

# Former head of Israel's military admits over 10 percent of Gaza's population killed or injured

Andre Damon  
14 September 2025

Over 200,000 Palestinians in Gaza, or over 10 percent of the population, have been killed or injured during the Israeli onslaught on Gaza, the former chief of Israel's military said last week.

Herzi Halevi, the Israeli general who served as the chief of the Israeli military during the first 17 months of the Gaza genocide, said Tuesday in a local town hall that "There are 2.2 million people in Gaza, over 10 percent were killed or injured," according to the Israeli publication Ynet.

This statement is broadly consistent with the official casualty count published by Gaza's Ministry of Health, which found that 64,718 Palestinians were killed in Gaza and 163,859 were injured since October 7, 2023.

Halevi's comments contradict repeated declarations by the Israeli government that the death toll reported by Gaza's Ministry of Health, and cited by the United Nations and other international institutions, is not credible. In reality, all efforts by Israel and its imperialist backers to deny the death toll of the Gaza genocide are a fraud from beginning to end.

Explaining this massive death toll, Halevi added, "We took the gloves off," and "This is not a gentle war."

He explained that the mass killing by the Israeli military was totally unconstrained by any internal checks or restraints, including by military prosecutors. "Between a year and a half and a year and seven months, we attacked throughout the Middle East, a lot, in huge quantities. Not once did anyone restrict me—not the military prosecutor, by the way, she has no authority to restrict me."

Instead, he implied that the purpose of the oversight mechanisms of the Israeli military is to present the ongoing mass killing within a pseudo-legal framework. "There are legal advisors who say: We will know how to defend this legally in the world, and this is very important

for the State of Israel."

However horrific the official death toll of 64,718, it is in fact a massive underestimation. In July 2024, an article published in the *Lancet* medical journal estimated that, once "indirect" deaths arising from the destruction of Gaza's food, medical, and sanitation systems are included, the real death toll stood at 186,000. If these figures were extended through the present, the real death toll would now be approaching 300,000. Another article published by the Australian journal *Arena* in July 2025 estimated that the death toll could be as high as 680,000.

Any actual count of the dead is impossible, due to the collapse of Gaza's medical infrastructure and the fact that a vast portion of bodies are buried under the rubble of destroyed buildings or buried by family members with no way to notify medical officials.

Over the weekend, Israel intensified its bombardment of Gaza City, destroying three residential blocks and killing at least 53 Palestinians in the course of 24 hours. In a statement, Gaza's government media office condemned the "systematic bombing of towers, residential buildings, schools, and civilian institutions with the aim of extermination and forced displacement."

It added, "The occupation deliberately and according to a clear methodology bombs schools, mosques, hospitals, and medical centers, destroys towers and residential buildings, destroys displaced persons' tents, and targets the headquarters of ... international institutions working in the humanitarian field."

Meanwhile, the deliberate, man-made famine engineered by Israel continues to ravage Gaza, causing the deaths of two people from malnutrition in 24 hours, bringing the official death toll of the famine to 422.

Last month, the United Nations-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification formally declared a famine

in Gaza. Since then, 144 Palestinians have died of starvation or malnutrition, including 30 children.

Israel's onslaught on Gaza City has forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee to the city of Rafah in the south, clogging the main coastal road with a sea of people, carts and battered vehicles. Since the start of the month, a quarter of a million people have fled Gaza City, out of the 1 million who had been sheltering there.

Medical staff warned that the medical infrastructure in southern Gaza is already completely overwhelmed and simply incapable of dealing with the influx of sick and wounded people that is being forced into the area.

The conquest of Gaza City will place the entire Gaza Strip under Israeli military occupation, creating the conditions for what Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called the "concluding moves" in Gaza: the ghettoization of the Palestinian population in concentration camps and their expulsion from their ancestral homeland.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in Israel over the weekend to oversee the US-Israeli genocide in person. Responding to the Israeli strike earlier this month that attempted to murder Hamas negotiators in Qatar, Rubio shrugged, "What has happened has happened."

Rubio visited the Western Wall in Jerusalem, in a trip aimed at "reaffirming America's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's eternal capital," according to the State Department. This is coded language for reaffirming the US's support for the seizure not only of Gaza but ever-greater portions of the West Bank.

On Thursday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced a plan to expand Israeli settlements in the West Bank, effectively cutting the Palestinian territory in half. The settlement plan, in the words of Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, aims to "bury the idea of a Palestinian state."



To contact the WSWWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**