

# *Netanyahu warns Israeli airstrikes that killed 174 children were just the beginning*

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The shrouded body of a child killed in an overnight Israeli airstrike on the Gaza Strip lies on an adult Palestinian on a stretcher in the courtyard of Al-Ahli Arab hospital on March 18, 2025. (Photo by AFP)

Tel Aviv, March 19 (RHC)-- Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has declared an intensification of deadly assaults on Gaza, warning that the recent airstrikes, which killed at least 174 children, are just the beginning of a larger act of aggression against Palestinians.

In a televised address on Tuesday, Netanyahu said that Israeli forces would strike Gaza with “increasing force” and the recent attacks are just the initial phase of a broader offensive against the Palestinian resistance group Hamas and Gaza residents.

“Hamas has already felt the weight of our force in the last 24 hours, and I want to assure you – and them – this is only the beginning,” Netanyahu said, emphasizing that future ceasefire negotiations would occur “only under fire.”

Netanyahu's comments come in the wake of a renewed wave of airstrikes that have shattered an already fragile ceasefire, which had been in place since January 19.

He outlined the regime's objectives in the current offensive, which include the release of all captives held by Hamas, fully dismantling the resistance group, and eliminating any alleged threat from Gaza to Israel.

These objectives have been reiterated over the last 17 months, yet the only outcomes have been the devastation of Gaza and the displacement of its residents.

He placed the blame for the breakdown of ceasefire negotiations squarely on Hamas, claiming that while Israel accepted an offer from US envoy Steve Witkoff, Hamas refused to engage, which led to the decision to resume military operations.

In response to Netanyahu's aggressive rhetoric, Hamas spokesman Abdul Latif al-Qanou said “Hamas remained committed to the agreement until the last moment, prioritizing its continuation, while Netanyahu, seeking to resolve his internal crises, chose to reignite the war at the expense of our people's blood.”

As the Israeli military continues its bombardment of the Gaza Strip, the humanitarian situation has rapidly deteriorated. The Palestinian Health Ministry reports that over 400 civilians have been killed since the escalation, including more than 174 children.

The strikes have left more than 560 others injured, raising alarms about the scale of the humanitarian crisis unfolding in the territory.

The United Nations agency for children, UNICEF, has described the situation as “beyond horrifying,” with reports indicating that many strikes have targeted makeshift shelters where families sought refuge.

The UN agency urged Israel to reinstate the ceasefire and allow for the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid, warning that Gaza's one million children are now trapped in even greater fear and danger.

Ayed Abu Eqtaish, accountability program director at Defense for Children International-Palestine(DCIP), lamented, “Today marks one of the largest one-day child death tolls in Gaza in history,” labeling the ongoing violence as a “death warrant for Palestinian children.”

More than 18,000 Palestinian children have been killed in Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, according to the Ministry of Health.

“The true death toll is likely to be much higher, and children continue to suffer from serious communicable and preventable conditions like hypothermia, malnutrition, dehydration, and scabies,” the DCIP official said.

The humanitarian crisis has been exacerbated by the blockade of lifesaving aid, with essential supplies running dangerously low. The main desalination plant in Gaza has also lost electricity, curtailing access to

clean drinking water for the already beleaguered population.

[ SOURCE: PRESS TV and AFP ]

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