

Israel responds to ICC ruling with bombings in Lebanon, mass expulsions in Gaza

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Israel has responded to last week's arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant by intensifying its rampage throughout the Middle East.

On Saturday, an Israeli airstrike killed at least 29 people and wounded more than 68 in the Basta al-Fawqa neighborhood of Lebanon. That day, 84 people in Lebanon were slaughtered in Israeli bombardments, with dozens more killed on Sunday.

To date, 3,754 people have been killed and 15,626 wounded in Israeli attacks on Lebanon since October 2023, according to the health ministry. Nearly one-quarter of Lebanon's population has been forced from their homes.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said that Saturday's airstrike was an attempt to kill Mohammad Haidar, a Hezbollah military commander, but the attack was unsuccessful. Firass Abiad, Lebanon's health minister, said that the strike targeted a multi-story building that was home to at least 45 people.

"Beirut, the capital, woke up to a horrific massacre, as the Israeli enemy's air force completely destroyed an eight-story residential building with five missiles on Al-Mamoun Street in the Basta area," Lebanon's official National News Agency reported.

Ongoing strikes on Sunday "caused massive destruction over a large geographical area," reported the NNA. "A series of violent strikes are targeting Haret Hreik, Bir al-Abed, and Ghobeiri in the southern suburbs of Beirut."

Al Jazeera's Zein Basravi reported that Saturday's strike "marks at least the fourth Israeli strike this week carried out in central Beirut." He added that the Israeli attacks involved "multiple strikes, no warning, on an area that is densely populated with missiles meant to

penetrate deeply."

Among those struck in the attacks were Lebanese troops, at least one of whom was killed. While the Israeli military is nominally targeting Hezbollah, and not the Lebanese government, Israeli politicians are openly advocating strikes on Lebanese government buildings. "The Lebanese government is allowing Hezbollah to operate freely. It's time to take strong action against its infrastructure and assets," said Israeli opposition leader Benny Gantz.

Israeli media publications are going even further, with an op-ed in the *Maariv* newspaper suggesting the bombing of Lebanon's parliament building. "The parliament building is part of Hezbollah's political infrastructure and could serve as a refuge for its members," wrote military analyst Avi Ashkenazi.

The massive bombardment of Lebanon has been accompanied by the expansion of the ethnic cleansing campaign in Gaza. The Israeli military issued a new set of expulsion orders for the Shujaiya neighborhood in northern Gaza, forcing large numbers of people to flee. Social media posts showed hundreds of people leaving the neighborhood in donkey carts and on foot.

Avi Dichter, a member of Israel's security cabinet, made clear that Israel intends to occupy Gaza for years. "Gaza will never be a threat to the state of Israel, no matter how long it is going to take. ... I think that we are going to stay in Gaza for a long time. ... I think most people understand that that will be years," he said.

The latest mass expulsion orders are part of a systematic campaign, known as the "Generals' Plan," to fully ethnically cleanse northern Gaza by withholding food and supplies and to treat all those who remain as enemy combatants subject to be killed.

The escalating war against Lebanon and ethnic cleansing campaign in Gaza are accompanied by

sweeping domestic repression inside Israel itself. Over the weekend, the Israeli government levied sanctions against Israel's oldest newspaper, *Haaretz*. Earlier this month, *Haaretz* published an editorial accusing the Israeli military of "conducting an ethnic cleansing operation in the northern Gaza Strip."

Israel's genocidal rampage in Gaza is relentlessly targeting healthcare and humanitarian workers. Palestine's Wafa news agency reported that Israeli bombings in Gaza have killed more than 1,000 doctors and nurses. "Over 310 other medical personnel were arrested, tortured, and executed in prisons," medical sources told Wafa, adding that Israeli troops "prevented the entry of medical supplies, health delegations, and hundreds of surgeons into Gaza."

In a statement Friday, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said that 2024 has become the deadliest year on record for humanitarian workers, with 281 aid workers killed globally, the vast majority of them by Israeli forces in Gaza.

"Humanitarian workers are being killed at an unprecedented rate, their courage and humanity being met with bullets and bombs," said Tom Fletcher, under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator. "This violence is unconscionable and devastating to aid operations. States and parties to conflict must protect humanitarians, uphold international law, prosecute those responsible, and call time on this era of impunity."

Amid the perpetual bombings and mass starvation in Gaza, there are continuing reports of Israeli forces carrying out mass summary executions. The Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor reported:

Among the numerous atrocities committed by Israeli forces—ranging from bombing homes with residents inside, to mass killings of displaced civilians in shelters, and the targeting of gatherings and vehicles—Euro-Med Monitor's field team documented harrowing incidents of direct killings and extrajudicial executions of civilians by Israeli soldiers, carried out with no justification whatsoever.

The Euro-Med team "documented the killing of Khaled Mustafa Ismail Al-Shafai (58) and his eldest son Ibrahim (21) by Israeli forces. They were shot inside their home in Beit Lahia in front of their family on Wednesday, 13 November 2024."

On Tuesday, the International Criminal Court issued warrants for the arrest of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. US officials responded by condemning the ICC, with the White House saying it was discussing sanctions against the ICC proposed by Republican senators, at least one of whom has threatened military retaliation against countries cooperating with the ICC's case.



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