

Israeli forces kill dozens across Gaza as tanks advance deeper into Rafah

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Rescuers work to recover the body of a Palestinian girl from under the rubble of a house hit in Gaza City [Dawoud Abu Alkas/Reuters]

At least 13 people, including children, were killed in Israeli attacks on two homes in Rafah,

medical sources say.

Gaza City, September 21 (RHC)-- Israeli forces have killed at least 27 Palestinians in tank and air attacks across Gaza, as tanks advanced further into northwest Rafah near the border with Egypt.

The unrelenting Israeli attacks in the enclave continued on Friday, even as a parallel conflict in the Lebanon-Israel border area involving Hamas's allies Hezbollah intensified.

In the southern city of Rafah, at least 13 Palestinians, including three children, were killed in Israeli air raids on two residential properties in the Mesbah area, medical sources told Al Jazeera.

Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum, reporting from Deir el-Balah in central Gaza, said the two properties were completely destroyed in the attack. "Civil defense crews are scrambling to reach the scene of the attack as fighting between Hamas and Israel rages in the area," he said. "There are still people buried in the debris."

Tanks advanced further to the northwest area of Rafah backed by aircraft, residents told the Reuters news agency. Heavy fire and explosions echoed in the eastern areas of the city, where Israeli forces blew up several houses, according to residents and Hamas media.

"Our fighters are engaged in fierce gun battles against Israeli forces, who advanced into Tanour neighbourhood in Rafah," Hamas's armed wing said in a statement.

Separately, Palestinian health officials said shelling by Israeli tanks killed eight people and wounded several others in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central area of Gaza, and six others were killed in an air raid on a house in Gaza City.

In the northern town of Beit Hanoon, an Israeli attack on a car killed and wounded several Palestinians, medics said. The Israeli military has said that forces operating in Rafah have killed hundreds of Palestinian fighters, located tunnels and explosives and destroyed military infrastructure in the last few weeks.

The United States and mediators Qatar and Egypt have attempted to secure a truce between Israel and Hamas for months, but have failed to bring about a final agreement.

Two obstacles have been especially difficult – Israel's demand that it keep forces in the Philadelphi Corridor between Gaza and Egypt, and the specifics of an exchange of Israeli captives for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

Israel's latest war on Gaza began after October 7, when Hamas fighters entered Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking about 250 captives, according to Israeli tallies.

Since then Israel has been relentlessly attacking the enclave, killing more than 41,000 Palestinians, according to the local health ministry, while displacing nearly the entire population of 2.3 million, causing a hunger crisis and leading to allegations of genocide at the World Court, which Israel has denied.

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