



Israel's war on the Gaza Strip has affected half a million children so far



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Israel-Palestinian Territory



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Geneva - Approximately half a million Palestinian children have been affected by Israel's ongoing war on the Gaza Strip, which has now entered its 36th consecutive day, the Euro-Med Human Rights

Monitor said in a statement. The estimated figure includes those who have been killed, injured, or whose family homes have been damaged or destroyed.

Euro-Med Monitor reported that 6,100 children have been killed or reported missing under the rubble of buildings destroyed by Israel's intense air and artillery attacks on the Strip, stating that chances for their survival diminishes with each passing day.

More than 15,500 children have been injured, said Euro-Med Monitor, with dozens of them in critical condition. Other children have suffered limb amputations, while hundreds more have suffered severe burns to their bodies, according to the Geneva-based human rights organisation.

Euro-Med Monitor estimated that between 17,000 and 18,000 Palestinian children have lost one or both of their parents, leaving them without emotional or financial support. In addition, over 450,000 children have had their homes damaged or destroyed.

The future of hundreds of thousands of children is still unknown, said the rights group, as 214 schools in the Gaza Strip have been damaged or destroyed by the Israeli attacks, halting many children's ability to access education in the Strip for the foreseeable future.

The children of Gaza are being subjected to indiscriminate attacks by Israel amid a terrifying war

for the second consecutive month. Simultaneously, a large number of these children are being denied access to food or clean water, and many more have been forced to flee to the south of the Gaza Strip, which has worsened their psychological distress.

Children under the age of 18, who make up 47% of the 2.3million people living in the Gaza Strip, have long suffered from mental health issues. Prior to the current Israeli assault on Gaza, four out of every five children there reported that they experienced depression, sadness, or fear.

Euro-Med Monitor warned of the traumas experienced by Palestinian children in Gaza, as tens of thousands of them have been forced to flee to the southern and central areas of the enclave without any precise destination. Some of these children have been killed while attempting to cross the “safe corridor” designated by the Israeli army, while those who do manage to cross arrive hungry, dehydrated, and terrified.

Over 1.5 million Gazans have been internally displaced, Euro-Med Monitor added, and families with children are living in severely overcrowded facilities that are neither intended nor suitable for shelter. At least 170 to 200 people generally share a single toilet, with one shower unit for every 700 or so people. Unhygienic surroundings, combined with an extreme lack of personal space and privacy, pose a threat to people’s physical and psychological health and safety.

Thousands of children are experiencing the rapid spread of bacterial and infectious diseases, said the human rights organisation, due to an acute shortage of clean drinking water and rampant food insecurity. This comes at a time when 21 out of 35 hospitals and dozens of primary care centres in the Strip have had to shut down due to Israel's attacks and lack of fuel needed to operate generators, seriously affecting children's health and impacting scheduled vaccinations.

Most children in the Gaza Strip are currently eating only one meal a day, according to Euro-Med Monitor, and there are indications of the rise of unhealthy coping mechanisms. Children who run out of bread, for example, are using dangerous and unhealthy methods to light fires for cooking.

The Euro-Med Monitor team has documented that a number of basic foodstuffs essential for children's health, like rice, legumes, and vegetable oils, have vanished from local markets. Other items such as eggs, dairy products, and wheat flour, have also vanished.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor renewed its call for the international community to take urgent and immediate action to stop Israel's attempts to turn the Gaza Strip into a real-life cemetery for children, to protect Palestinian life, and to value the human rights of Palestinian youth as much as it values the human rights of Israeli youth.

The human rights organisation, which accused the international community of hypocrisy and complicity, stressed that Israel should be held accountable for its clear violations of international humanitarian law. Israel's killing and targeting Palestinian children and blatantly ignoring their special needs for food, clothing, shelter, and medical care—needs that are recognised in the Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Protocols—must be brought to a swift halt by the international community, whose silence so far has been deafening.



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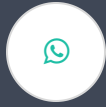


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