



## No Safe Place: Despite ‘Evacuation Order’, Israel Continues to Carpet-Bomb Gaza From North To South

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After Israel ordered 1.1 million Palestinians in the north of the Gaza Strip on 13 October, to evacuate their homes and move south to the districts of Rafah, Khan Younis and Deir al Balah, the Israeli military continued its indiscriminate bombardments throughout the Strip. Israel even targeted Palestinians who were evacuating via the supposed ‘safe route’. Al Mezan, Al-Haq, and PCHR contend that there is no safe place in Gaza and that Israel’s ‘evacuation order’ was

indeed intended to forcibly displace hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and move them closer to the border with Egypt. This forcible transfer is taking place amid the looming humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza as Israel continues to deny food, water, electricity, fuel and medicine. On Friday, 13 October, our organizations warned about the [illegality of Israel’s evacuation order](#). In particular, we highlighted that with no guarantee of safety or return, and given the extremely tight 24-hour time frame, the significant number of civilians affected (over 1 million) and the circumstances surrounding the evacuation, the implementation of this order is neither practical nor effective. The facts have proved us right. Al Haq’s Forensic Architecture Unit confirmed that on the same day that Israel’s evacuation order was issued, Friday 13 October, at least 70 Palestinians were killed and many others were injured by an airstrike which hit convoys driving south on Salah-al-Din Road- the main road connecting Beit Hanoun to Rafah, which crosses all the districts of the Gaza Strip. Salah-al-Din Road was one of the two routes—the other being the coastal road—that the Israeli military had explicitly instructed to be used for evacuating. [The Guardian](#), the [BBC’s Verify Unit](#) and other organizations and media outlets reached the same conclusion. On 17 October, Al Mezan’s deputy director—currently displaced in southern Gaza along with his family—said: *“The idea that there can be safe zones in Gaza is a masquerade. Since the*

*'evacuation order', the Israeli military kept targeting homes in Rafah, Khan Younis, and Deir Al Balah Districts. They are targeting family homes, which are full of people who evacuated from Gaza and North Gaza Districts to the south following Israel's order".* On Sunday, 15 October, an Israeli attack killed 12 family members of Hassan Halasa, an employee of the Independent Commission for Human Rights, Palestine's national human rights institution. In the preceding days, his family followed Israel's instruction, evacuated their home in al-Sheja'eyya (Gaza City) and moved to al-Zawayda (Middle Area District). Israel's indiscriminate attack killed Hassan's wife, Lina, his children Marah, 21, Bissan, 19, and Omar, 7, his mother, and other seven family members. The Government Media Office in Gaza on 17 October at around 2:00 pm, [stated](#) that the last 24 hours witnessed an intensification in bombings by Israeli warplanes in several locations in the Khan Younis and Rafah districts, resulting in the killing of around 80 Palestinians and the injury of dozens. During the early hours of 17 October, in Khan Younis, Israeli bombings resulted in the killing of more than 15 Palestinians of the [Al-Lamadani family](#) and another 21 members of the [Al-Jabri family](#). In Rafah, 28 members of the [Zorob family](#) were killed in Israeli bombings. Later, at 12:30 p.m., on 17 October 2023, Israeli attacks severely damaged the entrance of the [European Hospital](#) in Khan Younis, in southern Gaza. On 15 October, the Ministry of Health [reported](#) that around 70 per cent of the population of the Gaza and North Gaza districts are deprived of health services after UNRWA evacuated to the south and stopped its services in the north. Our organizations have received reports, including from our colleagues in Gaza, of multiple families (even up to 50 people) crammed into one house without water, food, or electricity. A colleague from the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights was amongst tens of thousands of Palestinians who fled their homes in Gaza City towards southern areas. He stated: "Nowhere [in Gaza] is safe. The targeting of civilians and civilian buildings is the same in the north and in the south, it is just a lie! I evacuated to Khan Younis but I decided to come back [to Gaza City] because I do not want to see a second Nakba. We want to stay in our homes, resist this unlawful occupation and not allow a second Nakba to happen again". Thousands of Palestinians were also unwilling or unable to follow Israel's evacuation order and therefore remained in northern Gaza. Many cited the danger, the lack of adequate shelters and facilities in southern Gaza; the lack of transportation to reach the south; and the reported attacks against civilian convoys on the Salah-al-Din Road, as the main reasons behind their decisions to remain in northern Gaza. Notably, the order to evacuate does not absolve Israel from its obligations and responsibilities under international humanitarian law, as it continues to bear obligations to protect civilians and civilian objects from indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks. Our organizations firmly hold Israel responsible for abiding by international law in regard to the protection of all Palestinian civilians who stayed or

returned to northern Gaza, who continue to be protected from direct targeting. More than three-quarters of Gaza's two million population are already refugees to whom Israel has denied the right of return since 1948. Seven decades on, the international community continues to fail to realize the right to return to their homes and lands to millions of Palestinian refugees, as already and explicitly stipulated under the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194. The looming [mass ethnic cleansing](#) of Palestinians in Gaza requires immediate intervention by the international community to halt this forcible transfer, which may amount to a war crime and a crime against humanity. In light of the ongoing Israeli bombardment of the entirety of the Gaza Strip, with the death toll reaching at least 3,478 Palestinians killed as of 3:30 pm on 18 October, the [displacement](#) of over one million Palestinians across Gaza, and the continued cutting off of vital services for the survival of the population, our organizations demand the international community, and Third States in particular, to immediately pressure Israel to end its military offensive, halt all measures aimed at ethnically cleansing Gaza of its Palestinian population, and ensure the swift supply



of water, food, gas, fuel, electricity and humanitarian aid to Gaza. A L - H A Q

