

Israeli air raid hits residential building, killing at least seven in Gaza's Rafah



Rafah, February 25 RHC)-- Israeli forces have killed at least seven people, including a child, in Rafah, in the latest deadly attack on Palestinians struggling to survive in the southern Gaza Strip's largest city.

An Israeli air raid hit a residential building belonging to the Shahin family on Saturday, housing displaced people from the Abu Hamra and Abu Sultan families, the Palestinian state news agency Wafa reported.

The air attack hit a busy road leading to a market, causing major destruction to buildings and cars, according to Al Jazeera's team in Rafah. Bodies were seen scattered on the road, with women, children, and the elderly among the victims.

"My mother ... my father ... They ran for their lives from Khan Younis," a man told Al Jazeera. "I brought them here to take shelter in my home ... They escaped death in Khan Younis to die in my hands ... How can I live after them?"

Addressing the Israeli forces, he screamed: "Kill me, so I can join them."

Another man told Al Jazeera that he was walking with friends towards al-Awda Hospital when all of a sudden "a massive explosion" occurred. "I was thrown into the air and saw all those around me flying around, others torn to pieces," he said. "I passed out and woke up to find myself here in the hospital. The Israeli warplanes fired a missile on one residential building in a very crowded area; hundreds walking on the street, trying to get their hands on some food."

"The Israeli occupying forces have no mercy; they have no mercy on the young or the elderly, women or babies," he added. "The Israelis have no respect to any law or human rights. They lost their humanity; targeting innocent displaced civilians; killing everyone, women and children, out of revenge."

"The missile hit 20 metres [66 feet] from me and I miraculously survived by the grace of God."

Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud, reporting from Rafah said the victims have been taken to Yusuf al-Najjar Hospital in Rafah. "The area shook as if an earthquake hit it; there was complete destruction and fire everywhere," he said.

"Cars were incinerated and people on the sidewalks were critically injured. Victims were also pulled from under the building's rubble. "Seven people were reported killed, five of whom have been identified. Two of them could not be identified as they were incinerated beyond recognition."

According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, Israeli forces committed eight "massacres against families" in the Gaza Strip, killing 92 people in the last 24 hours. The ministry added that Israeli forces have stopped ambulances and civil defence crews from reaching victims buried beneath the rubble and lying on roads.

According to the UN, severe food insecurity is at a catastrophic level throughout the Gaza Strip, with increasing reports of families struggling to feed their children, and an increasing risk of starvation-related deaths in the northern area of the strip.

"The risk of famine in Gaza is increasing by the day, particularly for an estimated 300,000 people in northern Gaza who have been predominantly cut off from assistance and where food security assessments show the greatest needs," according to the World Food Program.

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