

‘Operation Al-Aqsa Flood’ Day 94: Israeli Forces Kill Four-year-old Girl in Occupied West Bank; Gaza’s Children Face Brunt of the Genocide

Ten children in Gaza are losing a limb every day in Gaza to Israeli airstrikes, as Israeli politicians say the Gaza onslaught will last at least another nine months.

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Casualties

- 23,084+ killed* and at least 58,926 wounded in the Gaza Strip.
- 381 Palestinians killed in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem
- Israel revises its estimated October 7 death toll down from 1,400 to 1,147.
- 510 Israeli soldiers killed since October 7, and at least 2,193 injured.

*This figure was confirmed by Gaza’s Ministry of Health on January 8. Due to breakdowns in communication networks within the Gaza Strip, the Ministry of Health in Gaza has been unable to regularly and accurately update its tolls since mid-November. Some rights groups put the death toll number at [more than 30,000](#) when accounting for those presumed dead.

Key Developments

- Israeli soldiers shoot dead 4-year-old girl at military checkpoint in occupied West Bank
- Israeli military says the war on Gaza could last more than nine months.
- [Save the Children](#): Over ten children lose limbs a day in Gaza.
- The Israeli army forces Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital to evacuate and abandon sick patients.
- [Doctors Without Borders](#): Israel appears to have directly targeted deceased Al

Jazeera journalist Hamza Dahdouh after “a single rocket” hit his car.

- Palestinian Ministry of Health: 249 Palestinians killed and 510 wounded in Israeli attacks on Gaza over 24 hours.
- [Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor](#): “Systematic torture and inhumane treatment” of Palestinians detained in Israeli army camps.
- US Senator blames Israel’s ‘political decisions’ for the inadequate amount of aid reaching Gaza.
- Israeli military announces it “[dismantled](#)” Hamas’s military framework in northern Gaza, however, reports show that Israeli forces still face resistance from Hamas fighters in northern parts of the Strip.

Gaza’s Children May Never Recover from Israel’s Relentless Attacks

Israel’s attacks on Gaza have surpassed three months, fostering the most dangerous place in the world to be a child as death and destruction fills every corner of the besieged enclave.

According to Jason Lee, Save the Children’s director for the occupied Palestinian territory, children are much more vulnerable to explosives. They will also need much more time and effort to recover from the injuries they cause.

“Small children caught up in explosions are particularly vulnerable to major, life-changing injuries. They have weaker necks and torsos, so less force is needed to cause a brain injury,” Lee said in a [statement](#).

“Their skulls are still not fully formed, and their undeveloped muscles offer less protection, so a blast is more likely to tear apart organs in their abdomen, even when there is no visible damage.”

Lee added that over 1,000 children have had one or both legs amputated, citing UNICEF, averaging out to over ten children a day over the last three months.

To make matters worse, many of the injured children had to endure the painful procedures without anesthetic due to the Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip.

As the number of injuries compounds in the Gaza Strip amid the collapsed healthcare system, it is difficult for child amputees to receive the follow-up care they need.

“When children lose limbs, it’s not the same as when adults lose limbs,” he said. “Crucially, their bones continue to grow, so the amount of operations and surgical interventions that children who have lost arms and legs will... stay with them for many, many years. And there’s a huge amount of pain management as well, which of course, Gaza’s healthcare system currently is not, James Deneslow, head of Save the Children’s Conflict Time, said as [reported by Al Jazeera](#).

Israel Is Picking Off Hospitals in Gaza One by One

Gaza’s healthcare system is barely functioning as it is, and yet the Israeli army is continuing to attack one hospital after the other.

Most recently, the military has been targeting the only hospital in central Gaza, Al-Aqsa

Martyrs Hospital, which has already been over-capacity. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the hospital has received 99 new injured patients in the last 24 hours alone.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), [said](#) his staff “saw sickening scenes of people of all ages being treated on blood-streaked floors and in chaotic corridors,” on Saturday.

“An unidentified child laid dead, partially covered by a sheet, on a bed. Other injured were prostrate on the floor, being stepped over by the health staff and families. A man’s harrowing groans, either from pain or anguish, cut through the emergency ward’s commotion,” he continued.

The next day, the hospital’s medical staff were forced to abandon their patients after the army issued them an evacuation notice.

According to Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), they “dropped leaflets designating areas surrounding the hospital as a ‘red zone.’”

“Given the recent history of attacks on medical staff and facilities in Gaza, the team is unable to return. Many local health workers have also been unable to access the hospital to care for the hundreds of patients that remain due to the conflict,” [MAP continued in a statement](#).

