

Mass graves and unclaimed bodies rob Gaza of funeral rites

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Gaza City, October 28 (RHC)-- Palestinians say the devastating war between Israel and Hamas is robbing them not only of their loved ones but also of the funeral rites that long have offered mourners some dignity and closure in the middle of grief.

Overwhelmed hospitals and morgues and near-constant bombardment have made funerals and grieving all but impossible. Cemeteries have compelled families to dig up long-buried bodies and deepen the holes to make space for new victims.

Overflowing morgues have compelled hospitals to bury people before their relatives can claim them. To increase the chances of being identified if they die, Palestinian families have begun wearing identification bracelets and scrawling names with marker on their children's arms and legs.

Over the past three weeks, Israel's relentless bombardment of the besieged Gaza Strip – one of the world's most densely populated areas – has wrought dizzying levels of carnage. More than 7,600 Palestinians have been killed, including about 3,000 children. A further 1,650 Palestinians remain trapped under the rubble of their homes and buildings, half of them children.

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