

Gaza officials stop updating death toll amid health system collapse

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For the third day in a row, Gaza's Health Ministry did not release an updated death toll of Israel's bombardment of Gaza, amid the near-total collapse of the enclave's healthcare system.

"Following the collapse of services and communications at hospitals in the north, the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza did not update casualty figures," the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said Sunday.

On Friday, the last time the death toll was updated, it stood at 11,078 deaths, 27,490 people injured, and 1.6 million internally displaced. During the first month of Israel's onslaught on Gaza, over 300 Gazans died each day. This likely means that the death toll has already passed 12,000.

Throughout the day Monday, footage was widely shared on social media showing unburied bodies piled up at Gaza's hospitals. Dr. Munir Albursh, the director-general of the Ministry of Health in Gaza, told *Al Jazeera* that stray dogs had entered the Al-Shifa Hospital and were eating the unburied bodies that had piled up. "Stray dogs found the dead bodies inside and started eating them while we were watching," he said.

"We don't have electricity. There's no water in the hospital. There's no food," said one doctor at Al-Shifa Hospital, whose statement was published by Doctors Without Borders (MSF). "People will die in a few hours without functioning ventilators. In front of the main gate, there are many bodies. There are also injured patients; we can't bring them inside. When we sent an ambulance to bring the patients—a few meters away—they attacked the ambulance. There are injured people around the hospital looking for medical care. We can't bring them inside."

On Monday, Israel again attacked the Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza, killing another 31

people. Over 200 were killed at the camp in a series of Israeli airstrikes last month.

On Monday, the United Nations noted that food security inside Gaza was "catastrophic" and that "stocks inside Gaza" were running out. "The only operative mill cannot transform wheat due to electricity outages." It added that there is a 4- to 6-hour "average waiting time to receive half of normal bread portion."

The United Nations noted that "hospitals in the North" are under heavy strikes and that "almost all hospitals in Gaza City and Northern Gaza are reportedly not operational, except one." It stated that 1,000 kidney failure patients, 2,000 cancer patients and 130 premature babies in incubators are at immediate risk of death due to the collapse of the healthcare system.

To date, over 102 United Nations employees have been killed inside Gaza, alongside 182 healthcare workers. On Monday, at the UN headquarters in New York City, the organization lowered its flag to half-staff to commemorate the 100 UN employees that had been killed. UN executives held a moment of silence.

US officials once again reiterated their unequivocal support for Israel's genocide on Monday. White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said during a briefing, "Israel has the right to defend itself. They have the right to defend itself. And so we're going to support Israel in doing that."

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan added, "Our position is that Israel has the right to go after Hamas," adding that Israel is attacking "the tools and infrastructure of its terrorism."

For the second day in a row, Sullivan refused to answer whether Israel was committing war crimes. One journalist stated: "Israel has killed around 11,000 Palestinians and rising. Two-thirds of those are women

and children. The situation in the hospitals is dire. Israel has dropped an astronomical amount of ordnance in very pre-builtup areas. Is Israel, in your view, abiding by the laws of war?” Sullivan replied, “I said yesterday, I, Jake Sullivan, standing here, I’m not in a position to be judge and jury to make that determination. It’s a legal determination.”

Critically, the White House is making these statements against the background of the publication of internal documents in which US government employees categorically assert that Israel is violating international law.

Axios reported on the existence of an internal State Department dissent memo, signed by over 100 State Department and USAID employees, that categorically asserts that Israel is committing “war crimes” in Gaza. Noting the repeated statements by US officials that there are “no red lines” for the number of civilians Israel is allowed to massacre, the letter states, “We doubled down on our unwavering military assistance to the [Israeli government] without clear or actionable red lines.” It accuses US President Joe Biden of “spreading misinformation” in his efforts to justify the actions of Israel.

In a subsequent article, the *New York Times* reported that this is the third such memo that has been submitted by State Department employees.

Over the weekend, Israeli security cabinet member and Agriculture Minister Avi Dichter, a member of Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud Party, effectively admitted that Israel is engaging in ethnic cleansing, declaring, “We are now rolling out the Gaza Nakba.”

Israel’s ongoing genocide in Gaza, and the US’s support for it, take place against ongoing mass demonstrations of people opposing Israel’s crimes. Over the weekend, millions of people took part in mass demonstrations in dozens of major cities, including one in which as many as a million people took part.



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