

Israeli military expands evacuation order for Gaza's battered Khan Younis

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A wounded Palestinian child is carried to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, in the aftermath of an Israeli attack in Deir el-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip, July 27, 2024 [Ramadan Abed/Reuters]

Khan Younis, July 28 (RHC)-- The Israeli military has issued new evacuation orders in southern Gaza's Khan Younis that further expand into an area where displaced Palestinians have been forced to shelter. It said in an announcement on Saturday that staying in the area had "become dangerous" due to rockets being fired by Palestinian fighters.

"The adjustment is being carried out in accordance with precise intelligence indicating that Hamas has embedded terrorist infrastructure in the area defined as a humanitarian area," the military claimed, adding that it was about to "forcefully operate" there.

The latest order comes a week after the Israeli military issued an evacuation order for eastern parts of Khan Younis and began a new ground invasion, months after launching an offensive there. The Khan Younis invasion displaced at least 180,000 Palestinians in the first four days since it was launched, with many having to move without their belongings, according to the United Nations.

Reporting from Deir el-Balah in central Gaza, Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud said people are supposed to be going to "safer" areas despite repeated international warnings that nowhere is safe.

"But what we're seeing on the ground and judging from the patterns of how it happened, this is more of an enforced internal displacement for an already displaced population in the southern part of Khan Younis who had already fled the eastern part of Khan Younis as the Israeli military expanded its operations," he said.

Mahmoud said an air attack killed many people inside a home in the area on Saturday morning before the Israeli military ordered the latest mass evacuation through leaflets, SMS, phone calls, recorded audio messages, and Arabic-language media broadcasts.

Medical sources told Al Jazeera that 14 bodies had arrived at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis since the morning. An Al Jazeera correspondent also reported that Israeli artillery shelling has been targeting the town of Bani Suheila, east of Khan Younis.

The Israeli military is continuing its deadly attacks on areas across the besieged enclave, including Rafah in the south. It confirmed on Saturday that it hit "dozens of targets" in the past day, including the Zeitoun neighbourhood in the north's Gaza City, which has been a repeated target of attacks for months.

UN agencies have condemned Israel's policy of mass displacement of Gaza's civilian population and military attacks on areas previously declared as humanitarian "safe zones" by Israel. The Israeli military has killed more than 39,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip since the start of the current conflict in October, with more than 90,000 people wounded and thousands missing.

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