

Israeli air strikes kill 35 in one day as Gaza hospitals warn of collapse

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Gaza City, August 20 (RHC)--Israeli air strikes have killed at least 35 Palestinians across the Gaza Strip, medical sources tell Al Jazeera, as hospitals warn that children are at a risk of dying due to a fuel shortage.

Among the casualties on Monday were 13 people killed by Israeli forces in Gaza City. At least nine of them were killed in an air attack targeting a group of Palestinians in the United Nations-run Shati refugee camp in western Gaza City, Al Jazeera Arabic reported.

Meanwhile, earlier in the day, another four people were killed in the Israeli bombing of a civilian car in the az-Zarqa neighbourhood in northern Gaza City, according to the Palestinian Information Center (Palinfo).

Palinfo also reported that Israeli warplanes were firing at homes in the Sabra neighbourhood in southern Gaza City.

Separately in northern Gaza, Hussam Abu Safiya, the director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, told Al Jazeera that “11 sick children in the nursery and intensive care units are at risk of death within hours due to fuel shortages” that threaten to shut down the facility.

Al Jazeera’s Hind Khoudary, reporting from Gaza, said Abu Safiya warned that the children, some of whom are infants, were at risk as long as fuel did not enter northern Gaza.

“We know that the World Health Organization has a convoy filled with fuel and medicine heading to the northern part of the Gaza Strip, but so far, they are still on the checkpoint waiting for the green light from the Israeli forces to cross,” Khoudary reported. “So there’s no guarantee that they’re going to make it to the hospital.”

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, at least 33 health facilities have been out of service since October 7. The remaining hospitals need “at least 4,000 litres [1,056 gallons] of fuel every day to continue operating”, Khoudary added.

In Deir el-Balah in central Gaza, Khalil al-Degran, spokesperson for Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, said the facility is experiencing a severe shortage of medical supplies as the Rafah border crossing with Egypt has been closed for more than 200 days.

The staff at the hospital cannot provide “the most basic medical necessities” for injured patients, “a clear signal that the entire health sector has collapsed in Gaza”, he said. He added that Israeli forces “continue to target and pound unsuspecting residents” in civilian areas.

“Yesterday, the Israeli official forces targeted a residential building. In this building, seven members of the same family were killed – six children, together with their mother,” he said.

Israeli forces have a clear intent to commit “genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian population”, al-Degran added. On Monday, Israeli military spokesperson Daniel Hagari confirmed an expansion of the ground offensive on Khan Younis in southern Gaza and the outskirts of Deir el-Balah.

The military released aerial footage of what it said was a 1.5km-long (nearly 1-mile-long) tunnel that was being demolished. It also said Israeli soldiers killed an unspecified number of Palestinian fighters and found weapons in Khan Younis.

Khoudary reported that Israeli forces killed at least six Palestinians and injured 15 in western parts of Khan Younis. “We see the presence of tanks in Hamad, where there has been evacuation orders for the Palestinians to evacuate that area, but whoever is trying to evacuate, the Israeli quadcopters are directly shooting at those Palestinians,” she said.

This comes as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv on Monday, to discuss progress towards securing a ceasefire in the war. Since October, Israel’s attacks have killed more than 40,100 Palestinians in Gaza, according to health authorities in the Strip.

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