

As Gaza death toll nears 30,000, Israeli leaders call for ethnic cleansing

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On Wednesday, Gaza's Government Media Office reported that the number of Gazans killed has hit 28,110, including 21,110 bodies identified at hospitals and approximately 7,000 additional people missing, most buried under the rubble.

In a separate report, the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor reported, "The majority of those killed in the Israeli air and artillery attacks on the Gaza Strip were civilians, including 11,422 children, and 5,822 women."

The organization asserted, "Israel has deliberately targeted civilian infrastructure in order to cause as many casualties, material losses, and destruction as possible ... as a form of retaliation and collective punishment."

The organization concluded, "This is against international humanitarian law and the 1949 Geneva Convention, and amounts to war crimes according to the Rome Statute, which governs the International Criminal Court." It added, "Israel has flagrantly broken the terms of international humanitarian law, which forbids property damage as a 'preventive means' and property destruction as a means of deterrence, even for military purposes."

In its own report, the Gaza Government Media Office asserted that 310 medical personnel and 97 journalists have been killed. It reported that 65,000 residential units have been completely destroyed, with another 290,000 damaged. The government media office reported that Israel has "targeted more than 23 hospitals, 53 health centres, 140 health facilities, and 102 ambulances."

In a separate report, Gaza's education ministry said that over 4,037 students and 209 educational staff have been killed since the start of Israel's attack on Gaza. It added that more than 7,259 students and 619 teachers were injured since October 7.

On Wednesday, more than 30 people were killed after Israel bombed a building near the al-Amal Hospital. In its daily report on the genocide, the United Nations asserted, "On 27 December, heavy Israeli bombardment from air,

land, and sea, continued across most of the Gaza Strip. In the north, Gaza City and Jabalya were most affected; in the Middle Area, hostilities continued in the four refugee camps—Al Bureij, An Nuseirat, Deir Al Balah and Al Maghazi. Simultaneously, Israeli forces struck multiple targets in the southern cities of Khan Yunis and Rafah."

As the death toll soars, Israeli politicians are openly advocating the ethnic cleansing of Gaza through the forcible displacement of the entire Palestinian population.

On Wednesday, Avigdor Liberman, a member of Israel's parliament who previously served as defense minister, became the latest Israeli politician to openly advocate the ethnic cleansing of Gaza through the displacement of the population into the Sinai Desert. Liberman called on the Israeli military to "tear down the fences" between Gaza and Egypt. He continued, "As soon as there is no obstacle there, I estimate one-and-a-half million Gazans will leave for Sinai and we will not disturb anyone."

This echoed a statement in parliament Monday by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who declared, "Regarding voluntary immigration ... we are working on it. This is the direction we are going in."

Earlier this month, Liberman published an op-ed in the *Times of Israel* entitled "Innocents in Gaza? Don't be naïve," in which he called for collective punishment against the entire civilian population of Gaza.

As the ferocity of the genocide increases, Israel is making preparations to massively expand the war throughout the Middle East.

Earlier this week, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant claimed that Israel is at "war" with multiple countries. "We are in a multi-front war. We are being attacked from seven fronts—Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), Iraq, Yemen and Iran," he said. "We have already responded and acted on six of those fronts," in a clear threat to Iran.

On Wednesday, Israeli war cabinet member Benny Gantz threatened Lebanon at a press conference, declaring, “The situation on Israel’s northern border demands change. The stopwatch for a diplomatic solution is running out. If the world and Lebanese government don’t act in order to prevent the firing on Israel’s northern residents, and to distance Hezbollah from the border, the [Israeli military] will do it.” He concluded, “the war will continue and expand.”

The United States, which is funding and arming the genocide, is coordinating its own military escalation in the Middle East with that of Israel. On Christmas Day, the US military carried out attacks on three locations in Iraq, targeting what it called Iranian proxy forces.

In a letter to Congress on Wednesday, US President Joe Biden wrote, “On the night of December 25, 2023, at my direction, United States forces conducted discrete strikes against three facilities in Iraq used by Iran-affiliated groups for training, logistics support, and other purposes... The strikes were intended to degrade and disrupt the ongoing series of attacks against the United States and our partners, and to deter Iran and Iran-backed militia groups from conducting or supporting further attacks on United States personnel and facilities.”

Biden threatened, “The United States stands ready to take further action, as necessary and appropriate, to address further threats or attacks.”

With every passing day, it is becoming clear that the Israeli-US genocide and ethnic cleansing of the population of Gaza is a critical component of a major new military offensive being carried out by the imperialist powers in the Middle East. With the new year just days away, the imperialist powers are seeking to make 2024 another year of endless war and military barbarism.



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