

Israel kills nearly 200 Gazans in 24 hours

The Gaza Strip's health ministry said Wednesday death toll in the Palestinian territory surged above 21,000 after Israel killed nearly 200 people in just 24 hours.

Israel again pounded Gaza with air strikes and shelling after its armed forces chief warned the war raging with Hamas since the October 7 attacks will last "many more months". Explosion lit up the sky over the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis – a focus of heavy urban combat since the Israeli army said it had largely gained operational control over Gaza's north.

Heavy firefights however also raged again around Gaza City in the north, while an air strike wounded 11 near Rafah, a far-southern city crowded with internally displaced people, witnesses said.

Gaza's spiraling humanitarian crisis has amplified calls for an end to the hostilities.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly vowed to keep

up the campaign to destroy Hamas. "This war's objectives are essential and not simple to achieve," armed forces chief Herzi Halevi said Tuesday. "Therefore, the war will continue for many more months."

The campaign has killed at least 21,110 people, according to the latest toll issued by Gaza's health ministry, which added that more than 55,000 people had been wounded.

The Israeli army said the number of Israeli soldiers killed inside Gaza had risen to 164.

Gaza's 2.4 million people have suffered severe shortages of water, food, fuel and medicines, with only limited aid entering the territory.

An estimated 1.9 million Gazans have been displaced, according to the UN.

The Gaza war "goes beyond a catastrophe and a genocide," Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas charged in an interview on Egyptian television.

The Palestinian Authority chief argued the war "is much uglier than what happened" during the 1948 war that accompanied Israel's creation when 760,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled from their homes.

"Netanyahu's plan is to get rid of the Palestinians and the Palestinian Authority," Abbas said.

The UN Security Council, in a resolution last week, called for the "safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale".

The resolution, which did not call for an immediate end to the fighting, effectively leaves Israel with operational oversight of aid deliveries.

In Rafah, hundreds turned up at the Abdul Salam Yassin water company carrying baskets, pulling hand-carts and even pushing a wheelchair stacked with bottles to queue for clean water.

Violence has also flared across the occupied West Bank, with more than 310 Palestinians killed by Israeli troops or settlers, according to the territory's health ministry.

An Israeli operation in a refugee camp in the north of the West Bank left six people dead early Wednesday, it said. Israel also said it will not renew the visa of a United Nations staff member and will also deny the visa request of another UN employee as the regime yet again expresses its displeasure of the global body, which has criticized Israel's targeting of civilians and hospitals. An overwhelming majority of the more than 20,000 Palestinians killed are civilians.

"We will no longer remain silent in the face of the UN's hypocrisy!" Eli Cohen, Israel's minister of foreign affairs, posted on X on Monday. Israel has accused the UN of being biased.



A plume of smoke erupts over the northern Gaza Strip during Israeli bombardment from southern Israel on December 27, 2023.
● JACK GUEZ/AFP



The shrouded bodies of Palestinians killed in northern Gaza, that were taken and later released by Israel, are buried in a mass grave in Rafah, on the southern Gaza Strip on December 26, 2023.
● Mahmud HAMS/AFP

Leader: West irrational over women's issues



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei addresses a group of women in Tehran on December 27, 2023.
● leader.ir

International Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the West follows no logic in the issue of women and merely seeks profit and pleasure from them.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with a group of women in Tehran on Wednesday in the run-up to the celebrations commemorating the birthday anniversary of Hazrat Fatima (SA), the revered daughter of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Press TV reported.

The Leader described the issue of women as one of Islam's strong points, saying, "Islam has a robust, rational logic in all areas pertaining to

women."

Stressing that the world's view on the issue of women is either of a Western approach or an Islamic approach, Ayatollah Khamenei said the two are complete opposites as the Western approach is summed up in seeking profit and pleasure from women.

"The cultural and civilizational system of the West is not willing to discuss such issues; it avoids entering into discussion and research," the Leader said.

He underlined that the West resorts to using force, causing an uproar, and buying off figures to get its own way on women's issues.

"The West is not ready to discuss and is not willing to answer questions

since it knows no logic," Ayatollah Khamenei noted.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution said a Muslim woman could not find a better role model than Hazrat Fatima (SA), advising women to follow the sacred figure in all walks of life.

Underlining the importance of establishing "gender justice" in the society, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "There are no restrictions on the presence of women in various managerial, political, social, and cultural positions."

The Leader also pointed to Iran's upcoming parliamentary elections in two months, calling on Iranian women to play a more active role in better introducing candidates and ensuring a promising turnout at the polls.

Netanyahu seeking Iran-US confrontation



By Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh
International affairs expert

EXCLUSIVE OPINION

The Israeli regime's move in assassinating one of Iran's military advisers in Syria has given the right to Iran to retaliate against Israel at the right time. Iran and Israel have been indirectly at war for several decades as both sides have taken actions against each other in various ways. But Israel's assassination of the Iranian military adviser on Monday raised the question: Why did Israel do such a thing in the critical situation of the Gaza war? What is the goal or goals pursued by the regime behind these terrorist operations?

Israel has faced a serious challenge in its military-security strategy in the Gaza war. Israel's military-security strategy is the result of five decades of war. In its important wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 with the Arab countries, and the 1982 attack on Lebanon, this regime has used an iron fist policy in the form of its military-security strategy; in fact, the regime has relied on this strategy. The strategy was chal-

lenged for the first time during the 33-day war in 2006 against Lebanon's Hezbollah group. But the biggest challenge for Israel and its military-security strategy is the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas's Operation Al-Aqsa Storm has brought fear to the hearts of the occupied territories. On the other hand, Israel's scorched earth policy and the crimes it has committed against the Palestinian people have destroyed the possibility of a peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. The Israeli army and regime have not yet been able to achieve their goals in the Gaza war.

When one side of the war comes to the conclusion that its goals will not be stabilized after the end of the conflict, it usually tries to extend the war or expand its scope.

From the beginning of the conflict, the left factions in Israel, such as the Labor Party, were critical of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policy and believed that his policy would end in failure. Since a month ago, parts of the right-wing currents and even those close to the Israeli cabinet have gradually become critical of Netanyahu's war policy and have assessed that Israel will not achieve its goals. Therefore, it can be said that Netanyahu became a

victim of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm and, according to predictions, his cabinet will fall after the war. Therefore, he will try to delay it in order to gain achievements by intensifying the crimes and killing of the people of Gaza.

In such a situation, it seems that the assassination of Iranian Brigadier General Razi Mousavi in Syria is aimed at provoking Iran to enter the war. Of course, Israel currently does not have the ability to fight on several fronts, but the regime's plans to drag Iran into war is aimed at forcing the United States to enter the conflict, which would finally lead to a confrontation between Iran and the United States.

Although Iran is entitled to retaliate against the assassination of its commander, it seems that Tehran is aware of Netanyahu's plot and will respond to the Israeli terrorist act in the right place, at the right time.

Iran should focus more on weakening the Israeli regime by assisting the resistance fronts in the region. But both Iran and the resistance groups should not link the Gaza war to the US, which is the main goal of Israel. The struggle of resistance groups to expel the US from the region will continue even after a possible cease-fire in Gaza. Therefore, Iran will not fall into Israel's trap to confront the US.

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