

Israel bombs Gaza as tensions rise over death of Khader Adnan

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An explosion is seen as Israel strikes Gaza on May 2, 2023 [Mohammed Salem/Reuters]?

Gaza City, May 2 (RHC)-- Israeli jets carried out airstrikes in Gaza late on Tuesday, with loud explosions heard in the besieged coastal enclave as tension escalated over the death of a prominent Palestinian prisoner in Israeli custody following an 86-day hunger strike.

The Israeli bombing comes after rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip following the death of Khader Adnan earlier on Tuesday. Hamas media said Israeli planes hit two locations in Gaza city.

Khader Adnan, who was awaiting trial, was found unconscious in his cell and taken to a hospital, where he was declared dead after efforts to revive him, Israel's Prisons Service said on Tuesday. Hundreds of people took to the streets in blockaded Gaza and the occupied West Bank to rally in support of Adnan and mourn his death, which Palestinian leaders described as an assassination.

The Israeli military said at least 26 rockets were fired from the enclave. Two landed in the southern city of Sderot, wounding three people, including a 25-year-old foreign national who Israel's ambulance service said sustained serious shrapnel wounds.

An umbrella group of armed Palestinian factions, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, claimed responsibility for rocket barrages towards Israel. Earlier in the day, Tel Aviv fired artillery shells on several areas in the eastern parts of Gaza City and Khan Younis targeting the Malaka area specifically, Al Jazeera's correspondent Heba Akkila said.

In the West Bank city of Hebron, shops observed a general strike. Some protesters burned tyres and hurled stones at Israeli soldiers who fired tear gas and rubber bullets at them. There were no reports of injuries.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met security officials to assess the situation. An Israeli military official said Israel would respond at a time and a place of its choosing.

In a tweet, Israel's Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said the security establishment will act with "determination and force" against those who harm the country. Israeli observers said they believed an attack on Gaza to be imminent. "It is clear that there will an Israeli response. Expect intense air strikes in the next few hours," Jackie Khouri, an Israeli affairs expert, told Al Jazeera from Haifa.

Al Jazeera's Mohammed Jamjoom, reporting from West Jerusalem, said it would be surprising if Israel did not respond. Typically "they do so in the overnight hours – that would mean either later tonight or very early tomorrow morning," he said.

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