



# Israel takes revenge on Palestinian armed factions by mass killing civilians in Gaza



Euro-Med Monitor's preliminary data, 30 residential buildings were levelled directly onto the civilians inside of them. (Photo: Muhammed Hinnawo, UNRWA)

📅 09 Oct 2023

📍 Israel-Palestinian Territory

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**Palestinian Territory** - In what appears to be retaliation against Palestinian armed factions, Israeli forces are mass-killing civilians in the Gaza Strip and subjecting them to collective punishment, said Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor in a statement.

Within a few hours of a single night, Israeli armed forces killed approximately 70 children inside their homes. Israel is clearly violating international humanitarian law by employing weapons of enormous destructive power against Gaza Strip residents; residential buildings came crashing down on their inhabitants, resulting in a significant number of casualties among civilians, including children.

The Israeli Cabinet approved the declaration of war on Saturday evening, and thus the launch of large-scale military operations in response to Hamas' armed attack on Israel dubbed "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood", which has resulted in the deaths of approximately 700 Israelis and the capture of hundreds more.

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On Sunday evening and during the early hours of Monday morning, the Israeli army launched

hundreds of air strikes against residential neighbourhoods and multi-storey inhabited buildings. According to Euro-Med Monitor's preliminary data, 30 residential buildings were levelled directly onto the civilians inside of them on the morning of 9 October. The Israeli airstrikes have killed all or most of the members of approximately 18 Gazan families.

The death toll among Palestinians has risen to 687, including 140 children and 105 women, with over 3,726 others injured, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza. Meanwhile, the number of housing units that have been completely destroyed since Saturday is about 500, Euro-Med Monitor estimates, while another 2,400 have been partially destroyed.

According to the Euro-Med Monitor team in Gaza, Israel appears to be using thermobaric weaponry (vacuum bombs) in its attack, the effects of which are felt by all residents in the vicinity. These bombs have tremendous destructive power and the ability to level multi-storey buildings. Additionally, several testimonies which Euro-Med Monitor has yet to verify claim that the Israeli army used tightly controlled white phosphorus munitions in areas in the southern Gaza Strip.

Initial estimates indicate that more than 40,000 families have been displaced from various areas of the Gaza Strip, escaping the violent attacks, while the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for

Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) reported that about 74,000 people sought refuge in 64 of its schools and shelters in the Gaza Strip. Under the pretext that it had a tunnel underground, Israel even launched an airstrike on a UNRWA school housing over 225 people.

According to an Israeli army spokesman, the Israeli Air Force has dropped over a thousand tons of bombs on Gaza since the attack began. Israeli naval forces also took part in bombing various areas near the Gaza coast.

Israeli army forces issuing “warnings” via phone calls and text messages, or by “tapping the roof” with drone missiles with limited destructive power, is insufficient to protect Palestinian civilians and does not absolve Israel of responsibility for the large number of civilian casualties. Mass killings, and burying residents beneath the rubble of their own homes, are examples of Israeli bombing policy that disregards the principles of necessity and proportionality.

In the form of retaliation and collective punishment, Israeli forces deliberately target civilian objects to inflict widespread casualties and destruction, including material and human losses, said Euro-Med Monitor. This violates international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions (1949), and amounts to a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

“Even in cases of military necessity, Israel must adhere to provisions of international humanitarian law, which prohibits ‘preventive’ damage to property—that is, damage done before the danger has been [properly understood by residents]—and the destruction of property to achieve deterrence, instil fear in civilians, or retaliate against them,” said Euro-Med Monitor’s Chief Operating Officer Anas Jerjawi.

Jerjawi explained that [Article 33](#) of the Fourth Geneva Convention states, “Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited...Reprisals against protected persons and their property are prohibited”. “Israel’s policy of targeting and demolishing civilian homes constitutes collective punishment against the residents of the Gaza Strip, which violates international humanitarian law,” he stated.



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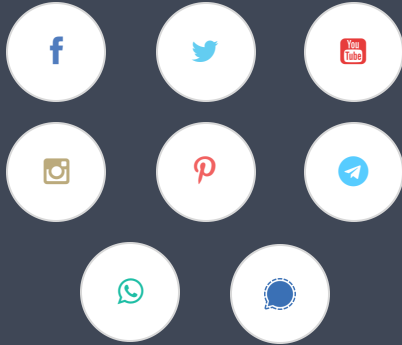
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