

*Palestinians report dozens of decomposed bodies, some half-eaten by dogs, found in Gaza City neighborhood*

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Gaza City, July 13 (RHC)-- The bodies of dozens of Palestinians have been retrieved from the Tal al-Hawa neighbourhood after Israeli forces withdrew from parts of Gaza City, Palestinian rescue workers have said.

“The Gaza civil defense teams moved in to rescue survivors. They found dozens killed. Most of those killed are families, women, and children. Some bodies were half-eaten by dogs,” Gaza’s civil defense spokesperson Mahmoud Basal said on Friday.

“At least 60 bodies were counted. Some bodies were buried on the spot. Others were taken to nearby hospitals.”

Israeli forces had entered the neighborhood this week after ordering civilians to evacuate on Monday. “Many bodies are still under the rubble. The Israeli forces are stationed nearby and the rescue efforts are interrupted regularly,” Basal said.

The discovery has come after Israeli forces withdrew from Gaza City’s Shujayea neighbourhood. On Thursday, Basal said civil defence teams recovered dozens of bodies from there, as well, adding that the neighbourhood has become uninhabitable.

“Documented testimonies” have been taken that Israeli forces opened fire on residents in the neighbourhood despite being located on designated evacuation routes, he said.

Home to more than a quarter of Gaza’s residents before the war, Gaza City was largely razed to the ground in late 2023, but hundreds of thousands of Palestinians had returned to homes in the ruins before Israel once again ordered them to leave.

Hamas, the Palestinian group that governs Gaza, accused Israeli forces of “atrocities” and called for international accountability. In a statement, the group accused Israel of committing “heinous abuses” in Gaza City.

“The atrocities revealed after the terrorist occupation army’s withdrawal from Tal al-Hawa in southwest Gaza City, after days of incursion and intense bombing that targeted all aspects of life, are war crimes of genocide and ethnic cleansing,” Hamas said.

It called on the UN and international community to take immediate steps to end a “war of extermination” that Israel is waging against Palestinians.

As Israeli forces step up attacks in Gaza’s north, they have also continued targeting areas in the besieged enclave’s south. In Khan Younis, an Israeli air raid killed at least four aid workers from UK humanitarian organisation Al-Khair Foundation.

They were “targeted in a distribution point where they were preparing to distribute aid in Khan Younis,” Al Jazeera’s Hind Khoudary said, reporting from Deir el-Balah. “Al-Khair Foundation has been working in the Gaza Strip since day one, trying to provide people with food assistance, and with a lot of other commodities, and we lost another four aid workers today,” Khoudary said.

This is not the first time that Israeli forces have targeted aid workers. In April, seven people working with the United States-based NGO World Central Kitchen (WCK) were killed in an Israeli air raid in Gaza. At the time, Israel’s military said the attack on the WCK team’s convoy was a “grave mistake” and pledged to protect aid workers.

Mediators are still trying to reach a ceasefire deal that would free Israeli captives in return for Palestinians jailed by Israel. On Friday, a senior Hamas official blamed Israel for a failure to build on the momentum

created when the group dropped a key demand in the US-drafted ceasefire offer a week ago to clear the way for a deal.

“Israel hasn’t given a clear stance over Hamas proposal,” the official, who asked not to be named, told the Reuters news agency, accusing Israel of “stalling and wasting time”.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Thursday he remained committed to the Gaza ceasefire framework and accused Hamas of making demands that contradicted it, without saying what those demands were.

Two Egyptian sources said on Thursday that talks had made progress but security arrangements and ceasefire guarantees were still being worked on.

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