



Gaza witnesses bloody week following Israeli legal team's presentation before the ICJ



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📍 Israel-Palestinian Territory

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Geneva - Israeli army forces have killed more than 1,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip since the International Court of Justice (ICJ) adjourned its

hearings a week ago to consider South Africa's lawsuit against Israel, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor stated. South Africa has accused Israeli of violating its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the rights group said.

Euro-Med Monitor added that, in stark contrast to the narrative put forth by the Israeli legal team in an attempt to refute South Africa's claims, the facts on the ground serve as further verification that Israel has been committing genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Israel asserted at the ICJ that it does not target civilians or civilian-related objects in the Strip; has slowed down its military activity there; is eager to expand humanitarian aid to the fullest extent of its capacity; supports rather than interferes with the work of medical personnel; and has no intention of forcibly displacing Gaza's population.

Nevertheless, preliminary documentation provided by Euro-Med Monitor casts doubt on the coherence of Israel's assertions, especially in view of the events that have transpired in the Gaza Strip between 12-18 January 2024—i.e. as recently as yesterday. According to the human rights organisation, the Israeli army has not stopped killing civilians in the Strip, and has killed 1,018 people in just seven days, including 208 women and at least 390 children, at a rate of 145 people per day.

The aforementioned statistics only include the dead who arrived at Gaza Strip hospitals; there are still reports and data of deaths of others—at least 15 per day during the same reported period—whose bodies have not been recovered or who have been buried in makeshift graves. Five civilians, two of whom were women, were buried on the 17th and 18th of January in a school sheltering displaced people in the southern Gaza Strip, east of Khan Yunis. Of the 1,934 additional people injured in Israel's most recent attacks, at least 70% are women and children.

Some of these attacks targeted homes, tents, and shelters housing displaced people in the southern city of Rafah, Euro-Med Monitor reported, which is designated by the Israeli army as a “safe area”. A total of 1.3 million displaced people have sought refuge in Rafah.

Another air raid targeted a school in Gaza City's Al-Daraj neighbourhood, a place where, according to Israel's defence team, the Israeli army had previously announced it would end its military operations.

Euro-Med Monitor indicated that at least 70 Palestinians were killed and dozens more injured in several incidents after Israeli tanks and quadcopters opened fire on Palestinians who gathered in northwest Gaza waiting for aid trucks. The most appalling event that occurred in the Gaza Strip during the ICJ session was the Israeli army's opening fire on a group of people who were attempting to

obtain food from these trucks; approximately fifty of them were killed at once.

Regarding the targeting of civilian targets, Euro-Med Monitor said that between 12 and 18 January, Israeli forces demolished 22 residential squares in the city of Khan Yunis' central neighbourhood and in the Strip's southern communities of Batn al-Samin, Jourat al-Lot, and Ma'an. Israeli forces also blew up four residential squares in the Gaza Strip's central governorate. Initial estimates indicate that about 6,000 housing units were completely or partially destroyed during the reported period, and that Israel also targeted two universities and seven schools, completely or partially destroying them.

The Israeli army is still demolishing Palestinian homes, even in neighbourhoods and places where there are no hostilities, said Euro-Med Monitor. The rights group indicated that the demolition operations have happened following the Israeli army's widespread and methodical consolidation of control over these neighbourhoods and areas. This suggests that the goal of these operations is to forcibly prevent Gaza Strip residents from returning to their homes, thus ending all aspects of the lives they enjoyed prior to the current genocide.

Euro-Med Monitor warned that the Israeli army has also continued to attack the health sector during the past week, including its facilities, staff, and resources. On 17 January, the Jordanian field hospital in Khan Yunis was targeted during an Israeli bombing that

coincided with an Israeli ground incursion into a cemetery in the vicinity, causing the injury of one of the health crews as well as another person who was receiving treatment in the intensive care unit and was injured by shrapnel.

On the same day, Israeli forces dropped lighting bombs over the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis, coinciding with violent bombardment and an incursion into the southern section of the hospital, causing a state of panic among thousands of displaced people there who were forced to flee.

In a similar attack, Israeli tanks approached the area surrounding Shuhada Aqsa Hospital last week, forcing thousands of displaced people to flee as Israeli aircraft opened fire nearby and bombed a flat next to the hospital's gate. Around the same time, most medical teams left the hospital, only to come back later when the Israeli forces withdrew.

Meanwhile, Israeli authorities have continued their campaign to incite fear of hospitals in the Gaza Strip, alleging without proof that Nasser Hospital—the largest hospital in the Strip now that Al-Shifa Medical Complex is out of service due to Israeli attacks—was being used to fire at Israeli forces, despite the fact that it is filled with 10s of thousands of displaced, sick, and injured people. Last Wednesday, World Health Organisation official Sean Casey confirmed that he had not seen any evidence that hospitals in the Gaza Strip were being used for purposes other

than providing healthcare, and said that their primary mission is to provide health services.

Euro-Med Monitor went on to confirm that Israel continues to use starvation as a weapon of war, noting that the amount of aid supplies entering the Gaza Strip, especially the northern part of the Strip, does not meet the population's growing needs. It has now been over 100 days since the start of Israel's genocidal war against Gazans, the rights organisation stressed.

Only 1,200 aid trucks—a relatively small number—have entered the Gaza Strip in the past week, said Euro-Med Monitor. Furthermore, the method of delivery remains dehumanising, as it involves hundreds of residents assembling around the trucks, which arrive at specific locations without any formal announcement being made. When aid supplies were being distributed, Israeli forces shot and killed several Palestinians.

