

Family of Al Jazeera Gaza bureau chief killed in Israeli air raid

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Gaza City, October 26 (RHC)-- The wife, son, daughter and grandson of Wael Dahdouh, Al Jazeera Arabic's bureau chief in Gaza, have been killed in an Israeli air raid. Footage aired on Al Jazeera showed Dahdouh entering the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah on Wednesday to see his dead wife, son and daughter in the morgue.

He was shown crouching and touching the face of his 15-year-old son, Mahmoud, who wanted to be a journalist like his father. Later footage showed him holding the shrouded body of his seven-year-old daughter, Sham, seeming to speak to her as he looked at her bloodied face after the attack on the Nuseirat refugee camp.

Looking shocked, Dahdouh spoke to Al Jazeera on his way out of the hospital: "What happened is clear. This is a series of targeted attacks on children, women and civilians. I was just reporting from Yarmouk about such an attack, and the Israeli raids have targeted many areas, including Nuseirat. We had our doubts that the Israeli occupation would not let these people go without punishing them. And sadly, that is what happened. This is the 'safe' area that the occupation army spoke of."

Dahdouh's grandson Adam was declared dead two hours later. Some members of Dahdouh's family, including a toddler granddaughter, survived the attack on the house they were staying in at the Nuseirat refugee camp south of Wadi Gaza.

Operations are ongoing to rescue some people from the wreckage of the home.

According to Al Jazeera Arabic, Dahdouh's son Yehia was injured, and doctors had to perform an emergency procedure to staunch a serious wound to his head. The procedure had to be done in the hospital corridor, and the doctors struggled to find appropriate instruments, finally having to use non-surgical thread to stitch his wound.

"The indiscriminate assault by the Israeli occupation forces resulted in the tragic loss of [Dahdouh's] wife, son and daughter, while the rest of his family is buried under the rubble," Al Jazeera Media Network said in a statement.

"Their home was targeted in the Nuseirat camp in the centre of Gaza, where they had sought refuge after being displaced by the initial bombardment in their neighbourhood, following [Israeli] Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu's call for all civilians to move south."

Speaking from Gaza, Al Jazeera's Youmna Elsayed said: "It's heartbreaking to be reporting about Wael's family and to see how broken he is. He calms everyone. He speaks to us like a big brother, not just a bureau chief.

"He didn't leave Gaza City. He stayed despite all the threats and warnings and didn't stop for 19 days in a row. He said, 'I must be here in Gaza City to report about these people who are getting bombed every day.'

"He didn't give up on them. He didn't want to leave."

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