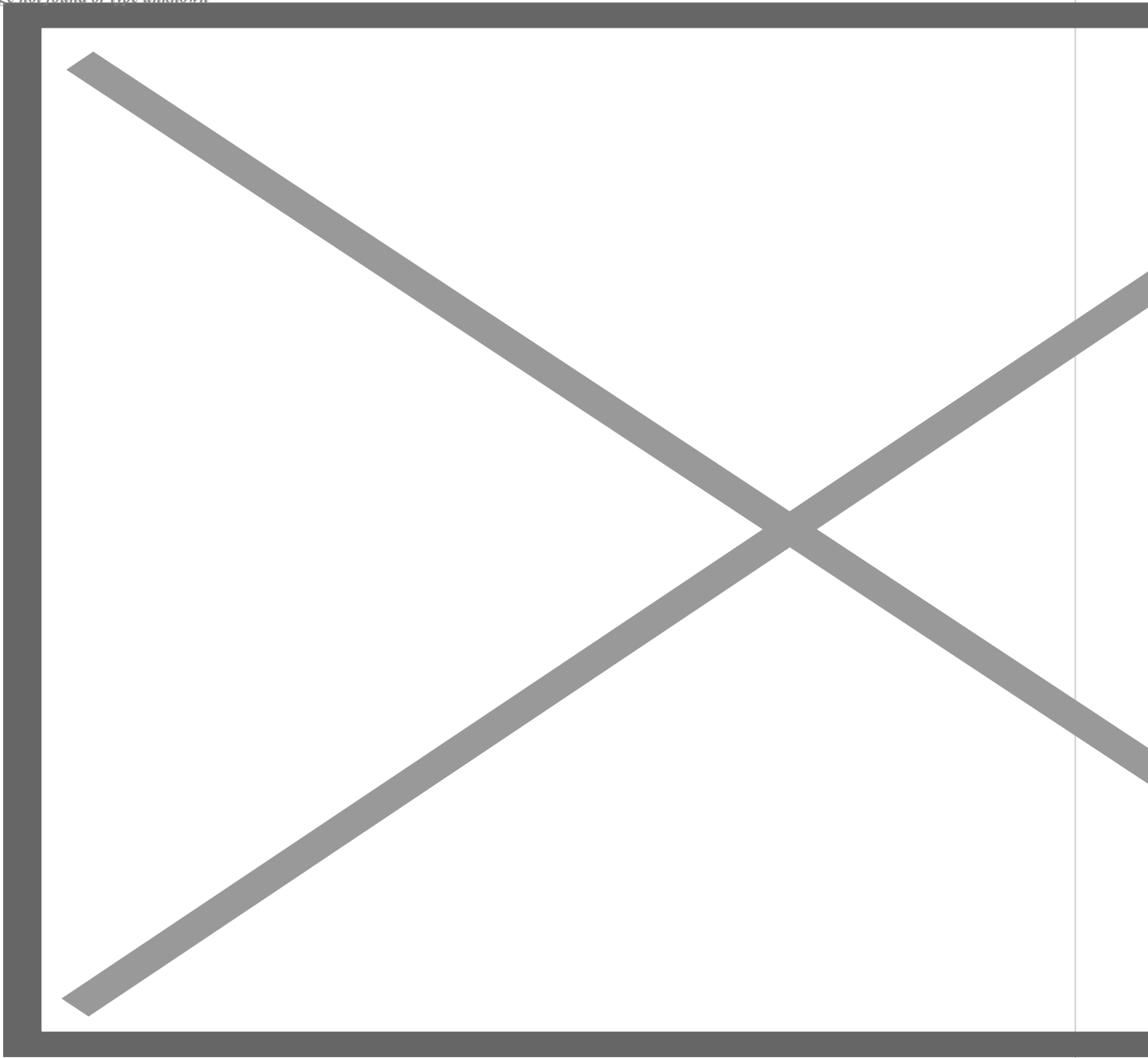


Israeli genocidal bombardment kills at least 21 in Gaza

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Gaza City, October 2 (RHC)-- Israeli air strikes have killed at least 21 people in Gaza, local medics reported. The Israeli military said on Tuesday that it had carried out a strike targeting a Hamas command centre.

However, it made no immediate comment on two strikes on two houses that Palestinian health officials said killed at least 13 people, including women and children, in Nuseirat. The other strike, on a school sheltering displaced Palestinian families in the Tuffah neighbourhood of Gaza City, killed at least seven people, medics said.

The Israeli military said in a statement the air strike targeted Hamas fighters operating from a command centre embedded in a compound that had previously served as Shujayea School.

Later on Tuesday, two separate Israeli attacks killed five Palestinians in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip and in the Zeitoun suburb of Gaza City, medics said.

In Khan Younis, in the south of the enclave, six Palestinians were killed in an Israeli air strike on a tent housing displaced people, medics said. The latter two attacks would raise the death toll to at least 31, but the reports remain unverified.

The armed wings of Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, and other smaller factions said in separate statements that their fighters attacked Israeli forces operating in several areas of Gaza with antitank rockets, mortar fire and explosive devices.

The renewed surge in strikes on Gaza came as Israel launched a ground operation in Lebanon, saying its paratroopers and commandos were engaged in intense fighting with Iran-backed Hezbollah.

The conflict follows devastating Israeli air strikes against Hezbollah's leadership.

Some Palestinians said they feared that Israel's shift in focus to Lebanon could prolong the conflict in Gaza, which marks its first anniversary next week. "The eyes of the world now are on Lebanon while the occupation continues its killing in Gaza. We are afraid the war is going to go on for more months at least," said Samir Mohammed, 46, a father of five from Gaza City.

"It is all unclear now as Israel unleashes its force undeterred in Gaza, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, and God knows where else in the future."

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