

# Israeli airstrikes on Gaza kill Palestinian as violence ebbs

## International Desk

Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip killed a 58-year-old man and wounded five others on Wednesday, Palestinian health officials said, even as the latest spasm of violence between Israel and Palestinian militants in the enclave appeared to ebb.

Israeli fighter jets struck targets in Gaza in what they claimed to be a response to salvos of rockets launched by Palestinian militants on Tuesday. But after sunrise, the violence seemed to subside as both sides signaled they wanted to avoid a wider conflict, AP reported.

The exchange erupted when a prominent Palestinian detainee died in Israeli custody after an 87-day hunger strike. The death of Khader Adnan, 45, a leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group credited with popularizing hunger strikes as an

effective form of activism, reverberated across the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, where he is revered as a national hero. Protests erupted at Israeli military checkpoints and a general strike shuttered stores. Palestinians and rights groups have blamed Israel for his death, accusing prison authorities of medical negligence.

Palestinian militants in Gaza fired 100 rockets into southern Israel late Tuesday. The Israeli military said its warplanes struck tunnels, arms production sites and military installations belonging to the ruling Hamas militant group in Gaza.

The Israeli strikes sent shrapnel slicing through the house of 58-year-old Hashil Mubarak in Gaza City, his son Hatem said. As their roof collapsed, shards of metal struck Mubarak's chest, killing him, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. Mubarak was rushed to

the hospital and could not be resuscitated.

"We were sleeping at home safe and sound when we heard a giant explosion from a missile," Hatem recalled as mourners filled his neighborhood mosque and took turns bending down to kiss his father's forehead. "He was martyred," he said.

The U.N.'s envoy to the Mideast, Tor Wennesland, said he welcomed "the restoration of calm" after a violent 12 hours. "Had our efforts failed, we would risk being in the midst of another deadly escalation," he said.

The spike in violence comes at a time of heightened tensions in the occupied West Bank under Israel's most right-wing government in history. On Wednesday, Israeli security forces demolished the family houses of two Palestinians who carried out deadly attacks against Israelis last fall.



Israel's decades-old policy of leveling family homes of attackers as a deterrent has long drawn criticism from human rights groups that call it collective punishment, forbidden by in-

ternational law. Some also question its effectiveness in preventing future attacks, saying such demolitions only exacerbate tensions and fuel hatred in Palestinian communities.



Palestinian mourners chant Islamic slogans during funeral of Hashil Mubarak in front of a mosque in Gaza City, on May 3, 2023.

● ADEL HANA/AP

## UN: 258m people faced acute food insecurity in 2022



● AP

More than a quarter-billion people in 58 countries faced acute food insecurity last year because of conflicts, climate change, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine, according to a report published Wednesday. The Global Report on Food Crises, an alliance of humanitarian organizations founded by the U.N. and European Union, said people faced starvation and death in seven of those countries: Somalia, Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, AP reported.

The report found that the number of people facing acute food insecurity and requiring urgent food aid — 258 million — had increased for the fourth consecutive year, a "stinging indictment of humanity's failure" to implement U.N. goals to end world hunger, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said. While the increase last year was due in part to more populations being

analyzed, the report also found that the severity of the problem increased as well, "highlighting a concerning trend of a deterioration."

Rein Paulsen, director of emergencies and resilience for the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, said an interplay of causes was driving hunger. They include conflicts, climate shocks, the impact of the pandemic and consequences of war in Ukraine that has had an impact on the global trade in fertilizers, wheat, maize and sunflower oil.

The impact has been most acute on the poorest countries that are dependent on food imports. "Prices have increased (and) those countries have been adversely affected," Paulsen said. He called for a "paradigm shift" so that more funding is spent investing in agricultural interventions that anticipate food crises and aim to prevent them.

## Floods amid heavy rainfall kill more than 100 in Rwanda

Torrential rains caused flooding in western and northern Rwanda, killing 109 people, a public broadcaster said Wednesday.

