

Senior Israeli commander killed as resistance fights off Gaza invasion

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Photo released by the Israeli military shows troops holed up outside Gaza City

Gaza City, November 3 (RHC)-- Israeli tanks and troops have met fierce resistance from Hamas fighters using mortars and hit-and-run attacks from tunnels to fight off Tel Aviv's ground invasion of Gaza City after nearly four weeks of bombardments.

Fighters of Hamas and its ally Islamic Jihad were emerging from tunnels to fire at tanks, then disappearing back into the network, residents said and videos from both groups showed Thursday, in guerrilla-style operations against Israeli troops.

"They never stopped bombing Gaza City all night, the house never stopped shaking," Reuters quoted an unnamed man living there. "But in the morning we discover the Israeli forces are still outside the city, in the outskirts and that means the resistance is heavier than they expected."

Military commanders said Israeli troops were "at the gates of Gaza City." Herzi Halevi, chief of the general staff of the Israeli military, said Israeli troops were fighting in a dense and complex urban area, that required professional combat. "This is certainly terrain that is more heavily sown than in the past with minefields and booby-traps. Hamas has learned and prepared itself well," said Brigadier General Iddo Mizrahi, chief of Israel's military engineers.

The Israeli army said Palestinian fighters killed a commander of an armored brigade's battalion in Gaza. Lt Col Salman Habaka became the 18th soldier to be killed in Gaza in two days of heavy fighting. He is the most senior Israeli soldier to be killed since the ground invasion escalated on Tuesday.

An Israeli soldier was seriously wounded in an "incident" on the Egyptian border, Israeli media said, citing the army. Lebanon's Hezbollah said two drones attacked an Israeli military position in the Israeli-occupied Shebaa Farms on Thursday. In a brief communique, the group said the two drones used "a large amount of explosives" and hit their targets with "high accuracy".

Earlier on Thursday, sirens warning of incoming rockets sounded in northern Israel.

Hamas rockets launched from Lebanon wounded at least two people and caused damage in the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona. Footage shared on Israel's Channel 13 showed cars and shops on fire as a result of the rocket.

Hamas said in a statement on Thursday that its armed wing in Lebanon had launched 12 rockets into the city.

Israel's military authorities have stressed the difficulties of urban warfare. Their strategy for now seems to be concentrating large forces in the northern Gaza Strip rather than launching a ground invasion on the entire territory.

In yet another development on Thursday, an Israeli settler was killed in a shooting that targeted the vehicle he was driving near the settlement of Einav in the occupied West Bank, said Israel's Magen David Adom emergency response organization.

The deadly shooting prompted dozens of settlers to storm the Palestinian village of Dayr Sharaf, located about seven kilometers from the Einav settlement. They reportedly set Palestinian businesses and fields ablaze and smashed parked cars.

On October 7, Israel launched a full-scale war on the impoverished Gaza Strip, where shortages of food, water, and medicine threaten the lives of Gazans and hospitals are overwhelmed amid incessant Israeli bombings.



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