

At least 15 killed in Israeli attack on central Gaza refugee camps

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Gaza City, June 5 (RHC)-- At least 15 people have been killed in Israeli ground and air attacks on the Bureij and Maghazi refugee camps in central Gaza, a Palestinian health official has said.

"More than 15 martyrs and dozens of injuries reached the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the last several hours," a spokesperson for the Ministry of Health told reporters from outside the hospital grounds in

central Gaza's Deir el-Balah.

"If the aggression on the areas in central Gaza does not come to a halt, the number of those killed is expected to quickly rise," he said.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital is the only medical facility currently offering services to more than one million people in the area, the spokesperson said. The facility does not have the capacity for more patients, he warned, adding that the hospital is already "overflowing with wounded people," many of whom are being treated on the floor.

An attack on another house in the neighboring Maghazi refugee camp killed two people, according to officials at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital. Earlier, the Israeli military said in a statement jets were hitting Hamas targets in central Gaza while ground forces were operating "in a focused manner with guidance from intelligence" in the al-Bureij area.

Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud, reporting from Deir el-Balah, said medical staff at the hospital are overwhelmed by casualties pouring in. "Doctors are running everywhere, searching for remaining medical supplies including antiseptics and anaesthetics to perform urgent operations to save lives," Mahmoud said.

"We can still hear explosions of ongoing attacks and heavy machine-gun fire in the eastern area of central Gaza – including the densely populated Maghazi and Bureij camps," he added. "We're learning from victims' relatives there are still entire families trapped inside bombed homes in those camps."

Israeli forces waged an offensive earlier this year for several weeks in Bureij and several other nearby refugee camps in central Gaza. Troops pulled out of the Jabalia camp in northern Gaza last Friday after weeks of fighting caused widespread destruction to the already ravaged area. First responders have recovered the bodies of 360 people, mostly women and children, a spokesman for Gaza's civil defence said.

The Israeli air raids and ground offensives across the Gaza Strip come as international mediators wait for Israel and Hamas to respond to a new ceasefire and captive exchange proposal. Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan said on Tuesday the group will not accept a deal with Israel that does not clearly lay out a permanent ceasefire and a full Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

"The Israeli response talks about opening the door for negotiations on everything with no end or timeline ... this confirms that Israel only wants one phase, where it takes its prisoners then resumes its aggression and war against our people," Hamdan said.

"As long as there is no clear stance of readiness by the Zionist occupation for a permanent ceasefire and full withdrawal from Gaza ... we cannot agree to a deal that does not ensure and does not guarantee a permanent ceasefire, full withdrawal and a subsequent prisoner exchange," he added.

Announcing the plan last week, U.S. President Joe Biden said the three-phase plan was proposed by Israel, however, Israeli leaders have since appeared to distance themselves from the proposal and pledged to keep fighting Hamas until the group is destroyed.

Israeli bombardments and ground operations in Gaza have killed more than 36,000 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry. Israel is expanding its offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah and has largely cut off the flow of food, medicine and other supplies to Palestinians who are facing widespread hunger.

More than one million Palestinians have fled Rafah, mostly into tent camps that have arisen across central and southern Gaza.

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