

Israel intensifies genocide in Gaza and deepens killings in Lebanon

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Armed to the teeth by the Biden-Harris administration in the US, the Israeli regime is re-intensifying its slaughter in refugee camps, schools and hospitals in northern and central Gaza, even as it expands its invasion and bombardments in Lebanon, including the centre of Beirut.

In the most recent attacks in Gaza, at least 22 people were killed yesterday in an air strike in Jabalia—the largest of Gaza’s eight historic refugee camps—in northern Gaza. Dozens were injured, with some ambulances unable to help rescue efforts due to fuel shortages.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) issued virtually impossible orders for residents, hospitals and healthcare centres across the area to evacuate, placing thousands of people, including healthcare workers and their maimed patients, directly in danger.

A strike on a school sheltering displaced people in the central Gaza city of Deir al-Balah also killed at least 28 people, including a child and seven women, according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, where bodies were taken. It said several other people were wounded.

Gaza’s Health Ministry said 61 Palestinians were killed and 231 were wounded in the latest 24-hour reporting period.

Thousands of people are trapped in Jabalia as Israeli forces continue to attack the area, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said. “Nobody is allowed to get in or out, anyone who tries is getting shot,” Sarah Vuylsteke, MSF project coordinator, said in a post on X.

The Israeli army issued evacuation orders for residents in the camp on October 7, “while carrying out attacks at the same time, preventing people from leaving the area safely,” MSF said.

Forced evacuations and bombing of neighbourhoods are turning Gaza’s north into “unhabitable ruins,” MSF added.

Haydar, an MSF driver inside the camp, said: “We were staying at the Al-Yemen Al-Saeed Hospital, but they bombed it. About 20 people were killed. I don’t know what to do, at any moment we could die. People are starving. I am afraid to stay, and I am also afraid to leave.”

United Nations officials voiced concerns yesterday that the Israeli offensive, as well as evacuation orders in northern Gaza, might affect the second phase of a polio vaccination campaign set to start next week.

Aid groups carried out an initial round of vaccinations last month after a baby was partially paralysed by the Type 2 polio virus in August, the first such case in the territory in 25 years.

“I am, of course, concerned about the developments in the north, and specifically with these evacuation orders,” the World Health Organization’s representative in occupied Palestinian territory, Rik Peeperkorn, told reporters in Geneva.

Peeperkorn said three attempts by the UN health agency and its partners to assist and evacuate patients from northern Gaza hospitals under evacuation orders have been thwarted this week.

This renewed Israeli offensive, combined with systematic starvation and denial of medical access, underscores the genocidal intent of the Netanyahu government. By the official Gaza health statistics, the IDF has killed more than 42,000 people, mostly women and children over the past 12 months, but the true toll may be closer to 200,000, counting the unrecovered bodies beneath the rubble.

Israel’s assault on Lebanon is widening and deepening at the same time. On Thursday night, 22 people were killed and 139 wounded in strikes in the heart of Beirut, Lebanon’s capital, said caretaker Prime Minister Najib Makati.

Videos published by local news channels showed chaotic scenes following the attacks on Ras el-Nabaa and al-Nuweiri in Beirut. The strikes hit densely-populated residential areas. Many residents left their apartments in the high-rise blocks in the area and gathered in courtyards as emergency services rushed to the scene.

Israel did not issue evacuation warnings ahead of the strikes, which were the deadliest on central Beirut since the IDF offensive began last month. The area is outside the city’s southern suburbs, which Israeli forces have already pulverised.

The bombardments allegedly targeted Wafiq Safa, who heads Hezbollah's liaison and coordination unit working with the Lebanese government, and is therefore considered a political figure rather than a military one. That marks a heightening of the Israeli aggression.

A US-made munition was used in the strikes, the *Guardian* reported. The newspaper found remnants of a US-manufactured joint direct attack munition (JDAM) amid the debris of a building that was reduced to rubble.

According to the report, "JDAMs are guidance kits built by the US aerospace company Boeing that attach to large 'dumb bombs' ranging up to 2,000 lbs (900kg), converting them into GPS-guided bombs."

Earlier in the day, Israel warned Lebanese civilians not to return to their homes in the south of the country. The IDF soldiers were pushing on with their ground "incursion" inside Lebanon, as its fighter jets attacked more than 110 targets in the country in a single day.

Israeli strikes have killed at least 2,169 people, wounded more than 10,000 and displaced more than 1.2 million people in Lebanon over the past year, the Lebanese government said in its daily update.

Israel's flagrant assault on Lebanon, which it last invaded in 2006, was further demonstrated when an Israeli airstrike killed two Lebanese soldiers and wounded three others. That was just hours after the Israeli military fired on the headquarters of UNIFIL, the UN peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon, for the second time in as many days.

Two UNIFIL soldiers were also injured on Friday by an Israeli strike near their monitoring watchtower.

In the statement posted to X, UNIFIL also said an IDF bulldozer knocked over barriers at a UN position near the "Blue Line," the unofficial demarcation line between Israel and Lebanon.

"Any deliberate attack on peacekeepers is a grave violation of international humanitarian law," the statement concluded.

UNIFIL has some 10,000 personnel, with Italy, France, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India among the biggest contributors. It was created to oversee the withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon after Israel's 1978 invasion and was expanded after the 2006 Israeli invasion, allowing its troops to deploy along the Israeli border.

Various imperialist governments, including the US, UK, France, Italy and Spain, issued statements condemning the attacks on UNIFIL as serious violations of humanitarian international law and UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ruled that UNIFIL personnel would replace the Israeli forces occupying southern Lebanon.

But the same governments are continuing to facilitate and arm Israel's barbarism.

US President Joe Biden reaffirmed his "ironclad" support for Israel during a 30-minute phone call with Netanyahu on Wednesday, the White House said. Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic Party's presidential candidate, joined the call, which reportedly discussed Israel's plans to strike Iran.

"The president affirmed Israel's right to protect its citizens from Hezbollah, which has fired thousands of missiles and rockets into Israel over the past year alone, while emphasizing the need to minimize harm to civilians, in particular in the densely populated areas of Beirut," the White House said.

The latter phrase is another desperate bid, in the face of widespread opposition among workers and youth in the US and globally, to cover up US imperialism's responsibility for the ongoing slaughter in Lebanon, as well as Palestine. The US provides Israel at least \$3.8 billion in military aid annually, and the Biden-Harris administration has authorised \$14 billion in further assistance to its proxy to help fund the genocide and a wider war for domination over the resource-rich and strategic Middle East, directed against Iran, Russia and China.

On Wednesday, the Socialist Equality Party in the US hosted a live-streamed discussion to mark the one-year anniversary of the Gaza genocide, analysing the historical roots of the US-Israeli rampage in the Middle East and advancing a socialist strategy to stop it.

The event, featuring SEP National Secretary Joseph Kishore, WSWS Labor Editor Jerry White and WSWS International Editorial Board Chairman David North, referenced the centuries of colonial rule in the Middle East, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory since 1967, and the brutal US wars throughout the region since 1991.



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