

Israel strikes Jabaliya refugee camp for third day running as war crimes pile up in Gaza

Jordan Shilton
2 November 2023

The Israeli regime is carrying out horrendous war crimes on a daily basis, with Thursday marking the third day in a row that the Jabaliya refugee camp was struck. As the official death toll among Palestinian civilians surpassed 9,000, the Israel Defence Forces also reportedly struck four schools within 24 hours and is preparing a horrific massacre of civilians in Gaza City.

The latest attack on Jabaliya, where over 195 were confirmed dead in two previous strikes Tuesday and Wednesday, hit a school used by the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) as a shelter. At least 20 people were killed in the bombardment, according to UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini. Schools were also struck by the IDF in the Beach refugee camp in northern Gaza, killing one child, and the Al-Bureij refugee camp, killing two people and injuring 31.

The locations struck by Israel are hosting some 20,000 displaced civilians, the UNRWA reported. Underscoring the systematic targeting of infrastructure designed to provide humanitarian support for the civilian population, the UNRWA wrote, “Since the start of the war on 7 October, nearly 50 UNRWA buildings and assets have been impacted, with some being directly hit. Like today’s, this includes UNRWA buildings used as shelters where UNRWA is currently hosting around 700,000 people. Twenty-five of these shelters are in northern Gaza, hosting 112,000 people.”

A brutal slaughter of thousands of civilians is looming in Gaza City, which the Israeli military claims to have “encircled” as part of its ground offensive. Al Jazeera journalist Youmna ElSayed, reporting from the city, noted that one of the main escape routes to the south is entirely blocked, while another is being closed off. “Many civilian cars have been shot at as they’re trying to evacuate from the north of Gaza or from Gaza City to the south,” she said.

“There are thousands of people who had returned to the northern Strip and to Gaza City itself, and there are thousands that did not evacuate.

“We saw at the Jabaliya camp, as it has been bombarded over three days, how many people were still in their homes. We’re talking about huge numbers.”

Speaking from the city’s Al-Shifa Hospital, the largest in the Gaza Strip, Dr. Marwan Abusada described the conditions as “beyond catastrophic.” “The corridors are full of injured people,” he continued. “The ER rooms are beyond full. We have zero capacity to treat all the injured people.

“The high number of displaced people are no longer sheltering in the courtyard of the hospital but are now inside the hospital, including in the corridors. There is a high chance of infectious diseases spreading between patients and those displaced.”

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs confirmed that the Israeli military advance in northern Gaza “is impeding the delivery of humanitarian aid to about 300,000 displaced people.” A separate group of UN experts issued a statement warning that the Palestinian people face “a grave threat of genocide.”

Israeli army spokesman Daniel Hagari dismissed any talk of a ceasefire to allow the thousands of civilians to depart Gaza City, asserting that this is “not on the table.”

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated that no fuel shipments will be allowed into the Gaza Strip as part of the trickle of aid trucks crossing the Rafah entry point from Egypt. At least 16 of Gaza’s 35 hospitals have stopped operating due to a lack of fuel, with the remainder running on low supplies. Al-Shifa and the Indonesian Hospital are reportedly at risk of imminent collapse as their generators run out of fuel.

Bakeries have also been directly targeted, contributing to the shortage of food. Al Jazeera reported Thursday that five bakeries have been directly targeted across Gaza in

air strikes, while another eight suffered so much damage in nearby strikes that they are now out of service.

Under these conditions, the report that US secretary of State Anthony Blinken will seek to achieve “humanitarian pauses” of a few hours in the fighting during his trip Friday to Israel is akin to providing morphine to a dying patient. The few additional aid trucks that would reach Gaza during these brief windows of respite would still be prevented from transporting fuel, furthering the total collapse of any medical care in the enclave. Moreover, the Israeli regime demonstrates every day its utter disregard for any limits on its genocidal savagery, which would continue after any “pause” orchestrated by Blinken.

In a cynical statement Thursday, Blinken performed the necessary hand-wringing by noting that civilians are “bearing the brunt” of attacks by the IDF. However, he hastened to stress, “Israel has not only the right but the obligation to defend itself and also to take steps to try to ensure that this never happens again.”

Blinken claimed that the “pauses” would allow aid to reach Gaza and hostages taken by Hamas on 7 October to be freed. In reality, Israel’s savage onslaught is showing almost as little concern for the lives of the hostages—who are most likely being held in Hamas’ underground tunnel network—as for the Palestinian population. According to the IDF, soldiers will not enter Hamas tunnels but will use robots and explosive devices to collapse and destroy them. A senior army commander said, “It will become a death zone.”

Underlining US imperialism’s attitude to the genocide in Gaza, White House spokespersons made clear Thursday that the Biden administration remains opposed to calling for a “ceasefire.” There is bipartisan backing for the provision of over \$14 billion in additional military aid to Israel. The European imperialist powers are no less enthusiastic. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called Netanyahu Wednesday following the Jabaliya massacre to reaffirm Berlin’s “unwavering” support for Israel, while at home the German government is criminalizing protests against the genocide. France announced the dispatch of a second warship to the region Thursday, citing the threadbare pretext of providing additional medical care to Gaza residents.

One especially barbaric aspect of the Israeli regime’s onslaught on Gaza that has gone almost entirely unmentioned by the imperialist powers is its deliberate targeting of journalists. Mohammed Abu Hatab, a correspondent with Palestine TV, became the 30th Palestinian media worker to be killed since Israel’s

bombardment began. According to a colleague, Hatab was killed in an air strike on his home in Khan Younis when he returned from work to check on his family.

A systematic witch-hunt on journalists in the Gaza Strip is being whipped up in the Israeli media. The *Jerusalem Post* reported Thursday that it had identified “around five dozen individuals associated with Hamas” who “are often seen sporting blue press vests and helmets” and have been “waging a propaganda campaign against Israel on various social media platforms.” Echoing Israeli military propaganda, the newspaper continued that they have “found refuge in Al-Shifa Hospital, which the IDF recently disclosed serves as a Hamas command and control centre.” The implication is clear: the targeted killing of further journalists will be justified as a blow against “Hamas terrorists.”

The IDF’s genocidal onslaught on Gaza over the past three-and-a-half weeks has gone hand-in-hand with a dramatic escalation of violence by the military and far-right settler gangs in the occupied West Bank. Military raids on Wednesday night led to the detention of 49 Palestinians, bringing the total taken into custody in the West Bank since 7 October to more than 1,200.

After clashes between Palestinians and Israeli settlers led to the fatal shooting of an Israeli reservist Thursday morning, a gang of settler thugs descended on the Palestinian village of Deir Sharaf, where they torched cars and shops, and threw rocks at Palestinian residences. Israeli security forces killed three Palestinians in the West Bank Thursday, bringing the death toll there since 7 October to at least 135.

Fighting also intensified on the Lebanese border Thursday, where Hizbollah claimed it had fired at 19 IDF targets. Hamas’ Lebanese wing also claimed responsibility for a rocket barrage on the northern city of Kiryat Shmona, where two people were injured. The Israeli military responded by striking a series of positions in southern Lebanon.



To contact the WSW and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact