



# Israel destroys a quarter of northern Gaza Strip, Palestinian death toll exceeds 4,000



📅 19 Oct 2023

📍 Israel-Palestinian Territory

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**Geneva** – Israel is conducting the largest campaign of destruction of buildings and residential houses in

the Gaza Strip in modern history, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor stated, as part of a wide-scale military attack ongoing since the seventh of this month.

Euro-Med Monitor emphasised that Israel is focusing its attacks on the Gaza and North Gaza governorates through a systematic destruction campaign, aiming to force displacement and population transfer against the residents of these governorates.

The Israeli army has warned the residents of both governorates, which are home to nearly a million people, to evacuate the areas and move to the central and southern sections of the Strip, a measure that raises serious legal and humanitarian concerns as it endangers the safety of civilians.

Israel's army is bound not to target civilians or civilian infrastructure at all, Euro-Med Monitor confirmed, but in reality has committed multiple and complex violations that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity through the massive firepower it has used and continues to use against densely populated civilian areas.

Euro-Med Monitor pointed out that these violations include a blatant assault on a number of fundamental rights of civilians in the Gaza Strip, most notably the right to life, the right to housing, and the right to property.

Before the current Israeli attacks, the number of housing units in the Gaza and North Gaza governorates was estimated to be around 260,000. Euro-Med Monitor has documented that approximately 52,000 housing units are now destroyed or severely damaged by Israeli airstrikes.

The human rights group stated that over a quarter of the area of Gaza City and northern Gaza has been affected by the destruction and that 20% of the houses there are no longer fit for habitation. The town of Beit Hanoun, on the outskirts of the northern Gaza Strip, is the most severely affected, with approximately 60% of its buildings either destroyed or physically damaged.

Euro-Med Monitor emphasised that these numbers are preliminary and non-final, saying it is likely that these statistics could be multiplied due to the difficulty of documenting all the destroyed areas and

the intensifying Israeli targeting of residential areas around the clock.

The organisation called on the Human Rights Commissioner for the Palestinian Territories and the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing to take urgent action by confronting the Israeli destructive machine razing entire residential neighbourhoods in Gaza. It warned that international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Fourth Geneva Convention, prohibits the occupying force from demolishing the properties of the local population of the occupied area, and international human rights law guarantees the right to housing and the protection of private property.

The Israeli Political-Security Cabinet approved a state of war against the Gaza Strip on 7 October in response to an armed attack by Hamas, which it called “The Al-Aqsa Flood”, resulting in the killing of around 1,300 Israelis and the capture of dozens more. Since then, the Israeli army has carried out thousands of airstrikes and artillery strikes around the clock, targeting residential neighbourhoods and multi-storey buildings inhabited by Gazan civilians.

According to documentation by Euro-Med Monitor, at least 4,079 Palestinians have been killed, including 1,413 children and 806 women, with approximately 3,420 civilians among the dead. More than 15,000 additional Palestinians have been injured in various ways, with more than half of them being children and women.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor concluded that Israel is committing complex war crimes in the Gaza Strip. The organisation reiterated that these crimes represent serious violations of international humanitarian law and may amount to war crimes under the Fourth Geneva Convention for the Protection of Civilians. The egregious crimes currently being committed by Israel include the following:

Comprehensive closure and collective punishment, a war crime under international law.

Committing genocide through continuous and relentless aerial bombardment of civilian populations and the destruction of homes over their heads.

Committing ethnic cleansing and forced transfer began in the Gaza and North Gaza governorates and is expected to continue towards the Egyptian Sinai.



## EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS MONITOR

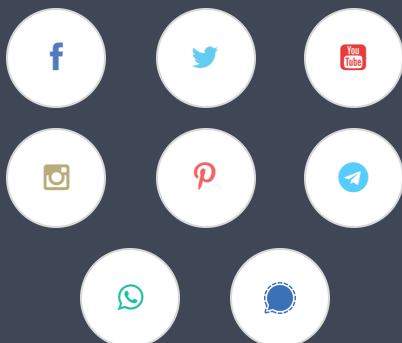
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