

World Mosque Day: Gaza mosques bear testimony of Zionist regime's barbarism

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By Ivan Kesic

The Israeli regime has not even spared places of worship in the coastal territory, indiscriminately and aimlessly bombing them, most recently last week in Gaza City.

At least 100 people were killed, many of them unrecognizable, after the Israeli regime bombed a mosque at the al-Tabin School in the Daraj district during the pre-dawn prayers last Saturday.

As the world marks 'World Mosque Day', a total of 610 mosques have been completely destroyed in the Israeli genocidal bombings in Gaza in the past 320 days, according to the Gaza Media Office.

The World Mosque Day was instituted in honor of the Al-Aqsa Mosque after it was set ablaze in a deeply provocative act by an Australian Zionist named Michael Dennis Rohan on August 21, 1969.

The day has over the years transformed into a symbol of unity and a reminder of the importance and sacredness of the places of worship, particularly the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam.

The fire damaged nearly 1,500 square meters of the mosque, including the medieval minbar (pulpit), the mihrab (prayer niche) of Prophet Zachariah, and various arches and pillars, causing the roof to collapse.

Following a proposal by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the international observance of this day, also known as the International Mosque Day, was approved by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The sacred mosque, however, has continued to be a flashpoint in the long-running struggle for Palestinian freedom from the Zionist occupation with the regime often ordering attacks on the mosque.

Destruction of mosques in Gaza

Since October 7, 2024, the Israeli regime has bombed every inch of the territory in Gaza, including mosques. According to the Gaza Media office, a total of 824 mosques have been completely or partially damaged in the past 11 months, including 610 mosques that have been damaged completely.

According to Palestinian official data from 2019, the Gaza Strip had 1,117 mosques, meaning that 55 percent of all mosques have been destroyed so far, with an additional 19 percent damaged.

Beyond their religious significance to Gaza's majority Muslim population, many of these mosques are of great cultural and historical importance, as their history dates back to several centuries.

Over the past 11 months, mosques have been deliberately targeted with displaced people inside them, such as the Ahmed Yassin Mosque in the Shati refugee camp in Gaza, the Salim Abu Muslim Mosque in Beit Lahia, and the Khalid bin Al-Walid Mosque in Khan Yunis city.

Numerous direct airstrikes, like the one on the Khalid bin al-Walid Mosque in southern Gaza, have been video-documented, and all evidence demonstrates that they had no military function, debunking false claims of the Zionist regime.

In a report in May, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs in Gaza reported that Israeli troops have also desecrated at least 60 cemeteries during their ground invasion of Gaza, using bulldozers to dig up graves and steal the bodies of more than 1,000 people.

Furthermore, over 100 Muslim preachers and 91 ministry employees have been killed in the genocidal war, representing only a fraction of the 40,000 victims so far.

These actions by the Israeli regime flagrantly violate international laws and conventions that strictly prohibit targeting places of worship during war, according to experts.

In addition to mosques, historic churches have also been destroyed, along with numerous other civilian buildings such as schools, hospitals, and residential structures.

Destroyed historical mosques

The Great Mosque of Gaza, also known as the Great Omari Mosque, was the largest and oldest mosque in the Gaza Strip and one of the oldest in the world before its destruction by Israeli regime forces.

Built by early Muslims in the 7th century, the mosque had been damaged multiple times throughout history by earthquakes, crusaders, Mongols, and British aviation, yet it was always rebuilt.

The mosque was used as a place of worship by the local Muslim community and served as a focal point for gatherings and cultural activities for centuries.

This sandstone building could accommodate up to 5,000 worshipers, but today, only its ruined Mamluk-era minaret remains.

On December 7, 2023, it was destroyed by an Israeli airstrike, leaving most of the structure collapsed and the minaret bent and broken.

The destroyed Great Mosque of Gaza, the largest and oldest mosque in the Gaza Strip
The Ibn Uthman Mosque, the second largest in Gaza after the Great Mosque, was also reduced to rubble last month after Israeli warplanes fired several missiles at it.

Built in the Mamluk style, the mosque covered 2,000 square meters, with 400 square meters dedicated to its main courtyard. It had two gates overlooking the Shuja'iyya market.

The mosque had been subjected to attacks and demolition during previous wars on the Gaza Strip and was a center of confrontations with Israeli occupation forces during the First Intifada in 1987.

The Ibn Uthman Mosque, destroyed in July

Sayed al-Hashim Mosque, one of the largest and oldest mosques in Gaza, built at the site where Prophet Muhammad's great-grandfather, Hashim bin Abd Manaf, is believed to have been buried, was also razed to the ground.

Legend says that he was a merchant traveling back to Mecca from Syria when he became ill, died, and was buried in what is now Gaza's Daraj neighborhood.

The mosque, built from limestone in the 12th century and renovated several times, stood until it was hit by an Israeli bomb in October last year.

In Gaza City's Zeitoun neighborhood, the Othman bin Qashqar Mosque, built during the same period as the Sayed al-Hashim Mosque, was badly damaged in an Israeli airstrike on December 7.

The destroyed Al Amin Muhammad Mosque in Khan Yunis

Among other notable destroyed mosques is the Al Amin Muhammad Mosque in Khan Yunis, destroyed in the early days of the genocidal war. Its fallen dome, with a hole on top, has become a symbol of Israeli savagery.

The Al-Rahma Mosque, located in the Al-Amal neighborhood of the same city and once used by thousands of worshipers, was also completely destroyed. After its destruction, thousands of Palestinians prayed next to its ruins during the last Eid al-Adha.

The Al Noor Mosque, on the seashore in Deir al-Balah Camp in the central Gaza Strip, was targeted by Israeli warships, resulting in large portions of it being destroyed.

Other mosques were bombed by warplanes while worshipers were inside, such as the White Mosque in Gaza. Some were bulldozed or blown up with dynamite.

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