

With US support, Israel continues Rafah massacre

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Israel intensified its mass displacement, ethnic cleansing and mass murder in Rafah, the southernmost city in the Gaza Strip, on Friday, killing 25 people in a strike on a refugee camp north of the city.

The attack by Israeli tanks took place immediately outside a Red Cross humanitarian facility in what the Israeli military had designated as a “safe zone.”

The Red Cross said in a statement that Israeli shells fell within a matter of feet from its offices, damaging them. The building had been “surrounded by hundreds of displaced people living in tents.”

One survivor of the attack told Al Jazeera, “We had just eaten and were about to sleep and take some rest, and the next we knew was the sound of resounding explosions destroying our places! We find ourselves alone not knowing what to do. We still can’t process what happened!”

The witness continued, “Oh Lord, look at us, oh world, see our condition. ... The fire is consuming us from every direction.”

Another survivor told Al Jazeera, “Today, before the afternoon, a bomb was thrown near the Red Cross. My husband went out after hearing the sound of the explosion. The second bomb was near the Red Cross building. All the young men went there because some people were injured.”

Friday’s massacre is only the latest in the US-backed Israeli assault on Rafah which has displaced over a million people from the city—most of whom had been displaced from other parts of Gaza.

“Last night was one of the worst nights in western Rafah: drones, planes, tanks and naval boats bombarded the area. We feel the occupation is trying to complete the control of the city,” Hatem, a resident of Rafah, told Reuters.

While the Biden administration had previously said

that an Israeli assault on Rafah would be a “red line,” the White House has fully endorsed both the ground attack on Rafah and ongoing airstrikes on civilians.

Two weeks ago, Israeli forces killed at least 274 Palestinians in a massacre at the Nuseirat refugee camp and injured more than 500 people. The White House called the Nuseirat strikes “limited” and “targeted.”

Friday’s massacre in Rafah was accompanied by mass killing throughout the whole of the Gaza Strip. Gaza’s health minister said that at least 35 people were killed over the past 24 hours, bringing the official death toll since October to 37,431.

The assault on Rafah and Israel’s destruction of the Rafah crossing has brought the distribution of food in Gaza to the brink of collapse.

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) warned Friday that it could be forced to suspend its operations in Rafah due to the near-total unavailability of medical supplies.

It blamed Israel’s attack on Rafah for the disaster, declaring, “The closure of the Rafah crossing following Israel’s offensive in the south of Gaza in early May, coupled with the endless red tape imposed by Israeli authorities, has led to a dramatically slow flow of humanitarian aid through the crossing that is open, Kerem Shalom entry point.”

Friday’s massacre came just two days after the United Nations’ commission of inquiry into the war in Gaza gave its official ruling, accusing the Israeli government of “extermination,” “war crimes” and “crimes against humanity.”

“The only conclusion you can draw is that the Israeli army is one of the most criminal armies in the world,” said commission member Chris Sidoti.

Navi Pillay, the chairperson of the inquiry, implicitly condemned the United States for serving as the enabler of the Gaza genocide. “Had it not been for the help of

powerful countries, Israel would not have been able to carry out this perpetual occupation as aggressively as it has,” Pillay said.

Even as Gaza’s health system collapses, the severely injured are left in Gaza to die. In a statement Friday, World Health Organization head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that not a single ill or wounded Palestinian has been allowed to leave Gaza since May 7.

“Since the closure of the Rafah crossing on May 7, no patients have been evacuated from the Strip,” Tedros said. “That means over 2,000 people have not received critical life-saving specialized healthcare.”

He added, “Medical evacuations must be facilitated through all possible crossings, including Rafah for transfers to Egypt, Karem Shalom for transfers to the West Bank and East Jerusalem referral hospitals, and when needed to other countries for specialized care.”

In addition to mass killing, the Israeli government is carrying out widespread torture of detainees. In a video that went viral Friday, Gaza resident Badr Dahlan described his torture by Israeli forces. “They [Israeli army] beat my hands and legs,” Dahlan testified, saying he was subjected to “violations and acts of torture.”

At least 36 prisoners in the Gaza Strip detained by Israeli forces have died due to torture and poor conditions, Gaza’s government media office said Thursday.

The media office said, “54 detainees from various Palestinian regions have died in Israeli prisons due to torture and inhumane detention conditions, amid systematic assaults on prisoners since the beginning of the genocidal war,” describing Israeli prisons as “mass graves for thousands of Palestinian prisoners, ignored by international institutions.”



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