Similarly, Ghebreyesus [said on x](#) that he received “troubling” reports from the hospital’s director that “over 600 patients and most health workers” have been “forced to leave” the hospital.

[.@WHO](#) has received troubling reports of increasing hostilities and ongoing evacuation orders near the vital Al-Aqsa Hospital in the Middle Area of [#Gaza](#), which according to the facility’s director forced over 600 patients and most health workers to leave. Their locations are not... pic.twitter.com/Vzd9UWThNm

— Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (@DrTedros) [January 7, 2024](#)

Ghebreyesus added that the current whereabouts of hundreds of patients and health workers from Gaza’s Al-Aqsa Hospital “are not currently known.”

The lack of information on the medical staff and patients’ whereabouts is especially concerning due to the testimonies surfacing of severe human rights violations in Israeli camps.

Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor [has reported](#) “systematic torture and inhumane treatment” of Palestinians detained in Israeli army camps.

Those who spent days in Israeli custody reported to the rights group that the army and Shin Bet members treated them as “non-human animals,” regularly beating them, stripping them naked, subjecting them to electric-shock torture, burning them with cigarettes, and holding them in iron cages.

Meanwhile, in northern Gaza, the Palestinian Red Crescent (PRCS) is continuing to treat those injured by Israeli airstrikes despite fuel and electricity shortages.

In a [video posted on X](#), PRCS volunteers were shown treating an injured man by torchlight at a medical point in Jabalia, northern Gaza.

Despite the power outage, our volunteers continue to work in the PRCS medical point in [#Jabalia](#), northern [#Gaza](#) to save the lives of patients and the injured, amid a shortage of medical supplies and medications.
📷 Filmed by PRCS volunteer: Yusuf Khader, 6/1/2024...
pic.twitter.com/ipM5n6kv7F

— PRCS (@PalestineRCS) [January 7, 2024](#)

Israel's 'Political Decisions' Are at Fault for the Lack of Aid

The Gaza Strip still needs life-saving humanitarian aid, including fuel, medical supplies, food, and water. However, Israel's ongoing blockade has made it difficult for aid to enter the enclave.

The United States Senator Chris Van Hollen has blamed Israel's 'political decisions' for the inadequate amount of aid reaching Gaza.

On a visit to the Egyptian side of the Rafah border crossing, Hollen described the screening process as "unnecessarily cumbersome," which is "the result of political decisions by the Netanyahu coalition" is delaying the delivery of assistance to Gaza.

Hollen told [CBS News](#), "When one item on a truck is rejected, the entire truck is rejected."

As an example, he said water filtration systems were turned back by Israeli inspectors at the border, with the crossing operating eight hours a day instead of 24-7 to meet the needs of Palestinians.

"According to all the international NGOs that we talked about - who have operated in conflict zones around the world - they've never seen a worse process for ensuring the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance," Hollen added.

Meanwhile, in Israel, Al Jazeera's Sara Khairat [says](#) Israeli media outlets, which are heavily relied on by Israelis for information, are not focusing on the human toll or ruthless destruction of the war.

"The only discussions you'll see here on Israeli media are related to the war decisions, to the situation in terms of what they've managed to achieve, the number of deaths of Hamas fighters. And it's very much a 'you're either with us or against us' mentality."

Four Year Old Shot Dead in Occupied West Bank

Meanwhile, in the occupied West Bank, Israeli forces shot dead three Palestinians, including a four-year-old girl, on Sunday evening at a military checkpoint northwest of occupied Jerusalem, according to [Wafa News agency](#).

The Israeli military claimed that they shot the child during an alleged car-ramming incident. However, the child was not involved in the vehicle.

The other two Palestinians killed were a young couple.

Israeli forces also conducted overnight raids across the occupied territory, an almost daily occurrence since October 7.

As Israel Makes Plans for the 'Day After' in Gaza, Resistance Continues

Israeli military leaders are hinting that their attacks on Gaza could last through 2024.

The army has claimed it "[dismantled](#)" Hamas's military framework in northern Gaza, alleging that it has killed some 8,000 fighters and will now end major combat operations in that area. However, according to reports, Israeli forces are still facing resistance across the North. According to an Al Jazeera report, in the Gaza City neighborhood of al-Shujaiyya, an Israeli commander was speaking to the media about how the area had been cleared, when fighters launched an attack.

Israel has not addressed the future of the troops still deployed in northern Gaza but has said during a [press conference](#) that the military will "continue to deepen the achievement" in the area.

