

Mayor among dead after Israel bombs municipality buildings in Lebanese city

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Rescuers at an emergency services center react as smoke billows during Israeli airstrikes in the

Beirut, October 16 (RHC)-- Israel has bombed municipality buildings in the southern Lebanese city of Nabatiyeh, with local officials saying the mayor is among the dead. The attacks on Wednesday were among 11 strikes on the city and its surroundings that created "a kind of belt of fire" in the area, they said.

The health ministry said in a statement that the Nabatiyeh municipality and the union of municipalities were targeted in the attacks, killing at least five people. "The mayor of Nabatiyeh, among others was martyred. It's a massacre," AFP quoted Nabatiyeh governor Howaida Turk as saying.

Mayor Ahmad Kahil had been in the municipality building with his team during a daily crisis management meeting, she said. Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati condemned the strikes, saying they intentionally targeted a municipality meeting.

Mikati "condemned the new Israeli aggression against civilians in the city of Nabatiyeh, which deliberately targeted a meeting of the municipal council that was discussing the city's services and relief situation," he said in a statement.

Nabatiyeh was hit for the first time on Sunday, when an Israeli airstrike destroyed its Ottoman-era market, killing at least one person and wounding four.

The new bout of aggression came after Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu turned down requests for a ceasefire and cessation of atrocities. It came after at least 15 people were killed and 15 others wounded in an Israeli attack on the southern Lebanese town of Qana, where Israeli forces committed massacres in 1996 and 2006.

Netanyahu and the Israeli military have insisted there must be a buffer zone along the border with Lebanon, where there is no presence of Hezbollah fighters.

In a televised speech on Tuesday evening, Hezbollah's Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem said the best possible outcome to the conflict is for Israel to stop attacking Lebanon and Gaza.

"The solution is a ceasefire, we are not speaking from a position of weakness," Qassem said. "If the Israelis do not want that, we will continue," he added. He said settlers of the northern occupied lands would be able to return home after a ceasefire deal is reached through an indirect agreement.

But he highlighted that "the number of uninhabited settlements will increase, and hundreds of thousands, even more than two million, will be in danger at any time, at any hour, on any day" if the Tel Aviv regime keeps the war going in Lebanon and Gaza.

"The resistance will never be defeated because they're the ones that own the land. They will fight and die in dignity. Victory will come with patience," the Hezbollah deputy chief stressed.

In recent weeks, Israel has mounted its bloody aerial assaults on Lebanon, causing the displacement of at least 1.3 million people, more than a fifth of the country's population.

At least 2,350 people have been killed and 10,906 others injured in Israeli air raids on Lebanon since early October 2023, according to Lebanon's health ministry.

Over the same period, the Zionist regime has been waging a genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, killing at least 42,344 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injuring 99,013 others.

Hezbollah has launched retaliatory attacks on Israeli targets and vowed to keep fighting until the regime ends its aggression against Lebanon and Gaza.

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