

*Over 17,000 Palestinian children orphaned and 21,000 missing in Israel's genocidal war of aggression*

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**A Palestinian girl stands in a partially destroyed apartment at the Nuseirat refugee camp, in the central Gaza Strip, on June 15, 2024, amid the ongoing Israeli war on the Palestinian territory. (Photo by AFP)**

Rafah, June 25 (RHC)-- The Government Media Office in Gaza says more than 17,000 children have been orphaned since the beginning of Israel's genocidal war on the Palestinian territory more than eight months ago.

The media office released the figure on Monday, adding that 3 percent of the orphaned Gaza children have lost both of their parents. Meanwhile, Save the Children, a leading humanitarian organization for children, said in a statement that up to 21,000 Palestinian children are estimated to be missing in Israel's Gaza onslaught.

The figure, it noted, includes at least 17,000 children, who are believed to be unaccompanied and separated from their families, and approximately 4,000 children, who are likely missing under the rubble.

The charity further said that an unknown number of children are in mass graves while others have been forcibly disappeared, including those detained and transferred out of Gaza.

"Families are tortured by the uncertainty of the whereabouts of their loved ones. No parent should have to dig through rubble or mass graves to try and find their child's body. No child should be alone, unprotected in a war zone. No child should be detained or held hostage," said Jeremy Stoner, Save the Children's regional director for the Middle East.

He further stressed that a ceasefire is needed "desperately" in Gaza to help "support the missing children who have survived and to prevent more families from being destroyed."

More than 14,000 Palestinian children have reportedly been killed in Gaza during months-long Israeli aggression.

Israel unleashed its brutal Gaza offensive on October 7th after the Palestinian Hamas resistance group carried out its historic operation against the occupying entity in retaliation for the regime's intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

So far, the Tel Aviv regime has killed more than 37,598 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured over 86,032 others in Gaza. The Israeli aggression is having a catastrophic impact on the Gaza children, causing mental harm to them. Many are losing their lives due to Israel's imposed starvation on the besieged Palestinian territory.

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