

*Israeli air strike hits Al-Aqsa  
Hospital in Deir el-Balah, killing  
at least four*

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Gaza City, April 1 (RHC)-- At least four people have been killed in an Israeli air strike on the courtyard of the Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir el-Balah in central Gaza, according to the World Health Organization and a hospital official.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a post on X that 17 others were wounded in the air strike. Khaled al-Dakran, a spokesman for the hospital, said several journalists were among the wounded in the attack.

Israel's military claimed the attack targeted a command center operated by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad armed group.

The Government Media Office in Gaza said the air strike hit a tent where displaced people were sheltering and journalists were working. Reporting from the hospital grounds, Al Jazeera's Hind Khoudary said displaced Palestinians at the hospital were "terrified" after the attack. "Everyone is terrified here. They have been seeking refuge inside this hospital for more than six months now," she said.

Al-Dakran called on the international community to ensure protection for health workers in Gaza. "Hospitals and medical teams and all health sector workers must be protected and the international community must provide such protection," he said.

"The patients, the wounded and the displaced are in a state of panic and horror, fearing that the Israeli planes will attack the hospital again."

WHO chief Tedros said a team with the United Nations organisation was at the hospital compound when the air strike hit and that all WHO staff were accounted for. "We again call for protection of patients, health personnel and humanitarian missions. The ongoing attacks and militarisation of hospitals must stop. International humanitarian law must be respected," Tedros said. "We urge parties to comply with the UN Security Council resolution and ceasefire!"

Reporting from Rafah, southern Gaza, Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum said the attack was "a new part of the Israeli ongoing attacks on journalists".

Since October, more than 130 Palestinian journalists have been killed, he added.

Israeli strikes have killed 77 Palestinians in Gaza in the past 24 hours, health authorities said on Sunday.

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