



Israel uses its ‘safe corridor’ in Gaza as trap to murder and detain Palestinians fleeing Israeli violence



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Israel-Palestinian Territory



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Geneva - Israel has turned the “safe corridor” it announced a few days ago into a trap where displaced individuals and families are killed or arrested and abused, said Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor.

According to Euro-Med Monitor, the Israeli army's claim of a safe passage for the displaced is part of the military tactics that it uses to attack Palestinian civilians. Israel's army, which has been forcing residents of Gaza City and the Gaza Strip's northern areas to move to the south of the Strip, has designated a "corridor" along Salah al-Din Road—the city's main thoroughfare—between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. each day for the time being.

Displaced individuals who crossed the alleged "corridor" over the course of the past three days provided testimony to the Euro-Med Monitor team, describing horrifying incidents of killing, arrest, and intentional humiliation. Gaza City resident Iyad Zakaria, 43, confirmed that he and his family of eight, including his elderly mother, had to walk roughly seven kilometres in order to escape to the southern part of the Strip.

Zakaria stated that the Israeli army prevents any vehicle from approaching within four to five kilometres of any military point it establishes in the Netzarim area of Gaza City, and forces the displaced people to raise their arms and carry white flags while walking. He reported seeing numerous bodies in pieces, some of them burned, lying on the ground and inside civilian cars that had been hit by Israeli missiles up to and beyond the military point; the bodies belonged mostly to women and children. Two young men were arrested near the point, he said, after their personal identity cards were checked.

A woman named Saada Awad said that Israeli soldiers forced her and her family of 11 to leave personal belongings behind and walk long distances while waving their arms in the air. She reported that there was constant shellfire resounding above them and that she observed a family of five, approximately 500 metres behind her, being struck by an artillery shell. The family was in a state of terror and was unsure of its fate at the time.

Video documentation reveals that the road used for the displacement operations is completely destroyed, said Euro-Med Monitor, making it extremely difficult for anyone to cross safely, particularly women, children, and the elderly.

One elderly man who identified himself as Abu Khalil stated that Salah al-Din Street is not a safe passage, but a death zone. Abu Khalil, who had been uprooted from the Al-Shati refugee camp, said that one of his grandchildren had been shot in the arm by Israeli gunfire. He noted that his sons were forced to carry his 16-year-old bleeding grandson for more than three kilometres, charging that the boy was directly shot by Israeli forces despite having raised a white flag.

Another man, named Salim, said an artillery shelling targeted a group of displaced women and children on Friday evening. Israeli soldiers opened fire on a number of young men who were trying to approach the women and children to save their lives, Salim said. He explained that the soldiers shouted at the

displaced men to raise their hands and phones and state their names; the soldiers then arrested several of them.

According to Dr. Sarah Al-Saqqa, Gazan civilians were forced to march under the scorching sun, surrounded by tanks and dead bodies, with nothing to carry but their identity cards. The soldiers later ordered them to stop for about an hour and threatened to arrest or kill them before ultimately allowing them to continue the journey south without looking around.

Euro-Med Monitor said Israel ordered over one million people—approximately half of Gaza's total population—to evacuate Gaza City and the Strip's northern areas less than a week after beginning its devastating and unprecedented war on the Strip on 7 October. Since then, the human rights organisation has warned of the Israeli evacuation order's legal and humanitarian implications.

Citing the immense dangers to Palestinian civilians, Euro-Med Monitor said that Israel's evacuation order constitutes a forced displacement, which violates international humanitarian law and may amount to a war crime. The rights group said that Israel does not only forcibly displace and target civilians in Gaza, but it also fails to provide them with safe shelter, explicitly violating the laws of war that prohibit "acts or threats of violence, the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population".

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor called on United States President Joe Biden, whose country gives Israel \$3.8 billion in military aid annually, to immediately put an end to Israel’s murderous practices and abuse of its so-called “safe corridor” for Palestinian refugees fleeing the Israeli bombardment of Gaza.



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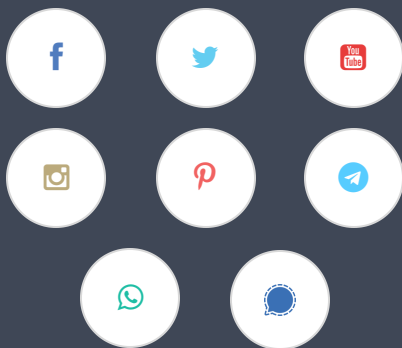
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