

*Report shows Israeli
bombardment has destroyed over
70% of Gaza homes*

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Gaza City, January 2 (RHC)-- Israel's relentless bombardment of Gaza for nearly three months has destroyed 70 percent of the homes in the besieged Palestinian enclave, according to the Government Media Office. No further details were provided but an earlier report said more than 200 heritage and archaeological sites were destroyed in the Israeli bombardment considered the most destructive in modern history.

About 300,000 out of 439,000 homes have been destroyed in Israeli attacks, a Wall Street Journal report said. Analysing satellite imagery, the report added that the 29,000 bombs dropped on the strip have targeted residential areas, Byzantine churches, hospitals and shopping malls and all civilian infrastructure

has been damaged to an extent that they cannot be repaired.

“The word ‘Gaza’ is going to go down in history along with Dresden [Germany] and other famous cities that have been bombed,” Robert Pape, a political scientist at the University of Chicago who has written about the history of aerial bombing, told WSJ.

In nearly two months, the offensive has wreaked more destruction than the razing of Syria’s Aleppo between 2012 and 2016, Ukraine’s Mariupol, or, proportionally, the Allied bombing of Germany in World War II. It has killed more civilians than the United States-led coalition did in its three-year campaign against the ISIL (ISIS) group.

Between 1942 and 1945, the Allies attacked 51 major German cities and towns, destroying about 40-50 percent of their urban areas, Pape told The Associated Press news agency. “Gaza is one of the most intense civilian punishment campaigns of history,” said Pape. “It now sits comfortably in the top quartile of the most devastating bombing campaigns ever.”

Corey Scher of the CUNY Graduate Center and Jamon Van Den Hoek of Oregon State University told the AP, “Gaza is now a different color from space. It’s a different texture.”

The Israeli military campaign in Gaza, experts say, also now sits among the deadliest in recent history, killing more than 21,500 people and wounding 55,000. More than 1,000 children had their limbs amputated in the Israeli attacks since October 7th.

The Israeli army claims it has been targeting Hamas fighters, who carried out a deadly attack inside Israel on October 7. Some 1,200 people were killed in that attack which triggered the current phase of the conflict.

Hamas says its attack was in response to continued Israeli blockade of Gaza and expansion of settlement in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Palestinians see the Israeli settlements – which are considered illegal under international law – to be the biggest hurdle in the realisation of their future state.

The level of destruction is so high because “Hamas is very entrenched within the civilian population”, Efraim Inbar, head of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, a think tank, told the AP.

But experts have criticised Israel for bombing Gaza -- which is one of the most densely populated areas in the world housing 2.3 million people on 365sq km (141sq miles) of land.

Media reports and rights groups say an overwhelming majority of those killed are civilians – more than 70 percent of them children, women and elderly. More than 90 percent of the enclave’s population is now displaced, with aid groups warning of hunger and outbreaks of disease. Delivery of aid has been restricted by Israel worsening the crisis.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military has said little about what kinds of bombs and artillery it is using in Gaza. From blast fragments found on-site and analyses of strike footage, experts are confident that the vast majority of bombs dropped on the besieged enclave are US-made. They say the weapons include 2,000-pound (900kg) “bunker-busters” that have killed hundreds in densely populated areas.

U.S. news network CNN reported on December 14 that about half of all the Israeli munitions dropped on Gaza were imprecise “dumb” bombs, which pose a greater threat to civilians. Earlier this week, an Israeli military official admitted that the high death toll from a Christmas Eve attack on a refugee camp in central Gaza was the result of the use of improper munitions, highlighting military tactics that have created high numbers of civilian casualties.

The Israeli news outlet +972 also previously reported that the Israeli military has loosened its standards regarding acceptable civilian harm from attacks, resulting in a higher portion of civilians killed than in

previous rounds of military assaults.

Human Rights Watch has accused Israel of using banned white phosphorous. Israel has denied the claims.

The Israeli army has reiterated that every strike is cleared by legal advisers to make sure it complies with international law. “We choose the right munition for each target – so it doesn’t cause unnecessary damage,” said the army’s chief spokesman, Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari.

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