

Gaza genocide death toll crosses 29,000

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The official death toll of Israel's genocide in Gaza has reached 29,000, Gaza's health ministry said Monday, amid ongoing relentless bombing and mass starvation caused by Israel's blockade of food, water, and medical care.

In addition to the 29,092 people who have been killed, a further 7,000 have been missing for more than two weeks and presumed dead, bringing the actual death toll to 36,000.

When the number of dead, missing, and wounded are added up, the figure comes to over 100,000, or four percent of the population of Gaza.

Some 107 Palestinians were killed in Gaza between Sunday and Monday, and another 145 were injured.

This massive death toll is only set to intensify with Israel's looming assault on Rafah, where over one million people are sheltering.

As the death toll soars, the conflict is only expanding in geographic scope, with Israeli warplanes carrying out two strikes inside the city of Sidon, Lebanon, killing 14 people.

Virtually the entire population of Gaza faces severe hunger, UNICEF warned Monday, with children and pregnant women facing the greatest vulnerability.

"The Gaza Strip is poised to witness an explosion in preventable child deaths which would compound the already unbearable level of child deaths in Gaza," said Ted Chaiban, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director for Humanitarian Action and Supply Operations. "If the conflict doesn't end now, children's nutrition will continue to plummet, leading to preventable deaths or health issues which will affect the children of Gaza for the rest of their lives and have potential intergenerational consequences.

In northern Gaza, one in six children under the age of two faces acute malnutrition, warned the report. "Hungry, weakened, and deeply traumatized children are more likely to get sick... It's dangerous, and tragic, and happening before our eyes," warned Mike Ryan, head of the WHO's Health Emergencies Programme.

In the south, five percent of children under 2 years old are acutely malnourished, the report said.

The UN report added that prior to the assault on Gaza, just 0.8 percent of children under 5 years of age were acutely malnourished. This figure has surged to 15.6 percent, pointing to what UNICEF said was an "unprecedented" increase in malnutrition.

The report found that "90 percent of children under the age of 2 and 95 percent of pregnant and breastfeeding women face severe food poverty, meaning they have consumed two or less food groups in the previous day - and the food they do have access to is of the lowest nutritional value."

It added, "95 percent of households are limiting meals and portion sizes, with 64 percent of households eating only one meal a day."

The UN noted that, "On average, households surveyed had access to less than one liter of safe water per person per day. According to humanitarian standards, the minimum amount of safe water needed in an emergency is three liters per person per day, while the overall standard is 15 liters per person, which includes sufficient quantities for drinking, washing, and cooking."

A staggering 70 percent of children under 5 had suffered from diarrhea over the past two weeks, representing a 23-fold increase since before the start of the war.

In a separate report, the UN reported that experts were "appalled by reported human rights violations against Palestinian women and girls."

The report found that "Palestinian women and girls have reportedly been arbitrarily executed in Gaza, often together with family members, including their children, according to information received."

It quoted UN experts as saying, "We are shocked by reports of the deliberate targeting and extrajudicial killing of Palestinian women and children in places where they sought refuge, or while fleeing. Some of them were reportedly holding white pieces of cloth when they were killed by the Israeli army or affiliated forces."

The experts added, “We are particularly distressed by reports that Palestinian women and girls in detention have also been subjected to multiple forms of sexual assault, such as being stripped naked and searched by male Israeli army officers. At least two female Palestinian detainees were reportedly raped while others were reportedly threatened with rape and sexual violence.”

The experts added, “Taken together, these alleged acts may constitute grave violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, and amount to serious crimes under international criminal law that could be prosecuted under the Rome Statute,” the experts said. “Those responsible for these apparent crimes must be held accountable, and victims and their families are entitled to full redress and justice.”

The experts included Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, as well as Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

The systematic torture of Palestinian detainees is being boldly publicized on Israeli TV, where detainees are shown blindfolded and shackled, many in the “stress positions” pioneered by the United States at Abu Ghraib.

Israeli television also ran a report documenting the fact that Israeli troops have constructed a highway that will effectively cut the Gaza Strip in two, between Gaza City in the North and Khan Younis in the south, effectively destroying Gaza as a unified geographical entity.

On Monday, the International Court of Justice opened a hearing on the legality of Israel’s occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. At the hearing, representatives from Palestine documented, in detail, that the present genocide takes place as part of a systematic effort to exert total Israeli control over all of the occupied territories, and fully annex them into the Israeli state.



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