The death toll "continues to rise," the Rwanda Broadcasting Agency said Wednesday, AP reported. "This could be the highest disaster-induced death toll to be recorded in the country in the shortest period, according to available records from recent years," the government-backed New Times newspaper reported.

Francois Habitegeko, governor of Rwanda's Western Province, told reporters that a search for more victims was underway following heavy rain Tuesday night and Wednesday morning. Strong rainstorms started last week, causing flooding and mudslides that swept away several houses across the country and left some roads inaccessible.

The Rwanda Meteorology Agency has warned that more rain is coming. The government has in the past asked residents living in wetlands and other dangerous areas to relocate.

The western and northern provinces and Kigali, the capital, are particularly hilly, making them vulnerable to landslides during the rainy season.

The Ministry of Emergency Management reported last month that from January to April 20, weather-related disasters killed 60 people, destroyed more than 1,205 houses and damaged 2,000 hectares (around 5,000 acres) of land across Rwanda.

Parts of East Africa, including Uganda's southwest, also are seeing heavy rainfall.

At least three people drowned in floods last week after a river burst its banks in the remote Ugandan district of Rukungiri.



● AP

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Nine killed at school shooting in Serbia



● AFP

A 14-year-old boy opened fire in his Belgrade classroom on Wednesday morning, shooting dead eight fellow pupils and a security guard in a pre-planned attack and wounding seven others, Serbian officials said. Using his father's handgun, the boy fired first at the security guard and three girls in the hallway and then entered a history class and shot at the teacher and classmates, police said. The teacher and six pupils were hospitalised, some with life-threatening injuries.

### US, Mexico agree on tighter immigration policies at border

U.S. and Mexican officials have agreed on new immigration policies meant to deter illegal border crossings while also opening up other pathways ahead of an expected increase in migrants following the end of pandemic restrictions next week. Under the agreement, Mexico will continue to accept migrants from Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba and Nicaragua who are turned away at the border, and up to 100,000 individuals from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador who have family in the U.S. will be eligible to live and work there.

### Brazilian police raid ex-president's home



Brazilian police on Wednesday raided former president Jair Bolsonaro's home and seized his cell phone as part of an investigation into his COVID-19 vaccination records.

The investigation may answer questions about how Bolsonaro, a strident coronavirus skeptic who vowed never to get a COVID vaccine, was registered as vaccinated in health records made public in February.

## Erdogan stands higher chance of reelection

Meanwhile, Erdogan's challenger Kemal Kilicdaroglu initially led in the polls due to support from six major Turkish parties. However, Erdogan countered with a robust campaign that showcased important national projects and narrowed the gap between himself and his main rival.

However, what raised doubts about Erdogan's abilities was his health condition in a TV show, an unfortunate moment that

was compounded by two other events that have favored his rival in the last few days. The waning popularity of the third candidate, Muharrem Ince, took a toll on his votes in favor of Kemal Kilicdaroglu. Additionally, the support of the People's Democratic Party, popular among Kurdish youth, adds to Kilicdaroglu's momentum.

So, it seems that Erdogan's rival has had a good week, and it remains to be seen whether Erdogan can make a stronger comeback in

the remaining 10 days. Whichever candidate gets elected does not make a significant difference for Iran. Erdogan's election has both opportunities and threats in store for Iran as he has shown a more independent approach toward the West, helped Iran circumvent sanctions, and maintained political stability in Türkiye. However, he has taken measures involving the neighboring countries of Iraq and the Republic of Azerbaijan that are not acceptable to Tehran.

On the other hand, although Kilicdaroglu and his supporting coalition are pro-Western, they are not anti-Iranian, and there are nationalist currents in both competing coalitions. However, the pro-Kilicdaroglu front is a tense coalition, and it is unclear what the situation in Türkiye will be in case of their victory. Ultimately, the competition between both candidates is very tight, and it is impossible to say with certainty the victory of which one will benefit or harm Iran.

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