



# Investigation must be opened into Israel's potential use of banned thermal weapons, which cause victims' bodies to melt or evaporate



30 Apr 2024

Israel-Palestinian Territory

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**Palestinian Territory** - An international committee of experts must be established to look into the weapons Israel has been using as part of its genocide in the Gaza Strip, ongoing since 7 October 2023, including the potential use of bombs that produce such high heat that victims' bodies evaporate.

Testimonies received by Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor reveal a horrific new level of killing in the Strip: victims whose bodies appear to have evaporated or melted as a result of Israel's bombing of residential homes.

The Israeli army's use of massive destruction in entire residential squares during its genocidal war on the Gaza Strip has resulted in a shockingly high number of casualties. This raises fears about the potential use of "thermal weapons", or what are known as "vacuum bombs", which are well-known in military circles for their efficacy in demolishing caves and underground tunnel complexes.

Thousands of victims remain missing, either because it was impossible to recover them from under the debris in light of insufficient equipment and technical know-how, or because their bodies were either hidden by the Israeli army or no longer exist. A number of the victims killed in these horrifying Israeli raids on residential buildings have vanished and may have turned to ashes, raising questions about the type of bombs used in the attacks.

Ahmed Omar lost 15 members of his family, including his parents, in an Israeli airstrike on their

Gaza City home on 15 October 2023. Omar told Euro-Med Monitor that family members and civil defence teams made strenuous attempts to retrieve the victims' bodies after the Israeli attack. However, no trace of the bodies of three victims—Raghad Saleh Farwaneh, 14, Ola Saleh Farwaneh, 7, and Rahaf Ahmed Qanita, 8—was discovered, despite their presence in the house at the time of the attack.

Jamal Awni lost seven family members in an Israeli bombing on a home they had fled to in the central Gaza Strip city of Deir al-Balah on 6 January 2024. Awni told Euro-Med Monitor that all efforts to find his 28-year-old daughter Shaima had been unsuccessful, amid concerns that her body had vanished.

Furthermore, the Gaza Civil Defense Service has released several statements concerning the dissolution of victims' corpses, and their conversion into ashes. These statements have included information on the mass grave discovered in the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis, in the south of the Gaza Strip, in April 2024.

An international investigation must be launched into Israel's probable use of internationally banned weapons, including thermobaric bombs, which operate by first using small conventional explosives to create a cloud of highly flammable particles or droplets. A second explosive device then ignites the cloud of combustible materials, producing extremely high temperatures of up to 2500 degrees Celsius,

which cause severe burning of skin and internal body parts, charring corpses to the point of complete melting or evaporation, particularly in areas where the explosion cloud is denser. Investigators must determine the precise type(s) of weapon used; preliminary estimates indicate that certain bodies may also have begun to decompose into ash sometime after death—a result of conditions brought on by thermal bombs.

The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and international humanitarian law all forbid the use of thermal bombs against civilians in populated civilian areas. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court also classifies the use of thermal bombs as a war crime.

Israel has a long record of breaking major international humanitarian law, such as by disregarding the principles of protection in armed conflicts, including military necessity, distinction, and proportionality. This is especially true during Israel's current military assault on the Gaza Strip, with its frequent launching of devastating attacks without regard for civilian lives and safety.

The Israeli army has used and continues to use a variety of weapons and ammunition, in addition to its use of disproportionately destructive force, against Palestinian civilians as well as their property. This is in violation of international humanitarian law, including the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, which

specialises in the protection of civilians in times of war.

The findings of investigations by certain credible international organisations and bodies into Israel's ongoing genocide, along with the startling statistics about the number of people killed and the extent of the destruction in the Gaza Strip, support the possibility that Israel has committed war crimes and crimes against humanity. In and of itself, this requires an extensive international legal and judicial investigation, accountability mechanisms, and serious work to hold Israeli leaders and soldiers accountable, ensure that they face consequences, and provide compensation to victims and their families in compliance with international law.



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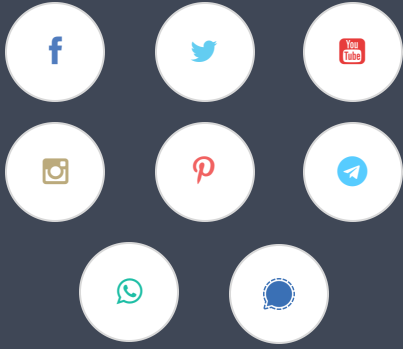
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