

Israel expands invasion after horrific massacres in Gaza's Shujaiya

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This photo shows destroyed buildings and rubble in Gaza City's Shujaiya district after weeks-

long Israeli invasion of the neighborhood.

Gaza City, July 12 (RHC)-- A trail of destruction is left as Israeli forces partially pull out of Gaza City's Shujayea district after a bloody two-week onslaught. Witnesses on Thursday said tanks and troops had moved into other Gaza City areas, and clashes between Israeli forces and persistent fighters were occurring. Explosions, artillery shelling and gunfire could be heard, they said.

Plumes of smoke were seen rising over parts of the city. The Hamas resistance movement reported 45 airstrikes in the Gaza City area, as well as in Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah.

Several Palestinians lost their lives in fresh Israeli attacks on areas of al-Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. At least 50 others were also killed in Gaza City's Tal al-Hawa neighborhood, where Israel had issued an evacuation order.

Witnesses say people were shot dead by Israel's military while fleeing Gaza City. Other parts of the Palestinian territory have also seen new strikes.

Israeli troops had pulled back from Gaza City's eastern district of Shujaiya leaving behind "more than 300 residential units and more than 100 businesses destroyed," Hamas said. The images showed Palestinians gathered around a destroyed and burned armored vehicle beneath a blackened building on a street carpeted with rubble.

Mohammed Nairi said he and other residents returned to "immense destruction that defies description. All the houses were demolished." Another displaced resident said the district "lies in ruins."

A spokesperson for the civil defense agency says more than 85 percent of the buildings in Gaza City's Shujayea neighborhood have become uninhabitable, making more than 120,000 residents now homeless. "We recovered more than 60 martyrs [bodies] and there are dozens of martyrs under the rubble of homes in the Shujayea neighborhood. We do not have an accurate number," said the spokesperson.

"The occupation destroyed a medical clinic that provided health services to more than 60,000 Palestinians in Shujayea," he added.

"Documented testimonies" have been taken that Israeli forces opened fire on residents in the neighborhood despite being in designated evacuation routes, he said.

Israeli forces are now invading Gaza City's southern neighborhood of Tal al-Hawa and "destroying all aspects of life", said the spokesperson.

Dozens of Palestinians reportedly lost their lives in Israeli attacks on the Tal al-Hawa neighborhood in Gaza City. Intense ground battles are also underway in the neighborhood. Hamas has released footage of its fighters hitting Israeli targets there.

The regime has ordered Palestinians to evacuate. Gaza officials have called the order a form of psychological warfare against civilians because they have nowhere to go.

On Wednesday, the Israeli military dropped leaflets warning "everyone in Gaza City" that the area would "remain a dangerous combat zone." The leaflets ordered residents to flee and set out designated escape routes from the area where the UN humanitarian agency OCHA said up to 350,000 people were staying.

The United Nations said the latest evacuations "will only fuel mass suffering for Palestinian families, many of whom have been displaced many times", and who face "critical levels of need".

The escalation comes as a new round of ceasefire talks have got underway in Qatar and Egypt. Hamas says the increased Israeli military activity can torpedo the talks. Nearly 38,350 Palestinians have been

killed since the war began in early October.

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