

# *Israel demolishes Gaza cemeteries and confiscates dead bodies of Palestinians*

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Geneva, December 19 (RHC)-- The Israeli army has repeatedly targeted several cemeteries in the Gaza Strip, leaving widespread destruction, vandalising some graves, and stealing dead bodies, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor reports.

According to Euro-Med Monitor field documentation, Israel's army has targeted the majority of cemeteries in the Gaza Strip, including Al-Falujah cemetery in the northern Gaza Strip, Ali bin Marwan, Sheikh

Radwan, Al-Shuhada, and Sheikh Shaaban cemeteries, in addition to St. Porphyrius Church cemetery in Gaza City and Al-Shuhada cemetery in the northern town of Beit Lahia, destroying dozens of graves in utter disregard for the sanctity of the dead.

Large holes have been created inside these cemeteries as a result of frequent Israeli attacks, engulfing dozens of graves. The remains of some dead bodies have been scattered or disappeared, while dozens of graves remain seriously damaged.

Euro-Med Monitor received reports confirming that the Israeli army dug up several graves in Al-Faluga cemetery and stole dead bodies -- believed to belong to Palestinian activists -- amid fears that their organs might be stolen.

Given the disgusting and unjustifiable international complicity, Euro-Med emphasised that Israel has not spared even the dead in its genocidal war on the Gaza Strip.

Israel systematically violates the sanctity of the dead and of cemeteries, the human rights organisation said, in flagrant violation of the principles of international humanitarian law and the rules of war in relation to the protection of cemeteries during armed conflicts.

Rule 115 of customary international humanitarian law states: "The dead must be disposed of in a respectful manner and their graves respected and properly maintained." Article (130) of the Geneva Convention of 1949 also states that graves must be respected, properly maintained, and marked in such a way that they can always be recognised.

According to Euro-Med Monitor, more than 120 mass graves were recently established across the Gaza Strip to bury those killed in Israel's ongoing genocide of Gazans, given the difficulty of accessing the main and regular cemeteries and the non-stop Israeli attacks.

Families in the Gaza Strip have resorted to creating random mass graves in residential neighbourhoods, courtyards, roads, wedding halls, and stadiums. More than 120 of these mass graves have been established so far.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor reiterated that Israel—like any other country—must abide by the principles of international law, which stipulate that the dead must be respected and protected during armed conflicts, and that the parties involved must take all reasonable steps to prevent the confiscation and dismemberment of the dead bodies.

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