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Dozens killed in their homes in renewed Israeli attack on Gaza City

Dozens were killed during a weeklong assault by the Israeli military on Gaza City, as Palestinians were trapped in their houses and unable to leave.



A boy sitting amongst rubble in Yarmouk Sports Stadium Friday, July 5, 2024 in Gaza City [AP Photo/AP Photo]

Bodies were lying uncollected in the streets on Thursday, according to Palestinian officials and emergency responders, one day after the Israeli army dropped leaflets telling residents to evacuate the city through “safe routes” and head south.

According to a report by Reuters, the Gaza Health Ministry said people had been killed inside their houses in the Tel Al Hawa and Sabra districts of Gaza City, and rescuers were unable to reach them.

Ismail Al-Thawabta, director of the Hamas-run Gaza government media office, reported that Israeli airstrikes on central Gaza killed 60 people Tuesday.

According to Reuters, “Residents said Israeli tanks that pushed into the Tel Al-Hawa, Shejaia and Sabra neighborhoods of Gaza City shelled roads and buildings, forcing them to flee their homes. This was followed by Israeli military orders to evacuate several districts in eastern and western Gaza City posted on social media, which included these neighborhoods.”

The emergency service said that at least 30 people had been killed in the Tel Al-Hawa and Rimal areas and that the bodies could not be recovered from the streets there.

In a further report on Thursday, Reuters correspondents said when the Israeli forces pulled back from parts of Gaza City, there were “dozens of dead and wrecked homes and roads in the Palestinian enclave’s biggest urban area...”

When the Gaza Civil Emergency Service was able to enter the area, they collected 60 bodies of Palestinians. That report was later updated, according to Al Jazeera, to 70 recovered bodies from the attacks in the Tal al-Hawa area.

On Friday, Gaza Strip Civil Defense spokesperson Mahmoud Basal said, “There are bodies scattered in the streets, dismembered bodies, there are bodies of entire families, there are also bodies inside a home of an entire family that was completely burned.”

While most of Gaza City had been razed to the ground by late 2023 as part of the US-Israeli ethnic cleansing the Gaza Strip, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians returned to what was left of their residences before they were once again ordered to evacuate.

Many Palestinians refused to leave Gaza City because they had concluded there was no safe zone for them anywhere, and they did not believe the Israeli claims of safe passage out of the city. Residents also told the *Guardian* that they feared they would not be able to return if they left.

In a text message to Reuters, Mohammed Ali, 30, said, “We will die but not leave to the south. We have tolerated starvation and bombs for nine months, and we are ready to die as martyrs here.”

Reuters also reported, “Dozens of residents returned again on Friday to check the damage after civil emergency teams put out fires in the early hours. Reuters footage showed wrecked roads and buildings, including the former UNRWA headquarters. Bodies wrapped in white shrouds and bearing the names of the dead women and men lay on the floor at Al-Ahli Hospital.”

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported that there have been 6,400 Palestinians reported as missing since the genocide was launched 10 months ago by the Israeli government with the backing of US imperialism.

Many of those missing are believed to be trapped under the rubble of the destruction, some having been buried without identification or are being held in Israeli detention. Others have been separated from their families and unable to reconnect in the chaos of the siege. Since April, approximately 1,100 new cases of missing persons have been registered with the ICRC.

In a statement, ICRC spokesperson Sarah Davies said, “Each week we can receive anywhere between 500 and 2,500 calls to our hotlines, and the majority of these are requests for missing family members.”

Davies continued, “Unfortunately, in such chaotic situations, people can be separated easily. People are panicked, sometimes it is dark and difficult to see, if there are explosions nearby people flee and lose one another.”

Since October 7, the ICRC reported that there are more than 8,700 missing Palestinians in Gaza and has engaged with 7,429 Palestinian families to gather information, with approximately 2,300 cases where families have found their relatives either alive or dead.

The *Guardian* reported that Muhammad Naji, a resident of al-Falluja in the north of Gaza, said emergency response teams had been able to rescue eight people from the rubble after a recent attack, but that 17 others were buried beneath the debris, and that some of his cousins were missing.

Naji said, “We don’t know anything about them. The whole building collapsed on their heads. Are they dead? Are they alive? No one can tell us anything. ... If my cousins are dead, we want to bury them. We can’t think or comprehend.”

The Lancet medical journal published a conservative estimate last week that the true death toll in Gaza since October 2023 could be over 186,000, with an official death toll just over 37,000.

Exposing the fraud of the “humanitarian pier” erected in March, the White House and US Defense Department announced on Thursday that the operation will shortly “cease operations.” Major General Patrick Ryder said in a statement that US troops had attempted to reconnect the floating structure to Gaza’s shoreline on Wednesday but were unable to do so because of “technical and weather-related issues.”

The pier was set up as part of a public relations effort, announced by President Joe Biden at his State of the Union address, to cover up the US government’s role in funding and arming the Israeli genocide in Gaza. It was an absurdity that a \$230 million floating pier, which has been an unqualified operational failure, was going to do anything to address the starvation and suffering faced by the Palestinians in Gaza.

Despite the obvious, Biden's National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan claimed on Thursday that the pier mission was a success, "in trying to deal with the heartbreaking humanitarian situation" resulting from the nine-month US-made genocide. "I see any result that produces more food, more humanitarian goods getting to the people of Gaza as a success," Sullivan added.

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