

Israel massacres dozens in strikes on Rafah refugee camp

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The Israeli regime's deliberate massacre of at least 45 displaced people in a tent camp in Rafah marks yet another act of barbarism in its genocide against the Palestinians. Dozens of men, women and children, who had already fled multiple times in the past seven months, were massacred and maimed in a firestorm of American-supplied missiles fired by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF).

Sunday's bombardment was a direct response by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's fascist government to Friday's order from the International Court of Justice calling for an end to Israel's military intervention in Rafah. The Zionist regime wanted to make clear that it will not be bound by any restrictions imposed by international law. It feels able to act so provocatively because it has full confidence in the unflinching support of the imperialist powers, first and foremost the United States, for its "final solution" of the Palestinian question.

The strike was carried out "with precise ammunition and on the basis of precise intelligence," the IDF asserted. Its statement blandly noted that the military was aware that "several civilians in the area were harmed. The incident is under review."

The most commonly used "precise ammunition" fired by the IDF at Gaza are weapons fitted with US-produced Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) bomb kits, which transform standard weapons into GPS-guided munitions. US aerospace company Boeing accelerated the dispatch of at least 1,800 such kits to Israel in October 2023, as the Netanyahu regime's genocide got underway. Since then, they have played a major role in slaughtering well over 36,000 Palestinians, the current official death toll.

The Tal as-Sultan neighbourhood of western Rafah, where the camp was located, was supposedly a "safe zone" for Palestinian civilians. According to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, many victims were "burned alive" in their tents. An estimated 249 people were injured in the strike, which eyewitnesses told CNN included at least eight missiles. One survivor, who made it to the Kuwaiti hospital, stated, "The air strikes burned the tents, the tents are

melting, and the people's bodies are melting."

With Gaza's healthcare system collapsing after months of repeated attacks by the Israeli regime, many of the injured will not survive. A doctor who spoke to *Al Jazeera* after returning to Britain from an aid mission in Gaza stated that hospitals in the enclave are providing "medieval medicine" to patients.

"It is what you would hear about or read about what would be happening in Europe maybe 300, 400 years ago," commented Dr. Khaled Dawas, the head of gastrointestinal surgery at University College London. He added that injured Palestinians often avoid going to hospital because it "means pretty much a death sentence."

One day after the massacre, the director of the Kuwaiti hospital in Rafah, where many of the injured were treated, announced the closure of the facility due to Israeli attacks. Earlier in the day, two healthcare workers were reportedly killed in a strike on the facility's gates. The al-Aqsa hospital in Deir el-Balah was also set to suspend all services due to a lack of fuel triggered by an IDF blockade that was initiated on the same day as the refugee camp massacre.

This latest atrocity has the Biden administration's fingerprints all over it. The IDF's onslaught on Rafah has proceeded over the past three weeks after the White House gave it the green light. Just two weeks before Israel attacked Rafah, Biden signed a supplementary military assistance bill passed with bipartisan support that included \$26 billion in funding for Israel.

Biden has asserted that Israel is doing "all it can to ensure civilian protection," while National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan insisted that the IDF's assault has "not involved major military operations into the heart of dense urban areas." This line has been maintained even as over 800,000 people have fled the city. Likewise, administration officials continue to claim that killing civilians in Rafah is a "red line," even as the IDF does this every day with impunity.

The Biden administration's lying claims that no "major" operations are taking place in Rafah and that it opposes killing civilians are no more credible than Netanyahu's

attempt to present the bombing of the refugee camp in comments Monday as a “tragic mistake.” The fact of the matter is that as horrific as Sunday’s massacre was, it is part of a pattern of systematic targeting of defenceless civilians by the IDF.

From the bombardment of the al-Ahli hospital, killing upwards of 500 people, to the storming of the al-Shifa hospital, and the destruction of Khan Younis, millions of workers and young people know all too well the brutality of Netanyahu’s regime and what it is capable of doing with imperialist backing.

The imperialist governments in the United States and Germany, Israel’s two most important weapons’ suppliers, reiterated their backing for the Zionist regime after Sunday’s massacre. Adopting the Israeli government’s propaganda wholesale, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said:

Israel has a right to go after Hamas, and we all understand this strike killed two senior Hamas terrorists, who are responsible for attacks on Israeli civilians.

German government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit labelled the strike a “mistake,” echoing Netanyahu. Hebestreit also noted that the Israeli military had launched an investigation to determine what happened, adding, according to *Der Spiegel*:

First of all, investigate what happened and then judge. And don’t come to an immediate judgement on the basis of pictures.

In other words, let the murderers investigate the crime scene and cover up any evidence that implicates them before we say anything about it.

No “investigation” is needed to determine what the motivation for Sunday’s massacre was. Israeli government and military officials have repeatedly asserted since the genocide began that their plan is to ethnically cleanse Gaza of Palestinians by killing them, starving them to death, or forcing them to flee the enclave, so that Israel can seize the territory.

Gaza’s inhabitants are viewed by the Zionist regime as “human animals,” as Defence Minister Yoav Gallant put it in October. Fascist National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who recently declared that he would like to live in

Gaza, celebrated Sunday’s slaughter with a post on social media urging an intensification of the attacks. “Rafah with full force,” he wrote.

The imperialist powers support this barbarism because they view the Gaza genocide as a critical component of their plans to redivide the world in a rapidly escalating Third World War. The same indifference to the savage massacre of human beings in Gaza by the IDF with its never-ending supply of US-manufactured bombs is on display in Ukraine, where the US and its NATO allies have sacrificed some 500,000 Ukrainians in a war for imperialist plunder.

It was not for nothing that US Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson remarked in his denunciation of the application of the International Criminal Court’s chief prosecutor for arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Gallant last week, “If the ICC is allowed to threaten Israeli leaders, ours could be next.”

The key lesson that must be drawn following the Rafah refugee camp massacre is that appeals to the powers that be, whether to imperialist governments, the United Nations, or international courts, to “stop the genocide” will fall on deaf ears.

The millions of workers, students and young people who have joined anti-genocide protests and encampments over recent months around the world must turn to the international working class, the only social force capable of leading a genuine struggle to halt the genocide against the Palestinians.

The mass political mobilisation of the working class, which produces all of society’s wealth, is the only way to stop the Israeli war criminals and their imperialist accomplices in their tracks. As workers are told in every country to accept sweeping attacks on conditions and public services to pay for militarism, war and genocide, a powerful basis exists to rally workers in struggle to stop the production and delivery of all conceivable military equipment to Israel and its allied imperialist war machines in North America and Europe.

The fight to build such a movement requires arming the working class with a socialist programme to defeat capitalist barbarism. That is the most urgent task of all for those who want to bring the genocide in Gaza to an end.



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