

Hundreds of thousands of Gazans flee as Israel wipes out Rafah



Rafah, April 4 (RHC)-- Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have fled the southern Gaza city of Rafah in one of the biggest mass displacements of the aggression, as Israeli occupation forces advanced into the ruins of the city.

The Ministry of Health in Gaza said on Thursday that 112 Palestinians were killed by Israeli airstrikes since dawn, with at least 70 of those deaths taking place in Gaza City, in the north of the strip.

The figure makes Thursday the deadliest single day for Palestinians since Israel resumed its war on Gaza on March 18th. At least 20 people were killed in an airstrike around dawn in Shejayia, a suburb of Gaza City in the north.

Later on Thursday, an Israeli airstrike killed at least 27 Palestinians, including women and children, inside a school building that served as a shelter for displaced families in Gaza City, local health authorities said.

Medics said three missiles slammed into the Dar al-Arqam school building in Tuffah neighborhood in Gaza City. Troops pushed into Rafah on Gaza's southern edge, which had served as a last refuge for people fleeing the Israeli aggression.

Residents said the Israeli assault has left an "unprecedented human catastrophe and a trail of unprecedented destruction. Rafah "is gone, it is being wiped out," a father of seven among thousands who had fled from Rafah to neighboring Khan Yunis said. "They are knocking down what is left standing of houses and property," another displaced person was quoted as saying.

The assault to capture Rafah is a major escalation in the Israeli aggression, which Israel restarted last month after effectively abandoning a ceasefire in place since January.

Also, in Shejaia in the north, one of the districts where Israel has ordered the population to leave, hundreds of residents streamed out on Thursday.

Gazans who had returned to homes in the ruins during the ceasefire have now been ordered to flee communities on the northern and southern edges of the strip. They fear Israel intends to depopulate those areas indefinitely, leaving many hundreds of thousands of people permanently homeless.

Many Palestinians are also refusing to leave their homes despite the relentless Israeli bombing of the besieged territory.

"Others stayed because they don't know where to go, or got fed up of being displaced several times. We are afraid they might be killed or at best detained," said Basem, a resident of Rafah.

The latest developments come after Israeli authorities declared their intention to capture large swathes of the crowded, besieged Palestinian region. Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said his regime is working closely with the U.S. to implement Donald Trump's vicious plan of displacement for Gaza residents.

More Palestinians have fallen victim to Israel's incessant air and artillery strikes in Gaza as the regime's aggression rages on unabated across the besieged territory. The Israeli occupation forces resumed their offensive against Gaza on March 18th, breaking a two-month ceasefire. More than 1,160 civilians have been killed since then.

The death toll from the regime's brutal aggression since October 2023 now tops 50,500, with nearly 115,000 injured.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and REUTERS]



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