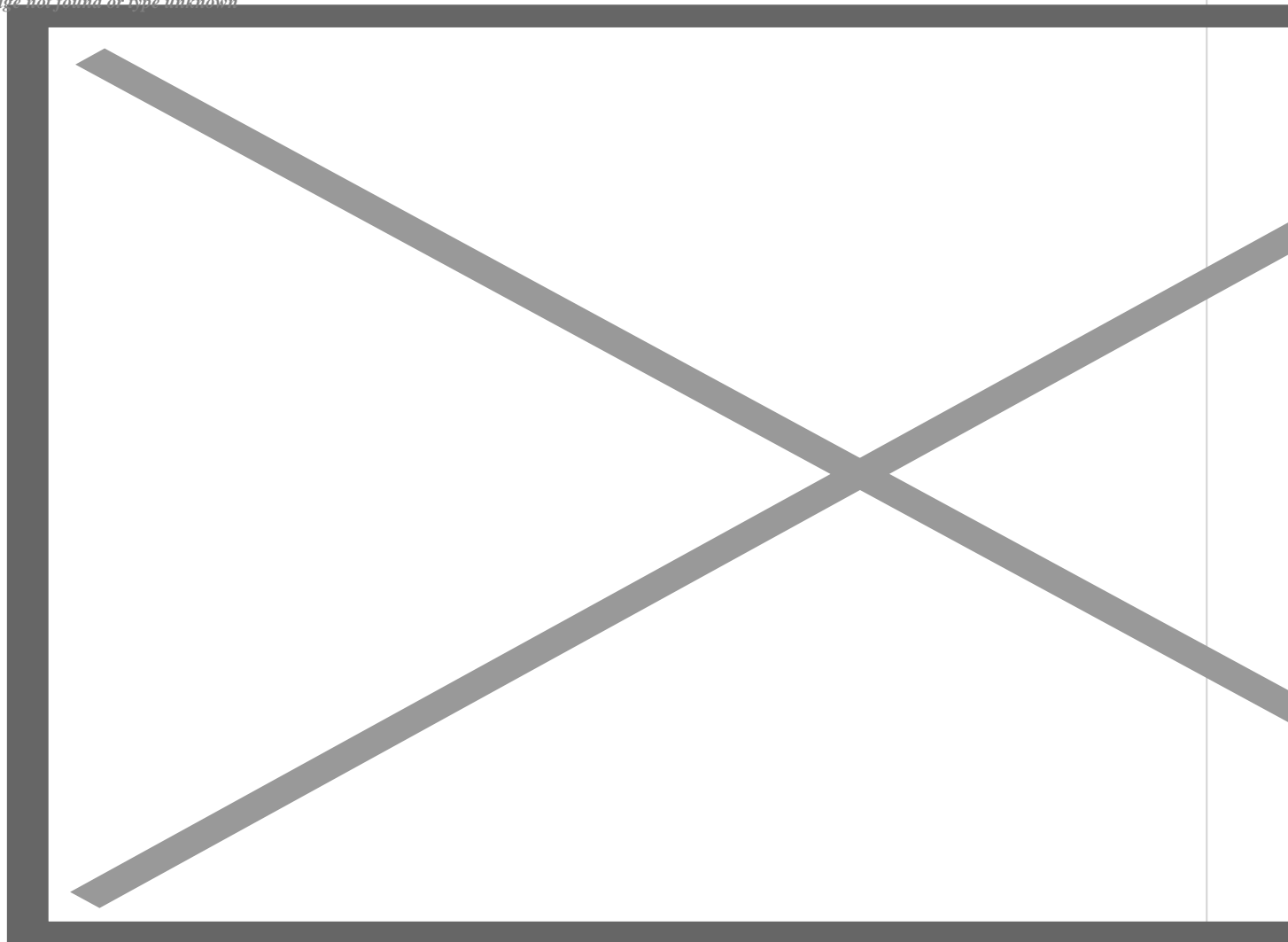


Israel launches airstrikes against Gaza after Nablus massacre

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File photo by AFP shows a fireball exploding in Gaza during an Israeli strike.

Gaza City, February 23 (RHC)-- Israel has carried out airstrikes on the besieged Gaza Strip, a day after the occupying regime's forces carried out a violent raid on the occupied West Bank city of Nablus. Israeli warplanes pounded targets in the north of Gaza City on Thursday, sending plumes of black smoke rising over one of the targeted locations.

The attacks came hours after the Israeli military alleged in a statement that Palestinian resistance forces launched six rockets from the coastal enclave towards the Israeli-occupied cities of Sderot and Ashkelon at dawn, setting off warning sirens in both towns. It also claimed that five of the rockets were intercepted, adding that another one landed in an uninhabited area. There were no reports of casualties or damage.

No Palestinian resistance group has yet claimed responsibility for the rocket attacks. However, the attacks appeared to be in retaliation for the Israeli forces' raid on Nablus a day earlier, which claimed the lives of at least 11 Palestinians. More than 100 were also wounded when the occupying regime's forces stormed Nablus, including a 72-year-old man, a 14-year-old boy, and two commanders of the Gaza-based Islamic Jihad resistance movement.

Palestinian resistance groups strongly denounced the attack and vowed retaliation. Secretary General of the Islamic Jihad movement Ziad al-Nakhala called the raid a "heinous crime," saying Palestinians will not allow the atrocity to go unpunished.

Abu Obeida, a spokesman of the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Hamas resistance movement, also warned that "the resistance in Gaza is monitoring the escalating crimes conducted by the enemy against our people in the occupied West Bank and is running out of patience."

The Israeli regime has intensified its crackdown on Nablus and the nearby city of Jenin since late December when Benjamin Netanyahu staged a comeback as the regime's prime minister at the head of a cabinet of hard-right and ultra-Orthodox parties.

Late last month, Israeli forces shot and killed at least 10 Palestinians and wounded over a dozen others during a violent raid on Jenin and its neighboring refugee camp.

Sixty-one Palestinians, including gunmen and civilians, have been killed in 2023, according to the Palestinian health ministry.

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