

Israeli strikes on Gaza schools kill 15 amid renewed evacuation orders

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A man walks past rubble and damaged buildings along a street in the Tuffah district east of Gaza City on July 8, 2024 amid the ongoing conflict in the Palestinian territory between Israel and Hamas. (Photo by Omar AL-QATTAA / AFP)

Khan Younis, August 9 (RHC)-- Israeli strikes on two schools in Gaza have killed at least 15 Palestinians and injured another 30, as renewed evacuation orders are given to residents in several districts in eastern Khan Younis city.

Many Palestinians remained trapped underneath the rubble of the schools – Abdel Fattah Hamoud and al-Zahraa – sheltering Palestinian families in the Tuffah district of Gaza City, Al Jazeera's Hind Khoudary reported on Thursday.

Reporting from the destroyed al-Zahraa School, Palestinian journalist Ibrahim al-Khalili told Al Jazeera that two missiles directly hit the school. He said civil defence crews have so far been unable to rescue the survivors trapped underneath due to a lack of tools. "The situation is catastrophic," he said.

Reporting from al-Mawasi in Khan Younis, Khoudary said in the past two weeks, Israeli forces have targeted at least eight schools across the Gaza Strip.

"Palestinians were sheltering in there and were seeking refuge ... [Israeli forces] have been targeting those schools without any prior notice, without any warning, and that's why dozens of Palestinians were killed in those air strikes," she said.

At least 39,699 Palestinians have been killed and 91,722 wounded in Israel's war on Gaza, which has displaced nearly the entire 2.3 million population of the besieged enclave amid widespread hunger and spreading diseases.

An estimated 1,139 people were killed in Israel during the Hamas-led attacks on October 7 and more than 200 taken captive.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military on Thursday also renewed evacuation orders to Palestinian residents in several districts in eastern Khan Younis, saying it would act forcefully against fighters who had unleashed rockets from those areas.

The army posted the evacuation order on X, and residents said they had received text and audio messages. It marks the second time in one month that thousands of Palestinians have been forced to flee Khan Younis under Israeli bombardment.

Residents said families had begun to leave their homes and head west towards al-Mawasi, a humanitarian-designated area but one that is overcrowded by displaced families from around the enclave. "People want a place where there's access to water, where there's no garbage. Here where we are, there's a huge pile of garbage just beside us, and that's why not a lot of people are setting up their tents over here," Khoudary said.

She added that there is "a state of panic among Palestinians" who have been ordered to evacuate as they "do not have any place to go to, everywhere is packed." "These people went back to their houses a couple of days ago when there was another warning for them to evacuate during the past couple of weeks. The same exact area is being called for evacuation," Khoudary said.

"Those same exact families – children, parents with all their belongings – were scattered on the streets for weeks because they did not have any place to evacuate to when the Israeli forces warned them."

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