

Israel kills 99 Palestinians in fresh airstrikes on Rafah and other cities

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Palestinians mourn near the bodies of relatives before a burial in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, on February 21, 2024, following overnight Israeli airstrikes. (Photo by AFP)

Rafah, February 22 (RHC)-- The Israeli military has conducted fresh aerial assaults on the Gaza Strip, killing at least 99 people in the besieged Palestinian territory. The Gaza Health Ministry said on Thursday that most of the victims of Israel's overnight air raids were women, children and elderly people.

Meanwhile, AFP reported that the densely populated Gaza city of Rafah, particularly its al-Shaboura neighborhood, was among the areas most heavily targeted in the deadly strikes.

Rafah resident Abdel Rahman Mohamed Jumaa said he lost his family in the attacks. "I found my wife lying in the street," he said. "Then I saw a man carrying a girl and I ran towards him and.... picked her up, realizing she was really my daughter."

Rafah, situated in the Gaza Strip's closed southern border with Egypt, is home to nearly 1.5 million Palestinians who have been displaced due to Israel's US-backed genocidal war on the territory. Israel had designated Rafah a "safe zone," but it is now threatening an all-out military offensive, leaving the people sheltering there terrified with nowhere left to go.

The looming assault has mounted fears over a new carnage against Palestinians and drawn global condemnations.

The Israeli strikes come amid growing calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, where almost five months of the Israeli aggression has killed 29,313 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 69,333 others.

On Wednesday, Ismail Haniyeh, the leader of the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement, and White House coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Brett McGurk visited the Egyptian capital Cairo to hold talks with the country's officials on the ongoing Gaza war. The U.S. official is expected to arrive in the occupied territories on Thursday.

U.S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Washington was hoping for an "agreement that secures a temporary ceasefire" in Gaza.

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