



## Israeli Military Escalates Bombing of Civilian Homes in Rafah Amid Threats of Ground Invasion

Home \ Advocacy \ International Advocacy \ Gaza

02. May 2024



Amid ongoing threats of a large-scale ground military assault on Rafah, Israeli forces have escalated airstrikes on the densely populated areas in the southern Gaza Strip. The Rafah Governorate, which typically houses [275,000 Palestinians](#), is now home to approximately 1.3

million Palestinians, the vast majority of whom have been displaced from northern Gaza. The intensified attacks on Rafah between 26 and 29 April 2024 resulted in the killing of at least 40 Palestinians, including 13 children and 12 women. The escalation of Israeli airstrikes on residential homes coincides with a surge in artillery shelling targeting the eastern area of Rafah. This appears to be part of a campaign aimed at intimidating the civilian population through indiscriminate killing and destruction. The goal seems to be to compel the population into a new wave of forced displacement. According to our preliminary documentation, the most significant Israeli attacks on Rafah between 26 and 29 April 2024, are as follows:

- At approximately 00:36 am on Monday, 29 April 2024, Israeli warplanes bombed a house belonging to the Abu Taha family in the Salam neighbourhood of Rafah directly and without prior warning. This attack resulted in the killing of 10 residents, including three children and three women, and injuring others with various wounds.
- Less than 15 minutes later, Israeli warplanes directly bombed a house belonging to the Al-Khawaja family in the Al-Shabura refugee camp in Rafah, also without prior warning. The bombing killed 9 residents, including four women and two children, one of whom was a newborn not yet five days old, with the majority of

the victims being displaced from Gaza and Deir al-Balah. Others were also wounded.

- At approximately 10:59 pm on Sunday, 28 April 2024, Israeli warplanes bombed the house of Ma'rouf Ali al-Khatib, in the Al-Jenina neighbourhood of Rafah, directly and without prior warning. The bombing resulted in the killing of three of his children: Aisha, 12, Nada, 19, and Ahmed, 23.
- At around 4:30 pm on Saturday, 27 April 2024, Israeli warplanes bombed the house of Hani Diab Ashour in the town of Al-Nasr, north of Rafah, directly and without prior warning, leading to the killing of 10 of its residents, including three women and three children: his wife Taghreed, eight of their sons and daughters, and the child of one of their relatives, as well as other wounded.
- At around 1:05 am on the same day, Israeli warplanes bombed a house rented by the family of Al-Hajj Yusuf in the Saudi neighbourhood west of Rafah without prior warning. The attack led to the killing of six of its residents, including four children and a woman: Hamdi Al-Hajj Yusuf, his wife, and their three children, as well as a displaced baby staying with her family from Jabalia in a neighbouring house. Others were also wounded.
- At around 9:19 pm on Friday, 26 April 2024, Israeli warplanes bombed a house belonging to the Al-Ghalban family in the Al-Shoka town, southeast of Rafah. The bombing resulted in the complete destruction of the house and the killing of Khaled Abdelrazzaq Khaled Hameed, a 43-year-old individual with a speaking disability. He was inside his home, adjacent to the targeted house, at the time of the attack. Another civilian sustained moderate injuries in the incident. Before the bombing, Israeli forces contacted one of the neighbours, instructing them to evacuate nearby houses.
- At around 7:10 am on the same day, Israeli warships fired shells and initiated gunfire toward Palestinian fishing boats off the fishermen's port west of Rafah. This led to the killing of the fisherman Mohammad Abdulsalam Sobhi Al-Hessi, 39, from Gaza City, while he was fishing aboard a small fishing boat (a rowing boat).

As a result of the repeated Israeli threats concurrent with the escalation of shelling, our field researchers have monitored tens of thousands of cases of displacement from Rafah to the Al-Mawasi area west of the city and west of Khan Younis. This has led to massive overcrowding in this limited area (about 12,000 dunams, or 12 square kilometres), where the displaced have resorted to setting up tents or makeshift nylon shelters in farmlands and on the sides of roads and along the coast, without access to

basic life necessities. The Israeli military attacks continue in various parts of the Gaza Strip, with ongoing aerial and artillery bombardment targeting residential homes and gatherings of displaced people. The toll of the military attack from 7 October 2023 until the morning of Monday, 29 April 2024, has [reached](#) 34,488 Palestinians killed and 77,643 injured, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza. Among the killed are 14,873 children and about 10,000 women. It is estimated that thousands of bodies remain trapped under the rubble or missing. Our organisations – the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), Al Mezan, and Al-Haq – [reiterate](#) their warning of the heightened risk of launching a large-scale military invasion on Rafah, and warn that Israeli forces may seek, through intimidation by bombing homes and killing large numbers of civilians, intensifying artillery shelling, and breaking the sound barrier, to force the population into displacement again. This pattern has been observed in recent weeks with the escalation of Israeli threats to attack Rafah. In this regard, we highlight that the continuation of these heinous crimes is a result of Israel's long-enjoyed impunity emboldened by the international community's inaction and Third States' unwavering military and political support. Therefore, we call on the international community to take serious and immediate action to compel Israel to end its ongoing genocidal military campaign, and adhere to the binding [decisions](#) of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordering the end of all genocidal acts in Gaza. Israel is targeting 2.3 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as a group, through a state policy of mass killing, targeting Palestinians in so-called "safe zones", causing severe physical and mental harm, subjecting the people to over seven months of multiple forcible displacement under conditions lacking adequate shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition, and [decent living conditions](#), comprehensive destruction of homes and infrastructure, collective punishment, and inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Palestinians as a group, involving starvation, the complete destruction of the healthcare system, and the denial of access of essential and life-saving aid and attacks against [humanitarian aid operations](#). Our organisations emphasise the urgent need for international intervention to prevent a land invasion on Rafah, secure the return of displaced Palestinians to their homes and ensure the unhindered provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance, including food, water, electricity, fuel, shelter, clothing, hygiene and sanitation requirements, as well as medical supplies and medical care to Palestinians throughout Gaza. The international community is well beyond the point of imposing sanctions on Israel, in the form of diplomatic, economic and individual sanctions, and a two-way

arms embargo, in order to pressure it into compliance with international obligations and decisions, including those of the ICJ as well as the United Nations Security Council [demanding](#) a ceasefire in Gaza under the binding resolution 2728. As this ongoing genocide deepens the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and return, the international community must learn from and rectify its wrongdoings committed against the Palestinian people during the Nakba around 1948, and put an end to this ongoing Nakba.

#### ALSO ON ALHAQ

##### **Case Update: Federal Court of Appeal of ...**

3 years ago · 1 comment

On 5 May 2021, the Federal Court of Appeal of Canada, issued its decision (see ...

##### **Cultural Apartheid, Israel's Erasure of ...**

2 years ago · 3 comments

The report builds from an investigation by the London-based research agency ...

##### **Alert: Israel Takes Alarming Steps to ...**

3 years ago · 1 comment

&nbsp; Al-Haq strongly condemns the military order issued by Israel's ...

##### **Alert: Force**

2 years

#Stanc  
the ear  
18 Aug