

Israeli drone attack on Gaza aid convoy kills 12 as hunger crisis deepens

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The bombing was the latest Israeli attack targeting security guards escorting humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip.

A truck carrying humanitarian aid drives on the main Salah al-Din Street in the Nuseirat refugee Camp in the central Gaza Strip on Wednesday [Eyad Baba/AFP]

Gaza City, December 12 (RHC)-- An Israeli attack on Palestinian security guards escorting a humanitarian aid shipment in the Gaza Strip has killed at least 12 people and injured dozens, Al Jazeera Arabic's correspondents on the ground and news agencies report.

Medics and local residents told the Reuters news agency that at least 30 people were injured, including several in critical condition, following the Israeli attack on Thursday that targeted civilian guards tasked with securing the aid convoy in the southern part of the war-torn enclave.

A video clip shared by local Palestinian media in Gaza showed bodies stacked in a morgue that were reported to be the aid convoy's security personnel who were targeted west of Khan Younis.

The attack is only the latest by Israeli forces on humanitarian aid workers, convoys and those trying to assist the safe entry of food and other supplies into war-torn Gaza, which is gripped by food shortages and fears of famine in the north of the territory, where an Israeli military ground operation and siege have been ongoing for several weeks.

On Sunday night, at least 10 Palestinian people were killed while lining up to buy flour in an Israeli attack on Rafah, which is also in the south of the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military has yet to comment on its latest reported attack on security guards protecting an aid shipment.

Al Jazeera Arabic also reports that six people, including children, were killed in an Israeli attack on a residential building in western Gaza City in the north of the Gaza Strip in the early hours of Thursday morning, while the death toll rose to 13 following Israel's bombing of a house in the Nuseirat refugee camp, in central Gaza.

Gaza's Ministry of Health said in a statement on Wednesday that at least 44,805 Palestinians have now been killed and 106,257 wounded in Israel's unrelenting war on the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023.

The latest attack on security trying to protect aid shipments entering the Gaza Strip comes after UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, said that it had taken the "difficult decision" to pause aid deliveries through the main crossing into the Gaza Strip at the beginning of December.

UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini said at the time that humanitarian operations had become "unnecessarily impossible" due to "the ongoing siege, hurdles from Israeli authorities, political decisions to restrict the amounts of aid, lack of safety on aid routes and targeting of local police" who secure aid convoys.

He called on Israel to ensure aid flowed to Gaza and said the country "must refrain from attacks on humanitarian workers".

On Wednesday, Lazzarini said that a joint UN aid convoy was able to provide urgent food supplies for 200,000 people in southern and central areas of the Strip, after aid resumed to pass through the Karem Abu Salem (also known as the Kerem Shalom) border crossing between Gaza and Israel.

With the "political will", Lazzarini said, delivering aid safely to Gaza was possible.

"We need to scale up our support to the people of Gaza [and] need all parties to continue facilitation of safe, unimpeded [and] uninterrupted humanitarian access to ensure aid reaches those who need it most," he wrote in a post on social media.

Speaking to reporters in New York on Wednesday after returning from the Gaza Strip, Haoliang Xu, associate administrator of the UN's Development Programme, said conditions in Gaza were unlike any he had seen before.

“I’ve been to many conflicts and disaster situations or disasters themselves that I experienced, I can say that I’ve never seen the kind of devastation that I’ve seen in Gaza in my career,” he said.

“What I know is that at least for the last month, no fresh fruit and vegetables have been imported” into Gaza, he added.

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