

# Israel massacres at least 40 people in strike on school with US precision-guided missiles

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The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) launched a savage assault on a school run by the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza early Thursday, killing at least 40 people, among them, nine children and three women.

An investigation by *Al Jazeera* confirmed that the missiles fired on the camp were equipped with US-supplied “precision” guidance systems. A piece of debris from one of the weapons used in the attack was traced to the American firm Honeywell. At least three missiles were fired in the attack, which also injured 73 people. Using its standard justification for reducing hospitals, schools, universities and other critical infrastructure to rubble, the IDF asserted that Hamas fighters were using the school, home to some 6,000 displaced civilians, as a base.

Asked about the attack at the State Department’s daily briefing, spokesman Matthew Miller declared:

If it is true that you have this site where Hamas is hiding inside a school, other militants are hiding inside a school, those individuals are legitimate targets, but at the same time, they’re embedded near civilians, Israel has a right to try and target those civilians.

The indiscriminate targeting of civilians in military operations is a war crime that recalls the darkest days of World War II, when Hitler’s Nazi regime waged a war of extermination against the Soviet Union that claimed the lives of 27 million people. The carpet bombing of major cities on both sides—Dresden, Hamburg, London, Tokyo—and the dropping of two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki demonstrated the barbarism of imperialism.

Eight decades on, Miller’s remarks confirm how accurately the *World Socialist Web Site* appraised the official D-Day commemorations, writing Thursday:

To be perfectly blunt, the policies and objectives of NATO are eerily similar to those of the Nazi regime against which the Allies fought in World War II. Hitler, were he resurrected for the occasion, would feel perfectly at home in the company of US President Biden, British Prime Minister Sunak, French President Macron and German Chancellor Scholz.

Just hours after the school bombing, the White House released a joint statement on behalf of US imperialism and its Canadian and European allies that amounted to a declaration of support for the far-right Israeli regime’s genocide in Gaza. Framed as a plea for a “ceasefire” in the eight-month onslaught by the IDF against defenceless civilians, it is in reality an endorsement of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s policy of ethnically cleansing the Palestinians from Gaza.

The statement, which never mentioned the more than 36,000 Palestinians slaughtered by the IDF or the more than 2 million driven to the verge of starvation by Israel’s deliberate withholding of aid, opened by stressing that the leaders who signed it were “deeply concerned for the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza.”

The signatories included the governments of Britain, Canada, France and Germany, Israel’s main weapons supplier behind the US, and a number of smaller countries in Europe and Latin America. Referring to the much-reported ceasefire proposal presented by US President Joseph Biden, the statement continued:

[W]e fully support the movement towards a ceasefire and hostage release deal now on the table. ... There is no time to lose. We call on Hamas to close this agreement, that Israel is ready to move forward with.

Amid the ostensible push for a “ceasefire,” all that Israel has proven that it is “ready to move forward with” is the expansion of its onslaught on Rafah with weapons supplied by the imperialist powers. Last week, the IDF carried out two deadly bomb attacks on displaced persons’ camps in supposedly “safe zones” in western Rafah.

The UNRWA reported that it received no forewarning of Thursday’s attack on its school. UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini stated:

Attacking, targeting or using UN buildings for military purposes are a blatant disregard of International Humanitarian Law. UN staff, premises and operations must be protected at all times. This must stop and all those responsible must be held accountable.

The systematic targeting of schools has been a major feature of Israel’s barbaric assault on Gaza. In Late January, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that 76 percent of Gaza’s schools had been destroyed by Israeli attacks. All 12 universities in Gaza have been demolished. The IDF has intentionally targeted many leading scholars and educators, such as the poet and Professor of Literature Refaat Alareer and Prof. Nasser Abu Al-Nour, the dean of nursing at Gaza’s Islamic University.

Netanyahu, who heads a fascistic government including right-wing extremist parties committed to reestablishing settlements in Gaza, has repeatedly declared that the onslaught on Gaza will end when Hamas is eliminated, the hostages are freed, and Israel has full security control over Gaza. This genocidal agenda is possible only through the ethnic cleansing of Gaza.

Those who manage to survive the IDF’s incessant bombardment must either be starved to death, killed by disease, or forcibly expelled across the Egyptian border. Thursday’s joint statement by the imperialist powers once again confirms their backing for this agenda, with the term “ceasefire” employed for propaganda purposes alone.

A Hamas official underscored this point, describing the agreement promoted by Biden as “not acceptable to us.” Describing the text of a resolution to be introduced at the UN Security Council by Washington, Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters:

The [US] document ... has no mention of ending the aggression or the withdrawal. The Israeli documents speak of open-ended negotiation with no deadline,

and it speaks of a stage during which the occupation regains its hostages and resumes the war.

Zuhri reiterated Hamas’s acceptance of a May 5 proposal that would free the hostages in exchange for a withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.

The Israeli regime disregarded Hamas’s acceptance of the earlier deal because it came on the very eve of the onslaught on Rafah, which began on May 6. Since then, over one million Palestinians have fled Gaza’s southernmost city, many of them returning to the ruins of Khan Younis.

Aid deliveries into the enclave have dropped by two-thirds from the already abysmally low level prior to the offensive in Rafah, due to the IDF’s closure of the border crossing with Egypt and effective shuttering of the Kerem Shalom crossing with Israel. The deaths of two children within a week from malnutrition in central Gaza prompted aid organisations to warn that famine is imminent. Around 1.7 million people are believed to be seeking shelter in the areas around Khan Younis, where civilian infrastructure has been obliterated.

The latest proposal presented by the US in a draft resolution that could be voted on in the UN Security Council as early as Monday is a transparent effort to cover up Washington’s complicity in the destruction of Gaza. It speaks of a six-week “ceasefire” during which all female, elderly and sick hostages will be released.

Thereafter, all remaining hostages will be released, and IDF forces will withdraw from Gaza, allowing Palestinians to “return to their homes.” The drafters are indifferent to the fact that the IDF’s genocidal onslaught has laid waste to 55 percent of all structures in Gaza, including the vast majority of housing units.

The pledge to “reconstruct” Gaza is equally empty. A recent UN projection estimated that in a best-case scenario, it would take until 2040 to rebuild destroyed buildings in the enclave. A more realistic timeframe, based on the aftermath of past conflicts, the report admitted, was over eight decades.



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