Of the humanitarian supplies that entered the Gaza Strip, only 50 vehicles carrying aid reached Gaza City and the northern part of the Gaza Strip this past week, Euro-Med Monitor pointed out. Of these, 36 were loaded with food supplies, and the rest contained fuel and medical supplies. It should be noted that Israel did not allow any humanitarian aid vehicles to enter Gaza City and the Strip's northern areas on the 12th, 15th, or 17th of January.

The United Nations estimated in November 2023 that the Gaza Strip's population requires the entry of at least 500 humanitarian aid trucks every day. Local estimates, on the other hand, confirm that the population's need for commercial goods and humanitarian aid has doubled recently, given the length of the conflict; extension of Israel's military attacks; prolonged interruption of adequate aid distribution; collapse of local production capacity; and increasing needs of the Strip's roughly 2.3 million residents.

Euro-Med Monitor warned about the danger of continued severe shortages of food, medical supplies, and basic necessities in the Gaza Strip, particularly given the growing risk of famine and the exposure of more people to the spread of serious and fatal diseases. Due to Israel's ongoing bombing and strict siege of the territory, independent UN experts state that the population of Gaza accounts for 80% of all people worldwide who are at risk of famine or catastrophic hunger. UN agencies, led by the World Food Programme, UNICEF, and the World Health Organisation, raised the alarm on 15 January, saying "a fundamental step change in the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza is urgently needed".

"People in Gaza risk dying of hunger just miles from trucks filled with food," said WFP head Cindy McCain. "Every hour lost puts countless lives at risk. We can keep famine at bay, but only if we can deliver sufficient supplies and have safe access to everyone in need, wherever they are."

The Israeli defence team's narrative about Israel's irresponsibility in preventing aid supplies from entering the Gaza Strip is refuted, said Euro-Med Monitor, by what Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu revealed to the Israeli media recently. Netanyahu spoke of his refusal to allow any aid trucks into the Strip without first undergoing an inspection by the Israeli military.

Israel continues to restrict the amount of goods that can enter the Gaza Strip, purposefully delays the entry of humanitarian aid, or obstructs it entirely. UN agencies and Egyptian authorities have confirmed that Israel maintains control over everything that enters the Gaza Strip through all ports and crossings.

Israel also maintains control over which people are allowed to leave the Gaza Strip via the Rafah crossing, including those who are sick or injured. Passenger lists are provided to Israeli authorities, who only permit a certain number of people to travel. These restrictions also apply to severely injured people who require urgent medical treatment abroad; only a very small percentage of them have been able to travel so far, while 6,500 seriously injured individuals remain on the waitlist.

Euro-Med Monitor has been closely tracking the continued inflammatory statements from Israeli officials, which demonstrate a clear premeditated intention to commit the crime of genocide. Israeli ministers continue to issue statements inciting the extermination of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip,

said the human rights organisation, pointing to the Israeli government's apparent aim of uprooting Gazans from their land by subjecting them to abhorrent living conditions in order to destroy them and ultimately force them out of the Strip permanently.

"Gaza must be occupied," Israeli Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir stated yesterday. "Stay inside it and encourage the voluntary migration of its residents. If we win the war, it will be practically accomplished." That same day, Netanyahu announced at a press conference that Israel fully intended to take control of the security situation throughout the region west of Jordan, essentially saying "from the river to the sea"—the slogan that many in Western and American circles have recently denounced as antisemitic and say encourages genocide against Israeli Jews. Notably, the slogan is frequently used across the globe by peace activists calling for an end to Israel's occupation of Palestine and its genocide of Gazans.

Netanyahu also stated at the conference that Israel intends to cut back on humanitarian aid to the barest minimum, adding that the decision will be made based on how military operations proceed and objectives are met. He explicitly stated that Israel intends to use humanitarian aid as a bargaining chip and form of pressure on Palestinian civilians, which Euro-Med Monitor called a violation of international law. This is another way that Israel plans to carry out its crime of genocide against the people living in the

Gaza Strip—by exacerbating the dire circumstances they are already facing as a result of Israel's ongoing military attacks and siege, amid a shortage of basic necessities, and by threatening to subject them to even harsher living conditions which will ultimately result in their actual deaths.

As in the past, said Euro-Med Monitor, Israel is failing to hold responsible any Israeli citizen who is encouraging the genocide of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, regardless of the individual's degree of political power or level of celebrity or influence.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor warned of the dire repercussions of preventing international committees from accessing the Gaza Strip, particularly in light of the forensic evidence that would likely condemn Israel for the crimes committed there, the difficulty of preserving potential evidence from destruction or loss, and the elevated risk of death from Israeli army fire, starvation, disease, or drought as a result of Israel's siege of the Gaza Strip.

The International Court of Justice must move quickly to take decisive action to halt Israel's genocide against the people of the Gaza Strip and to shield them from further grave and irreversible harm, Euro-Med Monitor insisted.

The International Court of Justice held two public hearings on the 11th and 12th of January in The

Hague regarding South Africa’s lawsuit against Israel’s violations of its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide with regard to the people of the Gaza Strip. South Africa asked the Court to indicate interim measures to “protect against further serious and irreparable harm to the rights of the Palestinian people under the Genocide Convention” and “ensure Israel’s compliance with its obligations under the Convention not to engage in, prevent and punish genocide”.



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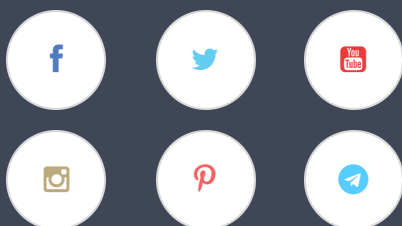
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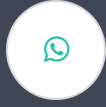


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