

Israeli air strike kills 10 family members of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in Gaza

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Men search through the rubble of the home of Ismail Haniyeh's sister in the Shati camp near Gaza City [Omar al-Qattaa/AFP]

Gaza City, June 26 (RHC)-- An Israeli air strike has killed 10 members of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh's family in northern Gaza's Shati refugee camp, according to the Palestinian group and the enclave's civil defense agency.

Confirming the attack on the Haniyeh family and the number of the dead, Hamas said on Tuesday that it held the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden responsible for the continuation of the war of "extermination" against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

It said the United States was continuing to give Israel "political and military cover and time to accomplish the task of destruction and extermination in the Strip." Mahmud Basal, a spokesman for the civil defence agency, told the AFP news agency that the Tuesday morning attack targeted the Haniyeh family home in Shati.

"There are 10 martyrs ... as a result of the strike, including Zahr Haniyeh, sister of Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh," Basal said, adding that a number of bodies were likely still under the rubble but "we do not have the necessary equipment" to extract them.

Civil defense crews transferred the bodies to al-Ahli Hospital in nearby Gaza City, Basal said, also reporting "several wounded" in the attack.

In a statement, Hamas called "on the international community and the United Nations to shoulder their responsibilities towards these ongoing horrific crimes, to take urgent action to protect innocent civilians, and to hold the terrorist leaders of the occupation accountable for their crimes".

The Israeli military said two buildings were targeted overnight in Shati and Daraj Tuffah, claiming that fighters who had been involved in the October 7 attack on Israel, ahead of the current conflict, were hiding inside. Its statement posted on social media did not mention striking the Haniyeh family home.

Al Jazeera's team on the ground said the dead from the Haniyeh family included Zahr Abdel Salam Haniyeh, Nahed Haniyeh Abu Ghazi, Iman Haniyeh Umm Ghazi, Ismail Nahed Haniyeh, Muhammad Nahed Haniyeh, Moamen Nahed Haniyeh, Zahra Nahed Haniyeh, Amal Nahed Haniyeh, Shahad Nahed Haniyeh and Sumaya Nahed Haniyeh.

In April, an Israeli air strike in central Gaza killed three sons and four grandchildren of Haniyeh, with the military accusing them of "terrorist activities".

Haniyeh at the time said that about 60 members of his family had been killed since Israel's war on Gaza broke out on October 7th last year. The war has killed more than 37,600 people in the territory.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the war will continue even if a ceasefire deal is agreed to with Hamas.

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