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The bloodiest face of its genocide: Israel has killed 2,100 Palestinian infants and toddlers in Gaza



A Palestinian woman carries the shrouded body of her infant killed in an Israeli strike in Rafah, southern Gaza, 19 December. Abed Rahim Khatib (DPA)

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Israel-Palestinian Territory

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Palestinian Territory - The Israeli army has killed 2,100 Palestinian infants and toddlers under the age of two, out of the about 17,000 children it has killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of its genocide on 7 October 2023.

The number of Palestinian children—whether infants or children in general—killed by the Israeli army is horrifying, and the rate of their killing is unprecedented in the history of modern wars. It also represents a dangerous trend based on the dehumanisation of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Israel's military targets Palestinians and their children daily, methodically, and widely in the most heinous and brutal ways possible, and virtually without pause for 10 consecutive months.

Due to the Israeli bombing of homes, buildings, residential neighbourhoods, shelter centres, and displacement tents, many children have lost their heads and limbs. This is a flagrant violation of the rules of distinction, proportionality, military necessity, i.e. the legal and moral obligation to take the necessary precautions to minimise the deaths of civilians and children.

The Euro-Med Monitor field team documented today, Tuesday 13 August, the killing of four-day-old twins Aser and Aysal Muhammad Abu al-Qumsan. The twins were killed this morning, along with their mother Juman and their grandmother, in an Israeli bombing that targeted a residential flat in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip.

After leaving the apartment to obtain a birth certificate for his two newborn children, the father of the infants returned to discover that all of his family members—including the twins' grandmother—had been killed in an Israeli attack on the building.

Despite its advanced technological capabilities, the Israeli army targets houses and shelter centres knowing full well that they house civilians, including women and children. Nevertheless, it bombs these targets with highly destructive bombs and missiles, aiming to cause as many civilian deaths and severe injuries as possible. This is demonstrated by the Israeli army's systematic, widespread, and repeated targeting of civilians in the Gaza Strip, as well as its use of highly destructive and indiscriminate weapons, particularly against areas with dense populations of civilians.

The case of the two babies Aser and Aysal are not unique; daily reports of child victims, including infants, are made in the Strip.

One of the most notable testimonies has been from 42-year-old Abdul Hafez Al-Najjar, the father of a child named Ahmed, who was among the many victims of an Israeli massacre on 26 May. The massacre targeted displaced people living in tents in the Barksat area, west of Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.

> **The systematic killings of Palestinian civilians, who make up at least 92% of the total**

Ahmed, along with three of his brothers and their mother, was among a host of other victims that were all beheaded and killed. Ahmed's father told the Euro-Med team: "My child Ahmed was very beautiful. He was a year and a half old. He was beheaded in the Israeli bombing. His head was separated from his body. When I saw him, I felt distressed. He was buried without his head."

number of deaths due to the genocide, will have a negative impact on the population growth rates and reproductive capacity for generations to come.

According to the Euro-Med Monitor team, an Israeli airstrike on Rafah's Al-Salam neighbourhood, in the southern Gaza Strip, killed another set of twin infants on 3 March. Six-month-old Wissam and Naeem Abu Anza were killed by the strike, along with their father and 11 other family members.

The mother of Wissam and Naeem, Rania Abu Anza, stated that she struggled for 10 years to become a mother before eventually giving birth to the two babies. "They implanted three embryos in me, two of them remained, and there they were," she explained. "They bombed the house, killing my husband, my kids, and the rest of the family in the massacre." Ten days ago marked six months since the death of the twins.

Shaimaa Al-Ghoul, meanwhile, was nine months pregnant when her home in the southern city of Rafah was bombed on 12 February. Her husband and two sons, Mohammed and Janan, were killed, and she suffered injuries from shrapnel that entered her abdomen, pierced her uterus, and ultimately lodged in the fetus.

Al-Ghoul stated that prior to her husband and two children's deaths, her husband, Abdullah Abu Jazar, had made her "dates, sweets, and a [gift] bag in celebration of his expected newborn". She said that she did give birth to a child, whom she named Abdullah, after his father, but the boy only lived one day. Baby Abduallah died from the wound caused by the shrapnel that had entered his mother. Thus, Al-Ghoul lost her husband and three children.

Euro-Med Monitor notes that numerous unborn children have died in hospitals over the past 10 months due to a lack of oxygen and electricity, inadequate care, and hospital targeting.

Israel continues to kill thousands of Palestinian men and women in the Gaza Strip, most of them in their reproductive age, including pregnant women, and thousands of children, including infants and toddlers. According to the meaning contained in the description of genocidal acts under Article (2) of the Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide, there is no doubt that Israel's systematic and widespread killings of Palestinian civilians, who make up at least 92% of the total number of deaths

due to the genocide, will have a negative impact on the population growth rates and reproductive capacity of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip for generations to come. Approximately 50,000 Palestinians, including thousands trapped under the rubble for long enough periods of time that they are now presumed dead, have been killed by Israel since 7 October. In addition, 88,000 other Palestinians have been wounded by Israel since then. These deaths and injuries will undoubtedly affect the Palestinians as a national and ethnic group for several generations.

Every day, infant deaths in the Gaza Strip are reported as a direct result of Israeli crimes that are legally classified as acts of genocide, including starvation, thirst, blocking the entry of basic supplies like milk, and deprivation of medical care. The majority of these infant deaths are not included in the official victim count released by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, as there is no specific system to identify such victims.

Due to Israel's crime of genocide, ongoing for the past 10 months, Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip are being denied their fundamental rights and are not being protected in any way by international law. They have become primary, direct, and deliberate targets of the Israeli army, and have even been subject to premeditated killings and direct executions.

Aside from being arbitrarily detained, Palestinian children have also been the victims of crimes of sexual assault; forced disappearance; torture and other forms of inhumane treatment; starvation; siege; severe psychological harm; deprivation of education due to the widespread destruction of schools; and denial of access to healthcare and other necessities of life. Many Palestinian children are also victims of family dispersion, and have lost parental care.

One of the main objectives of Israel's genocide is to leave a lasting legacy of these crimes that will affect the victims for the rest of their lives. The majority of Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip have experienced psychological trauma that will likely be difficult to treat: Thousands of children have lost one or both parents; have had limbs amputated; have suffered severe burns or other serious injuries; and/or have suffered from hunger, malnutrition, and dehydration; all of which will have a detrimental impact on their physical and psychological development.

Most children in the Gaza Strip have lost their homes, their financial security, and members of their families, in addition to being deprived of an education. This will have serious, far-reaching consequences on their futures and their ability to enjoy their other rights, making them more vulnerable to poverty, unemployment, and exploitation. The Israeli military attacks on the Strip have caused the widespread destruction of civilian

objects, including homes, private property, livelihoods, production, and the economic and commercial system, forcing Palestinians to migrate, whether directly or indirectly.

The international community must act swiftly and decisively to put an end to the crime of genocide, safeguard the lives of all Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip, prevent Israel from converting the Strip into the world's largest cemetery for children in modern history, and end the egregious double standards that are applied to Israel and its powerful Western backers and allies.

Israel and its backers must be held accountable for blatantly violating international humanitarian law by killing and targeting Palestinian children and denying them access to food, shelter, clothing, and medical assistance, including vaccinations, as specified in the Geneva Conventions and their two 1977 Protocols—protocols which should enable them to realise their rights.

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