



8 December 2023

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Al Mezan, and Al-Haq condemn the continuation of Israel's military aggression on Gaza, for 63 consecutive days, and the serious violations and international crimes committed against Palestinians there, including the bombing of homes and shelters with people inside, the targeting of hospitals, and carrying out mass arrests. We stress the need for immediate action by the international community to push for a ceasefire and for Israel to stop the unfolding genocide it is committing in Gaza.

Israeli warplanes continue to launch hundreds of aerial attacks, in the form of 'carpet bombing' at homes, shelters, mosques and streets. This is taking place amid a catastrophic humanitarian situation caused by the forcible displacement of nearly 2 million Palestinians, more than 85% of the population of the Gaza Strip, from their homes.

The Israeli raids in recent hours led to the death and injury of hundreds of Palestinians, the majority of whom were children and women. On the evening of December 7 2023, the Ministry of Health in Gaza announced that 350 killed and 1,900 wounded Palestinians arrived at hospitals during the evening. Numerous of inaccessible casualties remain under the rubble and on the roads.

Our organizations also examined video clips taken from inside a school housing displaced people near the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahiya, showing several civilians dead and lying on the ground, including at least one woman, after being killed by Israeli sniper fire.

Based on our monitoring, thousands of displaced Palestinians in several schools in Beit Lahiya and Jabaliya camps have been encircled by the Israeli occupying forces (IOF). They face shortages of food and water and are constantly subjected to Israeli gunfire and shelling, which result in the killing and injuring of many of them.

We also received confirmed information about people who have been killed or injured in several homes and shelters in the areas of the Israeli ground invasion, specifically in northern Gaza and Khan Younis and need urgent evacuation to hospitals and medical centers. Accordingly, we call on the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to ensure access to these victims and secure their evacuation. We also stress the need to put pressure on Israel to provide safe corridors to Palestinians and facilitate the evacuation of victims and people injured to hospitals.

The Israeli occupying forces also continued to target cultural and archaeological landmarks in the Gaza Strip. On December 7th, 2023, Israeli warplanes bombed the ancient Othman Bin Qashqar Mosque in the Old City of Gaza City.

On December 6, 2023, the Ministry of Health announced that all hospitals in northern Gaza went out of service. Patients and medical staff in the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Jabaliya were evacuated, and the hospital stopped receiving new patients after Israeli forces encircled it. Injured people are now received in new care centers with almost non-existent medical capabilities and supplies.

We strongly condemn the photos and videos posted by Israeli occupying forces on December 7th, of dozens of Palestinian residents of northern Gaza being arrested and subjected to humiliating and degrading treatment. This included stripping them down to their underwear, handcuffing them and forcing them to sit in the street in these conditions. They were then loaded in trucks and transported to unknown places.

Preliminary information followed up by our teams and the accounts published by relatives of a number of those detained show that most of the detained were taken from their homes and shelters in Beit Lahiya. The journalist Daaa Al-Kahlout was identified among those taken. Initial reports also confirm that many of those detained were beaten, abused, shot at, and used as human shields. They were forced to sit for hours in the streets near the IOF barracks. These incidents require investigation and accountability.

Also on December 6th, 2023, UNRWA announced the complete evacuation of five UNRWA schools, which were used as shelters for displaced people in the eastern Khan Younis City, following direct orders issued by Israeli occupying forces to the directors of these facilities. On this day, the IOF designated an additional area, which is approximately one square kilometer extending from the city of Khan Younis, as an active combat zone, to displace its residents.

In addition to similar displacement orders issued previously, around 178,000 residents and about 170,000 displaced people who lived in approximately 25% of the area of Khan Younis, received orders to leave the area. The Israeli army instructed residents to move to two areas in Rafah and the town of Al-Fokhari, east of the Khan Younis Governorate, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

Accordingly, the influx of displaced people continued to Rafah. Since December 3, 2023, tens of thousands of displaced people have arrived in Rafah, the majority of them from various parts of the city of Khan Younis. They were forced to settle in the streets, mosques and public places because shelters in the city of Rafah had far exceeded their capacity. UNRWA announced the distribution of hundreds of tents set up in two separate sites, in addition to hundreds of temporary shelters.

Meanwhile, the deterioration of humanitarian conditions continues in the entire Gaza Strip. Hundreds of thousands of displaced people are suffering from real hunger and water deprivation, at a time when the number of displaced people has risen to nearly 2 million including hundreds of thousands who have not found a place to take shelter. Most shelters, including those run by UNRWA, lack necessities of food, water, hygiene and shower services, a catastrophic reality that has begun to lead to the spread of various diseases and infections.

According to the Ministry of Health's latest update, Israel killed 17,177 and injured 46,000 as of 5 pm on December 7th, 2023. 70% of the killed were children and women.

Our teams confirm that the actual number of casualties is much higher than the number announced by the Ministry of Health, as a significant number of victims remain under the rubble or in the streets. In many cases, people bury their loved ones on their own because they cannot transport them to hospitals. According to estimates by the Ministry of Health, around 8,000 people are missing, a large number of whom are children and women. Among these, there are large numbers whose bodies have decomposed, as shown in videos seen by our teams, which portends the spread of diseases and health epidemics.

In the face of these dangerous developments, we reiterate our call on the peoples of the world, civil society organizations and influential forces to mobilize and exert all forms of political and legal pressure on the governments of their countries, especially in Europe and the United States of America. Governments should be pressured to change their positions, to stop their support for the unfolding genocide against the Palestinian people and to comply with the rules of international humanitarian law.

We also call on the international community to take serious and immediate action to stop Israel's military aggression on Gaza, prevent Israeli plans for a second *Nakba* for Palestinians, and take effective measures to ensure accountability for Israel's gross violations committed against the Palestinian people in occupied Palestinian territory, that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We reiterate our call to the international community to ensure the end of the Israeli occupation, and the dismantling of Israel's settle-colonial and apartheid regime. We call for the repeal of all discriminatory and inhumane laws, policies, and practices against the entire Palestinian people, and to enable them to exercise their unconditional right to self-determination without restriction.