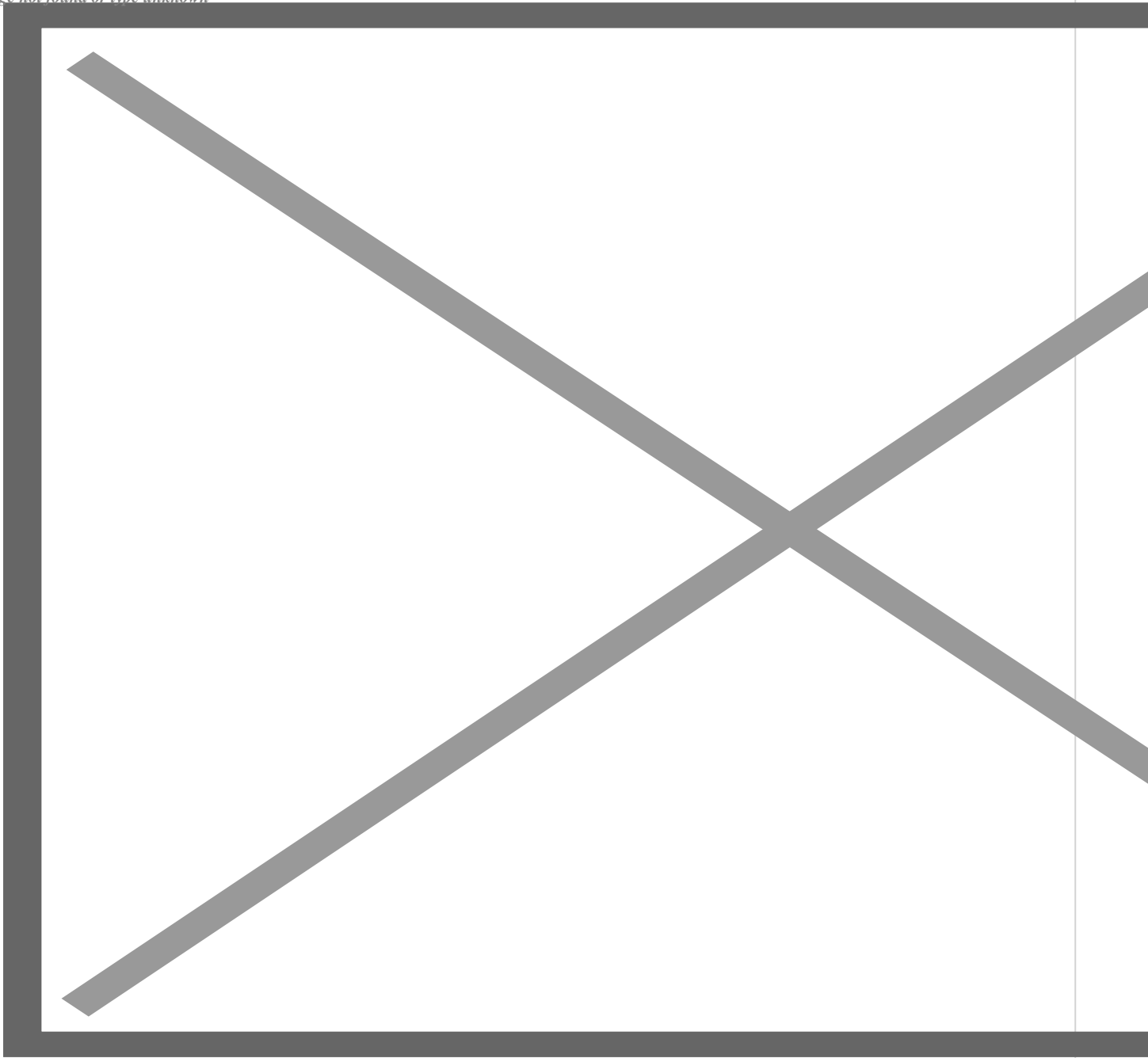


Israeli air strikes kill 28 Palestinians in southern Gaza

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Khan Younis, November 19 (RHC)-- At least 28 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli air strikes on two residential areas of Khan Younis in southern Gaza. A neighbourhood in Hamad was struck in a bombardment on Saturday, said Al Jazeera's Youmna EISayed, reporting from Khan Younis. Dozens were also wounded in the attack that mostly killed children.

Another bombing then targeted a house in the town of Khuza'a, east of Khan Younis, she said. "The total number of people killed is 28 people, but dozens have been injured and dozens still remain under the rubble especially in Hamad residential neighbourhood," EISayed added.

The director of Nasser Medical Complex in the south said his facility received 26 bodies and 23 people with serious injuries after the Hamad strike, according to the AFP news agency. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have moved to the southern Gaza Strip after Israel ordered them to evacuate the northern region, claiming it would be "safer" amid Israeli forces' ground offensive there. Two-thirds of them are now homeless.

In recent weeks, Israeli bombardments have also intensified in the south. Residents in Khuzaa, Abassan, Bani Suheila and al-Qarara in eastern Khan Younis, the biggest city in southern Gaza, said Israeli aircraft dropped thousands of leaflets overnight on Wednesday and early on Thursday, warning them to leave.

"For your safety, you need to evacuate your places of residence immediately and head to known shelters," the leaflets said. "Anyone near terrorists or their facilities puts their life at risk, and every house used by terrorists will be targeted."

It was not clear where residents in eastern Khan Younis were expected to flee as Israel had previously ordered people to relocate to this region for their safety.

In an interview with a U.S. broadcaster on Friday, Mark Regev, an aide to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said they are asking people to relocate because they "don't want to see civilians caught up in the crossfire", indicating the Israeli army's plans to attack Hamas in southern Gaza after subduing the north.

Regev added that Israeli troops will have to advance into the city to remove Hamas fighters from what he alleged are underground tunnels and bunkers, but that no such "enormous infrastructure" exists in less built-up areas to the west.

"I'm pretty sure that they won't have to move again" if they move west," he noted. "We're asking them to move to an area where hopefully there will be tents and a field hospital," he said, adding that the western areas are also closer to the Rafah border crossing with Egypt, where humanitarian aid could be brought in "as quickly as possible".

But UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said that currently, his organisation "do not consider any part of Gaza to be safe."

Since October 7, more than 12,000 people in the Gaza Strip, 5,000 of them children, have been killed due to Israel's bombardment of the besieged enclave that is home to about 2.3 million people.



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