



Residents in the southern Gaza Strip subjected to widespread murder and abuse by Israeli army, pushing them to forced displacement



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📍 Israel-Palestinian Territory

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Geneva - The Israeli army is expanding the scope of forced displacement in the southern Gaza Strip's Khan Yunis Governorate, with mass killing, destruction, and comprehensive abuse, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor said in a statement on Sunday, citing the widespread violence as evidence of Israel's genocidal war against Palestinian civilians, ongoing since 7 October 2023,

Less than two days after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Israel would be subject to temporary measures as a result of its military operations infringing upon its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, including mass forced displacement to unsafe locations, thousands of people were forcibly evacuated from the Khan Yunis refugee camp and several other parts of the governorate to the Strip's western coastal areas. There, they were met with bitter cold and rain, Israeli harassment tactics, and a lack of safe shelter and provision of basic humanitarian needs, Euro-Med Monitor reported.

The rights organisation confirmed that Palestinians in several newly-formed Khan Yunis neighbourhoods, totalling more than four square kilometres, received the fresh Israeli evacuation orders via social media.

An estimated 90,000 people live in the targeted areas, plus an additional 400,000 internally displaced people who are being housed in 24 schools and shelter centres, including three hospitals: the Nasser

Medical Complex (475 beds), Al-Amal (100 beds), and the Jordanian Hospital (50 beds), which, in addition to three health clinics, make up about 20% of the Gaza Strip's remaining hospitals; all of these medical facilities are only partially operational.

Thousands more displaced people have evacuated to the city of Rafah, in the far south of the Strip, as a result of the recent Israeli military evacuation orders and heavy bombing of Khan Yunis and the central Gaza Strip.

The Euro-Med Monitor team documented the establishment of an Israeli security checkpoint on Al-Bahr Street, west of Khan Yunis refugee camp. The checkpoint was set up after the Israeli military closed all of the side streets that residents were using to evacuate the area over the past few days.

The human rights group stated that residents are forced to pass the checkpoint alone, leaving behind all of their belongings, including any luggage they may have packed. While women and children are allowed to pass, male individuals over the age of 15 are required to show ID cards and have their irises scanned by special cameras. Some of them are allowed to pass, while others are arrested, forced to strip naked, and held in an open area amid the rainy weather.

Testimonies gathered by Euro-Med Monitor from displaced people state that Israeli soldiers coerced some of them into chanting anti-Palestinian slogans

in order to pass swiftly and anonymously through the checkpoint.

Numerous testimonies were submitted to Euro-Med Monitor by women who were forced to pass through the checkpoint by themselves after the arrest of their husbands or fathers. With nobody left to assist them or their kids, they found themselves stranded.

Most of the displaced individuals who managed to pass through the checkpoint headed to Rafah, which has become a haven for over 1.3 million people. In Rafah, they are forced to stay in an open area in appalling humanitarian conditions, waiting for assistance. Some Gazans have remained in the suburbs of Khan Yunis and in the Strip's coastal area, while others have moved to Deir al-Balah, in the middle of the Strip.

About two million people are thought to be internally displaced in the Gaza Strip; many of them have been uprooted multiple times since 7 October, looking for safe heaven. Some Gazans have even resorted to living on sewage-filled land. Just five days after Israel's military attacks began, the Israeli army began forcing the 1.1 million people who typically live in Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip to evacuate to the central and southern sections of the Strip. Since 12 October, Israeli forces have continued to forcibly displace Gazans, giving them no assurance that they will have a safe place to shelter or will even be able to eventually return to their homes.

Due to the growing forced displacement policy in Khan Yunis, the Israeli army's attacks on the governorate are becoming more dangerous, according to Euro-Med Monitor. These attacks include the demolition of entire residential squares and the military siege of hospitals and other institutions that house 10s of thousands of displaced people who are currently at risk of being directly targeted.

In the last three days, said the rights group, several random graves were established in the Khan Yunis camp, Al-Amal Neighbourhood, and the Nasser Medical Complex courtyard to accommodate the growing number of anticipated victims.

For days, the Israeli army has been repeatedly shelling the besieged Nasser Medical Complex, which was already functioning at a minimal level. During this time, it has been unable to receive sick and injured people or medical supplies. Simultaneously, patients who recently underwent critical surgeries at Al-Khair Hospital in Khan Yunis—the only maternity hospital in the Gaza Strip—were forced to leave after it went out of service.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor emphasised the importance of pressuring Israel to end its forced displacement violations and uphold the laws of war, which forbid the purposeful targeting of civilians under any circumstances and view forced displacement of civilians as a serious violation that equates to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Pointing to Israel's egregious practices on the ground, the Geneva-based organisation stressed that international pressure in all forms is needed to stop the ongoing Israeli crimes against Palestinian civilians, particularly in light of the ICJ's recent ruling regarding the existence of "reasonable doubt" that Israel is breaking its obligations as a State party to the Genocide Convention.



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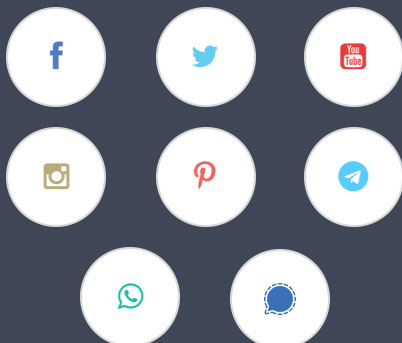
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