

Operration Al-Aqsa Flood "Taufan"

Report Day (13)

19/10/2023



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Escalation of Israeli Aggression on Gaza: Humanitarian Crisis Deepens

The Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip persisted overnight from Wednesday into Thursday, leaving civilians and journalists with the grim reality that nowhere seemed safe. The situation escalated as Israel intensified its bombing campaign, with the Rafah district being the primary target, resulting in dozens of Palestinian casualties and significant damage to roads leading from the border crossing with Egypt. Al Jazeera reported a tragic toll of at least 121 martyrs and 540 injuries in Gaza since Wednesday evening.

In the al-Zahra neighborhood, Palestinian media reported that Israeli warplanes carried out a devastating attack, completely demolishing four residential towers immediately after nearly 100 Palestinians had evacuated the premises. The United Nations has reported that a staggering number of people in Gaza, nearly one million, equating to almost half the population, have been displaced after fleeing their homes. Among these displaced Gazans, approximately 352,000 individuals are now seeking refuge in schools managed by UNRWA.

Simultaneously, Israeli forces continued to target Palestinian youth through deadly military raids in the West Bank. Overnight on Wednesday and into Thursday, at least seven Palestinians, including four children, tragically lost their lives to Israeli forces during these raids. This brought the West Bank death toll to at least 69 Palestinians since October 7. Among these casualties, 16-year-old Taha Mahameed was shot and killed during confrontations in the Nur Shams refugee camp, which Israel's military had placed under siege. Reports included soldiers restricting movement, raiding homes, and bulldozing streets.

Israeli forces also killed 14-year-old Ahmad Saduq in Bethlehem, Qais Shalash, 17, Khalil Khalil, 15, Mohammad Fawaqam, 21, and Jibril Awad in villages west of Ramallah. In the Nablus governorate, Israeli forces killed Ibrahim al-Hajj Ali, 24. Further, the Palestinian Prisoner's Society reported that Israel detained at least 120



Palestinians, including lawmakers, civic leaders, former prisoners, and journalists. This alarming figure contributes to the overall count of at least 850 Palestinians detained since October 7. Additionally, settler violence against Palestinians, often under the protection of the Israeli occupation forces, continues to be a concerning issue.

A press conference held by Mr. Iyad Al-Buzm, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior and National Security in Gaza, took place at Al-Shifa Hospital. Mr Al-Buzm emphasized the dire situation, announcing that the Rafah crossing, the sole gateway for Gaza to connect with the outside world, has been closed for the thirteenth consecutive day. This ongoing closure compounds the tragic humanitarian crisis in the region, and there is an urgent call for the crossing to be reopened. He stated that it is essential to allow the entry of humanitarian aid and essential supplies for the besieged people in Gaza. Furthermore, he emphasized that it is crucial to permit the travel of the wounded, whose numbers now exceed 13,000, surpassing the hospitals' capacity in the Gaza Strip.

In a separate press statement, Salama Marouf, the Head of the Government Media Office, decried a new and criminal act by the occupying forces, as they deliberately targeted and shelled the vicinity of bakeries, where dozens of citizens were queuing to purchase bread, resulting in numerous casualties and hundreds of injuries. He illustrated that the ongoing targeting of bakery areas underscores the absence of red lines in their actions, making it increasingly challenging for civilians to access basic necessities. Marouf called upon the international community to condemn this atrocity and intervene urgently to halt the occupying forces' assault, with women and children being the most affected.

The Ministry of Health's reports indicate that the number of casualties resulting from the Israeli aggression has risen to 3,785 martyrs, including 1,524 children, 1,000 women, and 120 elderly individuals. Additionally, 12,493 others have sustained various injuries, including 3,983 children and 3,300 women.