

# Israel escalates Gaza attacks as Netanyahu defies int'l calls for cease-fire



Smoke rises after Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip on October 31, 2023.  
● FADEL SENNA/AFP

## International Desk

Israel intensified assaults on Gaza on Tuesday after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected global demand for a humanitarian cease-fire, declaring “this is a time for war”. Israeli troops and Hamas fighters engaged on Tuesday in “fierce battles” in Gaza, where the dire humanitarian crisis spiraled and tearful Palestinian families scoured rubble in a desperate search for loved ones.

Israeli troops pushed deeper into Gaza, driving tanks and armored bulldozers through the rubble of shattered buildings, in what Israel claims is scouring for Hamas fighters who carried out a large-scale attack on October 7 that saw 1,400 people dead and 230 others captured.

Gaza’s Hamas-run Health Ministry said Tuesday that at least 8,525 people have been killed in the Palestinian territory, including at least 3,542 children and 2,187 women, as Israel pressed on with its air and ground campaign in the Gaza Strip. As Israel stepped up its relentless bombing of Gaza, desperate Palestinian families scabbled through debris searching for survivors and mourned over the bodies of some of the thousands killed, draped in white shrouds.

## ‘Scale of horror is hard to convey’

Major UN agencies are calling for a humanitarian cease-fire to allow deliveries of aid for more than two million civilians

trapped with scarce supplies of food, water and medical equipment, and also for the safe release of 230 prisoners.

The entire population of Gaza is “being dehumanized,” the chief of the main UN agency operating there told the UN Security Council on Monday, as pressure intensified on the besieged strip with Netanyahu ruling out the cease-fire, saying that while the Bible says there is a time for peace, “this is a time for war.”

“Calls for a cease-fire or calls for Israel to surrender to Hamas ... that will not happen,” he said.

Philippe Lazzarini, commissioner general of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) told the Security Council that thousands of children killed in Israeli airstrikes in Gaza in the past three weeks “cannot be collateral damage.”

“An immediate humanitarian cease-fire

## International Desk

Iran’s permanent mission to the United Nations said there has been no change in Iran’s policy towards Palestine, noting that Tehran’s ‘yes’ vote to a UN General Assembly resolution on Gaza conflict on Friday was consistent with the country’s position. The mission said on Tuesday that the Iranian government considers the UN approval of the resolution a victory for the international community supporting Palestine, defending the Palestinians’ right to determine their own fate, and that Iran supported the resolution in its entirety in a unified move with Islamic countries, according to IRNA.

At the same time, and according to the working procedure of the General Assembly, the Islamic Republic has announced its objection to the two-state solution and the recognition of the Israeli regime as a state. Therefore, the Islamic Republic did not co-sponsor Jordan’s motion due to the contradiction in some parts of the resolution to Iran’s position, it said. The two-state solution calls for es-

tablishing an independent state for Palestinians alongside Israel.

On Friday, the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly in favor of the resolution, calling for an immediate humanitarian truce between Israel and the Palestinian resistance movement, Hamas.

The 193-member body passed the non-binding resolution, drafted by a group of 22 Arab countries, by a margin of 120 to 14, with 45 countries abstaining. The United States and Israel voted no.

Among the abstentions was Canada, which had introduced an amendment that would have more explicitly condemned Hamas for its October 7 attack and demanded the immediate release of captives seized by the group.

The General Assembly voted after the UN Security Council had failed to take action over two weeks, with the US and Russia using their veto powers to block proposals supported by the other.

The adopted resolution calls for an “immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a ces-