

Israel vows unrelenting attacks as dozens reported killed in Gaza strikes



Tel Aviv, October 24 (RHC)-- Israel has promised “unrelenting” attacks to eliminate Hamas, as Palestinian authorities reported dozens of people killed in the latest air strikes on Gaza. At least 28 people were killed overnight in strikes on several homes in a district near Rafah, southern Gaza, Palestinian officials and medical sources told Al Jazeera’s Tareq Abu Azzoum in Gaza.

At least 14 others were also killed after an explosion at a fuel station following an Israeli strike in Khan Younis in the south of the enclave, Palestinian authorities told Abu Azzoum. There were conflicting reports about the death toll, with Palestinian media reporting that more than 50 people had been killed in the strikes.

Dozens of people were also killed or wounded in Israeli strikes on the al-Shati refugee camp in northern Gaza, Gaza’s Health Ministry said. Israel’s military said it had targeted a Hamas staging ground in the refugee camp, without providing further details.

The latest strikes come after Gaza’s Health Ministry said on Monday that Israel’s bombardment of the enclave had killed more than 430 people during the previous 24 hours, taking the total death toll in the enclave to more than 5,000 people.

Israel has bombarded Gaza and imposed a near-total blockade for more than two weeks as it seeks to eliminate Hamas in response to the armed group’s October 7 attacks inside the country, which Israeli officials say killed more than 1,400 people, mostly civilians.

Israeli Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Herzl Halevi on Tuesday signalled that Israel would not let up on its bombardment ahead of an expected ground invasion of the densely populated enclave.

“We want to bring Hamas to a state of full dismantling – its leaders, its military branch, and its working mechanisms. That is why we are striking, and eliminating high-ranking commanders and members, destroying infrastructure, and acting with great determination,” Halevi said in a statement.

“The path is a path of unrelenting attacks, damaging Hamas everywhere and in every way. We are well prepared for the ground operations in the south.”

Israeli forces also launched a new round of night raids in the occupied West Bank overnight, with heavily armed troops backed by armoured vehicles seen in at least two areas of the Palestinian territory. Israel’s escalating attacks come as the country faces growing calls for restraint amid warnings of a humanitarian catastrophe in the besieged enclave.

In a rare intervention on Monday, former United States President Barack Obama said that Israel’s actions in Gaza could erode global trust in the country and “harden Palestinian attitudes for generations” to come.

European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Monday said he supported a pause in the Israel-Hamas war and warned that the limited supply of aid entering the enclave was “not enough”, echoing earlier calls for a ceasefire by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

China, which has stepped up its diplomatic efforts in the Middle East, on Monday said it would do “whatever is conducive” to secure a ceasefire and restore peace. UN officials have warned that 2.3 million residents in the enclave are on the brink of starvation and at risk of cholera and other serious diseases due to the collapse of water and sanitation services.

U.S. President Joe Biden’s administration has publicly rejected calls for a ceasefire at this time, arguing that Israel has a right to defend itself. U.S. officials, however, have pressed Israel to delay its expected ground invasion of Gaza in order to allow more shipments of aid and more time for the release of captives held by Hamas.

Hamas, which governs Gaza, on Monday released two captives, saying it had freed 85-year-old Yocheved Lifshitz and 79-year-old Nurit Cooper for “humanitarian reasons.”

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