

Israeli military kills two children in West Bank raid on last day of Gaza truce

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In what local residents described as the largest military raid since 7 October, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) killed two children and levelled an entire street in the West Bank city of Jenin Wednesday. The continuation of daily raids on the West Bank during the six-day truce in the bombardment of Gaza underscores the fact that the Israeli regime remains committed to a policy of genocide against the Palestinian people, for which it enjoys the support of the imperialist powers in North America and Europe.

The two fatalities were identified as 8-year-old Adam Samer al-Ghoul and 15-year-old Basil Suleiman Abu al-Wafa. Both were shot by Israeli soldiers, one in the head and the other in the chest. The IDF claimed to have killed two senior commanders of armed resistance groups operating in Jenin and called in a drone air strike to demolish a house. Roads and water mains were also destroyed.

In total, Israel detained 35 Palestinians in West Bank raids during the night into Wednesday, more than the 30 released in the latest exchange as part of the Gaza truce. Over 3,325 Palestinians have been detained by Israel in the West Bank since 7 October, adding to the more than 5,000 Palestinians already languishing in Israeli jails. Of the 300 Palestinians identified for possible release as part of the truce brokered by Qatar and the US, fully 80 percent have not been charged with any crime, let alone convicted.

Prior to the final death toll being released from the Jenin raid, 242 Palestinians had lost their lives in West Bank raids since 7 October, including 57 children.

The IDF raids have been accompanied by vigilante violence by far-right settlers on Palestinian communities, which are divided into bantustans by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. Earlier in November, Israel's Channel 12 reported that the head of the IDF's Central Command, Maj. Gen. Yehuda Fox, wrote a secret report with the head of the Shin Bet intelligence service noting that police in the West Bank have been ordered by far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir not to respond to acts of settler violence. Ben-Gvir, who is head of the fascistic Jewish Power, has responsibility within Netanyahu's government

for directing police operations.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made clear in a video statement Wednesday that the Israeli regime remains fully committed to the resumption of its genocidal onslaught on Gaza. He said, "In recent days I've heard a question: will Israel return to fighting after this stage of returning our hostages is over? My response is an unequivocal yes. There is no way we won't return to fighting until the end.

"There is no situation in which we do not go back to fighting until the end. This is my policy. The entire security cabinet is behind it. The entire government are behind it."

Underlining this point, War Cabinet Minister Benny Gantz, leader of the opposition Blue and White who joined the Netanyahu cabinet at the beginning of the onslaught, told the media Wednesday that while Israel is "making the most" of the agreement to release hostages, "We are prepared and ready to return to fighting at any given moment, including this moment."

The IDF formally approved combat plans for southern Gaza Wednesday, although details were not released. "We know what needs to be done, and are ready for the next stage," commented IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi. The overwhelming majority of Gaza's 2.3 million inhabitants have fled to the south of the enclave, meaning that any resumption of the Israeli onslaught will take place in densely populated areas.

The Israeli regime's brazen preparations for the next stage of its ethnic cleansing of Gaza are possible thanks to the unconditional support it enjoys from the imperialist powers. Throughout the close to seven weeks of the IDF's daily bombardment of Gaza, the Biden administration backed Netanyahu to the hilt and continued the supply of the military equipment necessary for the slaughter of Palestinian men, women and children. With the pause in fighting having uncovered the true extent of the horrendous human suffering produced by Israel's war crimes, the imperialists are determined to stay the course.

Citing three unnamed Biden administration officials, *Politico* reported Wednesday that US imperialism has no

intention of restricting its support for the far-right Netanyahu regime. Applying pressure on Israel by placing conditions on military aid is “not something we’re currently looking into,” the officials said.

The savagery of Israel and its imperialist backers has provoked outrage among millions of people around the world, who have participated in weekly protests against the Gaza genocide since the onslaught began. Within Israel, Netanyahu’s far-right government is deeply unpopular and fearful that opposition to its plans for the ethnic cleansing of southern Gaza could erupt into the open.

On Wednesday morning, police intervened to disperse a protest outside the Knesset in Jerusalem calling for all hostages to be freed. The *Times of Israel* reported that the police intervened after prominent activist Maoz Inon raised questions about why his parents were not protected on 7 October. “Why didn’t anyone protect my parents,” he said as officers led him away. *Ynet* reported that several protesters were detained. As the *World Socialist Web Site* has previously documented, evidence is mounting that many of the deaths were caused by the IDF’s indiscriminate response to the Palestinian uprising, and that Israeli military and security circles were aware of an impending attack prior to its launch.

Israel’s onslaught has already claimed the lives of around 15,000 Palestinians, with some 7,000 declared to be missing. A spokesman for the civil defence in Gaza explained Wednesday that they lack the fuel and heavy equipment necessary to access thousands of people still buried under rubble. “[We] suffer from a lack of heavy machines that can deal with such crises. We have real difficulties dealing with the rubble and being able to reach the bodies, alive or dead. We are talking about thousands of people... mainly in the north of Gaza—Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya,” Khalil Abu Shammala, a member of the civil defence, told *al-Jazeera*.

The absence of medical services threatens the population with yet another catastrophe. On Monday, the World Health Organisation warned that more people could suffer a “slow death,” as a result of the spread of untreated diseases, than have been killed in Israeli attacks. Large portions of the population lack any access to hospitals, which were deliberately targeted by Israel during its bombardment.

The aid deliveries allowed into Gaza since the truce began remain well below the pre-war level of 500 trucks per day. Although the agreement promised 200 trucks per day and four trucks carrying fuel, *al-Jazeera* reported Wednesday that an average of 150 trucks have passed the Rafah border crossing each day. Rafah is not equipped for heavy commercial traffic, which has made the logistics of transporting aid throughout Gaza more difficult. Israel has refused to open its two border crossings into Gaza to

facilitate additional supplies.

The aid that has reached Gaza is totally inadequate to tackle the conditions that make the rampant spread of disease all but inevitable, including the lack of clean water for drinking and washing, overcrowded camps and residential areas, and a lack of food, winter clothing and medical supplies.

According to a doctor at al-Shiffa Hospital in Gaza City, no medical aid has reached the facility since the truce began last Friday. While many patients were evacuated with medical staff to the south, a significant number remained behind because they could not safely travel. “Since the ceasefire, nothing is coming to the hospital,” said Marwan Abu Sada, the chief surgeon at al-Shifa. “I think most of the medical aid goes to the southern hospitals, [but] nothing is coming to the northern areas, just food and water and other stuff.”

Mohamad Zaqout, a spokesman for the Palestinian Health Ministry, confirmed that Kamal Adwan and al-Ahli hospitals have also yet to receive fuel.

These conditions are the desired result of a conscious policy of ethnic cleansing, which has been publicly admitted by government officials and confirmed in documents leaked to the media. The resort by the Zionist regime to methods associated with the Nazis’ persecution and extermination of the Jews in Europe during World War II expresses the historical bankruptcy of its nationalist programme—the maintenance of a exclusively Jewish nation-state by implementing a “final solution” to the Palestinian question.

As terrible as conditions in Gaza presently are, they could worsen dramatically as soon as today if an extension is not agreed to the pause in fighting between Israel and Hamas. With the truce set to expire at 7am local time, no deal had been reported by the early hours of the morning. Netanyahu convened a meeting of the war cabinet, as US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken arrived during the night in Tel Aviv for his third visit to Israel since the war began.



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