

Israel massacres dozens including aid workers and children only hours after UN approves resolution demanding ceasefire



Gaza City, December 12 (RHC)-- Israeli attacks across the besieged Gaza Strip have killed dozens of people, Palestinian medics say, hours after the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire.

Two strikes on Thursday killed 15 people who were part of a force protecting humanitarian aid convoys, medics said.

The Israeli military said in a statement that Hamas members aimed to hijack the aid convoy "in support of continuing terrorist activity." The Palestinian news agency Wafa reported that those killed in the two air strikes were guarding the aid trucks.

Gunmen have repeatedly hijacked aid trucks after they roll into the enclave, and Hamas has formed a task force to confront them. Hamas-led forces have killed more than two dozen members of the gangs in recent months, Hamas sources and medics said.

The Nasser Medical Complex in the southern city of Khan Younis said eight people were killed in a strike near the southern border town of Rafah and seven others were killed in a separate strike near Khan Younis.

Children were among seven people killed when a residential building in Gaza City's al-Jalaa Street was bombed in another attack, Wafa reported. A separate Israeli bombing killed 15 people in a house where displaced people were taking shelter, west of Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip, medics and Wafa said.

Hamas said Israeli military strikes have killed at least 700 police tasked with securing aid trucks in Gaza since the war began on October 7, 2023. It has accused Israel of trying to protect looters and "creating anarchy and chaos to prevent aid from reaching the people of Gaza".

The UN says Israeli restrictions and the breakdown of law and order after Israel repeatedly targeted Gaza's police force make it extremely difficult to operate in the territory.

Israel's ongoing assault has plunged Gaza into a humanitarian crisis, and experts are warning of famine, especially in the besieged northern area of the enclave where Israeli forces launched a renewed ground offensive two months ago.

In the northern Gaza refugee camp of Jabalia, health officials said an orthopaedic doctor, Saeed Judeh, was shot and killed by Israeli forces while on his way to al-Awda Hospital, where he usually treated patients.

The Ministry of Health said his death raised to 1,057 the number of healthcare workers killed since the war began.

Two people were killed in another strike on a residential home in Jabalia, and several others were wounded, according to Wafa.

Months of ceasefire negotiations by key mediators Qatar and Egypt that have been backed by the United States have failed to produce an agreement for a truce and captive exchange between Israel and Hamas.

The latest attacks come as the UN General Assembly approved resolutions demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and expressing support for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), which Israel has moved to ban.

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said on Thursday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared prepared to negotiate a deal for the release of the captives held in Gaza.

“We’re now looking to close a hostage release deal and a ceasefire [in Gaza]. It’s time to finish the job and bring all of the hostages home. ... I got the sense from the prime minister he’s ready to do a deal,” Sullivan said at a news conference at the US embassy in Jerusalem after meeting Netanyahu.

Separately, Pope Francis, who has recently intensified criticism of the Israeli offensive in Gaza, received Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, with whom he discussed the “serious” humanitarian situation.

The pair, who have met several times, discussed peace efforts during a private half-hour audience, according to the Vatican.

Abbas then met the Holy See’s secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, and the Vatican’s equivalent of a foreign minister, Paul Richard Gallagher.

The discussions focused on the Catholic Church’s assistance in “the very serious humanitarian situation in Gaza”, the hoped-for ceasefire, release of all captives, and “achieving the two-state solution only through dialogue and diplomacy”, a Vatican statement said.

Abbas is also due to meet Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and President Sergio Mattarella in Rome.

Israel’s military has levelled swaths of Gaza, driving nearly all of its 2.3 million people from their homes. It has killed more than 44,800 Palestinians in Gaza, more than half of them women and children, according to health officials.

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