At the start of Israel's aggression on Gaza, Israel demanded the evacuation of all civilians from the north to the south, claiming it would be temporary. While it is unclear if Israel plans to allow Palestinians to return home as promised initially, the [idea of expelling Gazans into Egypt](#) continues to gain traction amongst Israeli politicians and the public.

Israeli spokesperson Daniel Hagari says that Hamas fighters "without a framework and without commanders" are still present, and scattered fighting is still to be expected. However, he claims Hamas no longer operates in an organized manner.

Hamas has yet to comment on the Israeli assertion.

Hagari stressed that Israel still plans to continue their onslaught on the rest of Gaza, including the South, which Israel previously labeled as a safe area.

"We are now focused on dismantling Hamas in the center of and south of the strip," Hagari continued, adding that it "will take time."

Israeli military chief Herzl Halevi also said 2024 will be a "challenging year."

"We will be fighting in Gaza all year - that's for sure," Halevi said during a visit to the occupied West Bank, [according to Al Jazeera](#).

Omar Ashour, a professor at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, [told Al Jazeera](#) that it is clear that Israel's ground forces in southern Gaza are meeting stiff resistance from Palestinian fighters.

"In Khan Younis, based on the statements from the Israeli military, nine brigades are deployed in just one governorate of the Gaza Strip. These include paratrooper brigades, a special forces brigade, and armored brigades.

“When you have this number of elite forces in such a small area it tells me the fight has a very long way to go,” Ashour concluded.

Esmat Mansour, a researcher on Israeli affairs, [told Al Jazeera](#) that according to Israeli estimates, the war will take at least nine months to a year to conclude, and that will only happen after the army “combs through the Gaza Strip and rids it of rockets and tunnels.”

“They will also aim to find the captives and reach the Hamas leadership. All of this makes 2024 a year of fighting and puts Israel in a continuous state of emergency,” Mansour continued.

“This means that the existing situation – the state of emergency, the emergency government, and all that those entail – will continue, and it is also possible that the captives may not return during this year,” he added.

US ‘Dissonance’ Over Israeli Crimes

The Biden administration has continued to financially back Israel in the face of mounting war crimes, death and destruction in north Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

Following Israel’s murder of Al Jazeera journalist Hamza Dahdouh, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he was “deeply sorry” about the “unimaginable loss” of Wael Dahdouh, whose son was killed in an Israeli attack.

In response, Middle East expert Khaled Elgindy [wrote on x](#): “The total dissonance of being sorry about an outcome that you have actively enabled at every stage.”

The total dissonance of being sorry about an outcome that you have actively enabled at every stage. <https://t.co/8KRJoYGpfu>

— Khaled Elgindy (@elgindy_) [January 7, 2024](#)

Similarly, political analyst [Hafsa Halawa told Al Jazeera](#),

“Nothing in the US’s policy actions – beyond certain doublespeak that we see or tweets that are written by the teams of everybody from the secretary of state to the president of the United States and other members of the government – seems to signal that there is any material pressure on Israel.”

“At the end of the day, nothing that we’ve seen since October 7 from anyone in this administration signals that the US is anything but supportive of this war.”

“And this is why Israel is pushing for a deal with Hamas without a halt to the fighting. Israel wants the fighting to continue because it is looking for a clear victory in the form of changing the entire situation in the Gaza Strip, and this requires a lot of time.”

During a press conference in Doha, Qatar, US Secretary of State Blinken [said](#) that the United Nations (UN) can play a crucial role in allowing Gaza’s displaced civilians to return home as Israel moves to a “lower-intensity phase” of its military campaign.

“Palestinian civilians must be able to return home as soon as conditions allow,” Blinken

said. "They cannot – they must not – be pressed to leave Gaza."

However, it is unclear if the US will put any material pressure on Israel to follow through with allowing Palestinians in Gaza to return to their homes

Blinken is set to visit Israel and the West Bank on Tuesday and Wednesday this week before wrapping up the trip in Egypt, in his fourth visit to the Middle East since October 2023. According to [AP](#), Blinken's priorities are "protecting civilians....getting more humanitarian aid into Gaza, ensuring Hamas cannot strike again and developing a framework for Palestinian-led governance in the territory and 'a Palestinian state with security assurances or Israel'."

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Featured image: Wounded Palestinian children, are taken to hospital after Israeli attacks in Khan Yunis, Gaza on December 23, 2023 [Belal Khaled/Anadolu Agency]

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