

Israel kills humanitarian workers, children and displaced people in spree of war crimes

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An Israeli attack on al-Jaouni school in Nuseirat, Gaza, on Wednesday killed 18 people, including 6 workers for the United Nations Palestinian relief agency UNRWA. More were injured, including children.

A statement by the agency detailed the flagrant criminality of the Israel Defense Forces:

Six UNRWA colleagues killed today when two airstrikes hit a school and its surroundings in Nuseirat in the middle areas. This is the highest death toll among our staff in a single incident. Among those killed was the manager of the UNRWA shelter and other team members providing assistance to displaced people...

This school has been hit five times since the war began. It is home to around 12,000 displaced people, mainly women and children. No one is safe in Gaza No one is spared.

Head of UNRWA Philippe Lazzarini explained, “Humanitarian staff, premises and operations have been blatantly and unabatedly disregarded since the beginning of the war.” UN Secretary-General António Guterres demanded a stop to “these dramatic violations of international humanitarian law”.

Various imperialist officials let out some crocodile tears. UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy posted, “Reports of six UNRWA staff members being killed in an Israeli strike are appalling. My thoughts are with their families and all those who continue to carry out lifesaving work. Aid workers must be able to do their jobs safely.”

Lammy had recently excluded parts for F-35 fighter

jets responsible for such strikes from a pitifully small set of restrictions on British arms sales to Israel.

The most openly filthy response came from US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, who told reporters, “We need to see humanitarian sites protected, and that’s something that we continue to raise with Israel,” but added in justification of Israel’s war crime, “We continue to see Hamas hiding in, taking over, and otherwise using these sites from which to conduct its operations.”

His comment echoed the lying claim made by the IDF that al-Jaouni had been “formerly used” as a school but turned into “a Hamas command and control complex” with “many of the names [of the victims of the attack] published on social media and news channels belong[ing] to Hamas terrorists.”

The barely disguised reality is that Israel considers humanitarian workers “terrorists” and enemy combatants, working against its war aims of the extermination and expulsion of the Palestinian people. It made this clear in January with its unsubstantiated claims of extensive Hamas involvement in UNRWA. Israel’s imperialist powers gave the green light by immediately suspending funding, still not resumed by the United States—formerly by far its largest funder.

At least 220 UNRWA staff have been killed since Israel launched its genocidal war, among around 300 humanitarian workers in total. More than 70 percent of the agency’s schools have been bombed, often multiple times—nearly all of which were being used as humanitarian shelters. In just the last six weeks, 16 schools have been hit.

This is part of a deliberate plan to kill millions of people by starvation and disease. Sam Rose, a senior deputy director of UNRWA told the press Thursday, “We estimate that over a million Gazans will go

without food in September. Over half the medicines in our health centres are running low, as is chlorine for water purification and other basic supplies.”

Amed Khan, founder of the Elpida relief organisation, pointed to UN data showing how the number of aid trucks entering Gaza had fallen from 100 a day in July (a fraction of the 5-600 the UN says is needed) to around 50 in August. Just 147 trucks have entered in the whole of September. All aid groups cite restrictions and “inspections” imposed by the Israeli military as the reason.

Effectively salting the earth, the IDF has meanwhile “decimated” Gaza’s agricultural assets—96 percent of farms, orchards, irrigation systems, machinery and storage facilities—according to the UN Trade and Development agency.

The relentless pace of Israel’s genocide in Gaza means that the attack on al-Jaouni overshadowed another war crime worthy of front-page coverage, carried out earlier the same day. Eleven people, including six young siblings aged 21 months to 21 years old were killed in a strike on their house in Khan Younis. This was according to the European hospital, which received the casualties.

Or the massacre of the day before, in al-Mawasi, which killed at least 19 people. The BBC reported, “Witnesses said the strike obliterated an area crowded with tents for displaced Palestinians in al-Mawasi, south-west of Khan Younis, leaving huge craters in the sand.

“‘The bombing was incredibly intense. People were thrown into the air,’ one displaced man told the BBC. ‘You can’t imagine the devastation.’”

Al Jazeera described how “Rescuers searching for survivors said they found craters up to nine metres (30 feet) deep at the tent camp.” Its journalist Mansour Shouman reported, “Dozens are still missing and the civil defence have been digging with their bare hands to get the people out.”

A witness told the Associated Press, “The people were buried in the sand. They were retrieved as body parts.”

It says everything the Al-Mawasi is formally an IDF-designated “safe zone”. The Israeli military routinely redraws the boundaries—occasionally sending notifications to mobile phones almost no Palestinians still have access to—in order to make swathes of refugee

tents “legitimate targets” for the multiple attacks that have been launched on the area. The worst was the massacre this July, which killed at least 90 people, and injured 300 more.

Ahead of the latest mass killing, “The area was bombed without prior warning, they didn’t ask us to flee to a safer area or anything,” according to a Gazan speaking to Agence France-Presse. “They told us to come to al-Mawasi, so we came to al-Mawasi.”

The atrocity prompted the same response from the imperialist powers. The German Foreign Office tweeted, “Reports about many deaths following the Israeli airstrike on Al-Mawasi are terrible. The fact that Hamas uses civilians as human shields is disgusting and a crime.”

UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories Francesca Albanese replied that it was “outrageous to place the blame on the Palestinians for yet another massacre of civilians... all based on unevidenced ‘human shielding’ accusations (i.e. Israel’s logic of genocide) ... I can’t believe how far Germany seems ready to go to protect Israel’s genocidal campaign.”

There have now been more than 41,000 Palestinians officially recorded killed by Israel’s war and 95,000 people wounded. Of the latter, one quarter, at least 22,500 people, have suffered “life-changing injuries” like amputations, according to the World Health Organization.

The real death toll is estimated to be far higher. The *Lancet* medical journal made conservative estimate of 186,000 by mid-June. At that rate of killing, roughly 23,000 a month, the total would now be breaching a quarter of a million human beings.



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