

Hospital patients burned alive in Israeli attack as genocidal campaign intensifies in northern Gaza

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In the early hours of Monday Israeli forces targeted the tents of displaced Gazans on the premises of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah city in central Gaza. An explosion from the airstrike set the compound on fire that burned down more than 50 tents. Initial reports state that at least four were killed and 70 wounded, including women and children, in the surprise attack.

The images of people being burned alive posted on social media and broadcast on news channels sparked a wave of shock and horror among those watching the devastation.

Even after a year of non-stop brutal savagery against the unarmed population in Gaza, who are mostly children, these scenes of patients with their intravenous lines still attached to them engulfed in searing white flames met with revulsion and justified condemnation on this senseless attack that recalled the Mai Lai massacre or the oft used napalm bombs in the US aerial campaigns in Vietnam.

The Palestinian poet, scholar and founder of the Edward Said Library, Mosab Abu Toha, who was born in the Al-Shati refugee camp in Gaza, wrote on his social media after watching the flames burn the encampment down, “Never again???? I have been watching my people burning in flames and cut into charred pieces. These are the only things that will haunt me all my life. Nothing else. Nothing from photo albums and stories from other people.”

Toha’s words gave context to the helpless faces caught in the images who watched on as the flames swept across the encampment with little else that could be done but to document the horrifying scene on their phones, yet another piece of evidence of the uninterrupted and unhindered genocide that is being unleashed on them by the Israeli regime with the full support of US and European imperialism. Not even water was available to douse the flames.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF), in a standard propaganda statement, insisted its forces comply with international regulations to minimize the violence to civilian population

and that it was targeting a Hamas command center, a claim that even the *New York Times* had to acknowledge was unverifiable.

Lt Col Nadav Shoshani falsely told the press, “We are making sure we’re getting civilians out of harm’s way while we operate against those terror cells in Jabalia... The hospital and its functionality were not affected from the strike.” And, as usual, the Israeli military spokesperson concluded with an assurance that the IDF planned to further investigate the matter, a euphemism that the case was closed.

These events occurred a day after a volley of artillery at a school in Nuseirat camp where displaced Palestinians were sheltering, killing at least 22 people, including 15 children according to officials on the ground. The UN had planned to use the site to distribute polio vaccinations that day.

And the morning after the incendiary destruction of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital encampment, ten more people were killed and 30 injured by artillery at a food distribution center at Jabalia refugee camp. A medic on the scene said a drone opened fire on dozens of Gazans that had gathered to receive food.

As is customary with the IDF, they have issued evacuation orders for the 300,000 to 500,000 people who have remained in the ruins of northern Gaza while simultaneously carrying out a military offensive that has already killed hundreds of people if not more over the last week.

The population is being directed through multiple checkpoints to eventually reach al-Mawasi that sits more than 20 miles south on the Mediterranean Sea. This is a perilous journey to take by foot for most that include the critically injured, elderly people, pregnant women, with their young children, without adequate foods or water to sustain them.

In an urgent communication, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said that thousands of Palestinians are trapped in the Jabalia camp. “Nobody is allowed to get in or out – anyone who tries is getting shot,” said Sarah Vuylsteke, project

coordinator for the international organization.

A report by Haydar, a driver for MSF, captures in succinct terms the grave situation that confronts the population of northern Gaza. He wrote:

On the night of October 6, there were sounds of bombing and clashes. Things got very serious. We were very scared. Day by day, things escalated. In the end, we decided to leave. We found that the situation was difficult, and that Jabalia camp was besieged. We couldn't get out, so we stayed in the Yemeni Alsaed Hospital. On the October 9, Israeli forces bombed the Yemeni hospital and set the tents on fire. More than 20 people were killed in the strike and others were injured. I have six children; my son has six children—one of whom died. I am here now. I don't know what to do; I have no choice. I am worried, anxious, very angry, and afraid of the terror we are living in. At any moment, I could die. I could get hurt, or my family, and we could all die.

My wife needs a wheelchair; it's very difficult for her to move, and she is sick. Even if I want to move, it is difficult for me to move. People are starving; there is no food, no water, and no drinking water. I am afraid to stay, and I am afraid to [leave]. Every place in the north is subject to these dangers; every place is at risk. There isn't a single safe place at all. I don't know how to describe these feelings—they are mixed with terror, tears, and holding the young children as they cry witnessing these hardships.

Healthcare workers have provided objective testimony that Gazan civilians, particularly children, have been the targets of extreme levels of violence. The recent opinion piece by Dr. Feroze Sidhwa in the *New York Times* underscores the realities for the Palestinians and the complicity of the Biden White House in Israel's genocide.

Sidhwa wrote, "I worked as a trauma surgeon in Gaza from March 25 to April 8. I've volunteered in Ukraine and Haiti, and I grew up in Flint, Mich. I've seen violence and worked in conflict zones. But of the many things that stood out about working in a hospital in Gaza, one got to me: Nearly every day I was there, I saw a new young child who had been shot in the head or the chest, virtually all of whom went on to die. Thirteen in total."

And while Israeli forces are intensifying the assault on northern Gaza, rescue teams are not being allowed entry to pull the wounded out of the carnage, making an exact toll of the casualties impossible to determine.

The current offensive underway is largely in line with "The General's Plan," a scheme for ethnic cleansing concocted by retired Israeli Major General Giora Eiland, who has called Gaza as a "full-on terror state" holding all citizens of the enclave as complicit in Hamas' resistance. He proposed a weeklong evacuation order for northern Gaza after which anyone that remains will be an eligible military target.

Meron Rapoport, editor of the *Local Call*, speaking on *Democracy Now*, explained, "The General's Plan, what is called the plan offered by ex-Major General Giora Eiland, speaks about offering the Palestinian northern Gaza, north of the Netzarim Corridor, meaning all Gaza City and its surrounding, offering them a week to evacuate Gaza and go south to the humanitarian area, what is called, near the Mawasi, near Deir al-Balah, in central Gaza. And then, after a week, there will be a total siege on northern Gaza, and a siege meaning no food, no water, no electricity, no medicine, nothing. And in a week's time, all those who stay will be considered terrorists that could be hit. The idea is that the civilian population will leave, only the Hamas militants will stay, and therefore Israel will be able to clean this area. This is the plan by General Eiland."

Although officially the plan is only being considered, as *AP* confirmed, an anonymous official in Israel has acknowledged that "parts of the plan are already being implemented." The plan would split Gaza in two with Israel maintaining full control over the north for an indefinite period while completely clearing it of any remaining Palestinians.



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