023, including 103 children. The World Food Programme has also reported that a third of Gaza's population regularly goes without food, while around 500,000 people are considered at risk of starvation.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) has warned that “the worst-case scenario of famine is currently playing out in the Gaza Strip.”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected these assessments, saying in July: “There is no policy of starvation in Gaza, and there is no starvation in Gaza.”

Efforts to provide medical evacuation continue. The latest transfers, supported by the World Health Organisation, included 32 children and six adults taken to Italy, Belgium, and Turkey. However, more than 14,800 patients remain on waiting lists for urgent treatment abroad.

Olga Cherevko, spokesperson for OCHA, stressed the importance of expanding evacuation programmes. She said many patients suffer from pre-existing conditions worsened by poor nutrition and limited medical care: “It wouldn’t be this way if they had proper nutrition.”

Italy has been active in receiving Gaza evacuees, with government-organised flights delivering critically ill patients to hospitals across the country. The Italian foreign ministry has pledged to continue working with international health agencies, though logistical and political barriers have slowed progress.

The case of Marah Abu Zuhri has drawn renewed attention to the humanitarian impact of the conflict and highlighted the urgency of timely evacuation and medical care.