

Civilian Casualty Burden During the 12-Day Israel-Iran War: The Role of Protected-Space Access

Danielle Akler MD 1, Gal Khanchin MD 1, Pavel Eidelman MD MPH 1,2, Harel Gershgoren MD 1, Omer Talmon BSc 1, Inbal Dym, MD1, Teva Amir MD MHA 1, Bar Zemer Tov MD 1, Iris Hershovich, MD 1, Avi Benov MD1,3, Zivan Aviad-Beer, MD 1,4, Sami Gendler MD 1,5,6, Arthur Shapiro MD1,7

1 - Israel Defense Forces Medical Corps, Surgeon General's Headquarters, Tel Hashomer, Ramat Gan, Israel. 2 - Department of General Surgery and Transplantation, Sheba Medical Center, Faculty of Medicine, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel. 3 - Azrieli Faculty of Medicine, Bar-Ilan University, Safed, Israel. 4 - Department of Military Medicine, Hebrew University of Jerusalem Faculty of Medicine, Jerusalem, Israel. 5 - The National Center for Trauma and Emergency Medicine Research, The Gertner Institute for Epidemiology and Health Policy Research, Sheba Medical Center, Tel-HaShomer, Israel. 6 - Department of General Surgery, Rabin Medical Center (Beilinson Campus), Tel Aviv University, Petach Tikva, Israel. 7 - Orthopedic Department, Emek Medical Center, Afula, Israel.

Introduction

During the Israel-Iran War (June 13-24, 2025), Iran launched over 500 ballistic missiles and around 1,000 drones towards Israel. More than 30 ballistic missile impacts were reported in populated areas.

The aim of this study was to characterize casualty patterns during this war, describe the burden on rescue and evacuation systems, and examine factors associated with moderate and severe injury, with particular attention to protected-space use.

Materials and Methods

A retrospective analysis of all casualties injured during the 12 days War (June 13, 2025 – June 24, 2025).

Data were extracted from the Israel Defense Force (IDF) Home Front Command rescue and incident management records, compiled from prehospital teams of the IDF and Magen David Adom (MDA), Israel's national emergency medical service organization.

Moderate and severe casualties were interviewed on hospital arrival by an IDF Home Front Command team.

Results

24 impact sites were recorded, primarily in central Israel.

A total of 3,343 casualties were evacuated to hospitals nationwide.

585 received field treatment by MDA or IDF teams, among them 4.8% of casualties were deceased, 3.2% were severely injured, and 7.2% sustained moderate injuries; the remainder had minor injuries or stress reaction.

Only one prolonged entrapment event was documented, in which an IDF rescue team treated a casualty trapped within a damaged structure for 150 minutes.

Among casualties with moderate or severe injury, 100% reported not staying in a protected space, primarily due to limited accessibility. The mean age in this subgroup was 60.4 years and 30.8% were bedridden.



Impact sites
24

Deceased
4.8%



Casualties
3,343

Severe Injury
3.2%



Field Treatment
585

Moderate Injury
7.2%

Conclusions

Protected spaces (shelter/safe rooms) appeared life-saving, except in rare cases of direct missile strike.

Prolonged entrapment events appeared to be rare.

Older adults and functionally dependent individuals were disproportionately represented among moderate-to-severe casualties, suggesting that **identifying at-risk populations and improving accessibility to protected spaces may improve outcomes.**



Disclaimer This study was performed as part of the Israel Defense Forces Trauma and Combat Medicine Branch effort to improve the quality of combat casualty care and received no external funding or support.



At the moment of truth,
IDF MEDICAL CORPS.