

*Israeli tank shelling kills dozens of Palestinians lining up for food in Khan Younis*

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Khan Younis, January 26 (RHC)-- Israeli tanks have bombarded areas around two hospitals in Gaza's main southern city of Khan Younis, killing at least 50 people among thousands who had queued up for food. Gaza's health ministry said Thursday at least 20 were killed and 150 others wounded at Kuwait Roundabout east of the Zeitoun neighborhood when Israeli tanks fired shells and live rounds.

The victims were taken to al-Shifa Hospital, which is out of medical supplies and only has a few doctors working. The death number is likely to rise as scores have suffered serious injuries.

Israeli shelling has intensified around besieged hospitals and shelters in the southern city of Khan Younis, which has already been the focus of the regime's airstrikes. The health ministry says the hospitals have run out of anesthesia drugs, painkillers, and food.

Palestinian medics said Israeli tanks had cut off and were shelling targets around the city's two main still-functioning hospitals, Nasser and Al-Amal, trapping medical teams, patients and displaced people sheltering inside or nearby. The Israeli military's siege of Khan Younis' main hospitals has made it near impossible for rescue crews to reach the wounded or collect the dead.

Meanwhile, an airstrike hit the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, killing several more children.

Gaza health officials said at least 50 Palestinians had been killed in Khan Younis in the past 24 hours, including two children in an Israeli air strike that hit a residential home.

Health ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qudra said at least 200 Palestinians had been killed in the past 24 hours. The death toll of Palestinians in the enclave since the war began is now at least 25,900, while 64,110 have been injured.

Israel has stepped up its aerial and ground strikes on Khan Younis, a day after targeting a UN shelter housing displaced Palestinians in the same city in southern Gaza.

On Wednesday, the United Nations said Israeli tanks struck a large UN compound in Gaza sheltering displaced Palestinians, killing at least a dozen people and wounding 75.

UNRWA director Thomas White said on Thursday that attacks on civilian sites in Khan Younis were "utterly unacceptable" and must stop immediately. "As fighting intensifies around hospitals and shelters hosting the displaced, people are trapped inside and lifesaving operations are impeded," he said.

White said the attack on the Khan Younis Training Center on Wednesday, which hosted thousands of displaced people, resulted in 12 people killed and 75 others wounded – with more than a dozen in critical condition.

"The situation in Khan Younis underscores a consistent failure to uphold the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law: distinction, proportionality and precautions in carrying out attacks," he said. "This is unacceptable and abhorrent and must stop."

White underscored the necessity of taking every measure to protect civilians. "I remind all parties that protection of hospitals, clinics, medical personnel and UN premises is explicitly enshrined within international law."

Resistance fighters in Gaza keep battling invading Israeli forces in southern Gaza, with Hamas reporting fierce clashes in the center and west of Khan Younis. In one of the latest operations, the Al-Quds Brigades, the military wing of Islamic Jihad, said it fired mortar shells at Israeli forces in Western Khan Younis.

The Palestinian Mujahedeen Movement said it brought down an Israeli helicopter using a surface-to-air missile. The Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, said it targeted two Merkava tanks using

Yasin shells.

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