Gaza war: ‘Intense ground battles’ reported, hospital hit kills five



© **UNICEF/Abed Zagout** | People clamour for food in the city of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip

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Continuing airstrikes were reported across Gaza on Wednesday and “intense ground battles” between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters in refugee camps in central areas that have reportedly left many dead.

Airstrikes and missiles struck dwellings and public buildings on Tuesday including Al-Amal hospital in Khan Younis **killing five, among them a five-**

day-old baby, reports indicate.

"No child in the world should be killed, let alone one sheltering under the emblem of a humanitarian organisation; this has to end," said Gemma Connell, a team leader from UN aid coordination office OCHA , in a video posted on X soon after the attacks.

According to Ms. Connell, the hospital was "clearly marked" with the logo of the Palestinian Red Crescent.

No shelter

An estimated 14,000 people were sheltering at the health facility when it was shelled twice, attacks that were also swiftly condemned by UN health agency chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

"I deplore today's strikes on the Al-Amal hospital…which severely damaged the Palestine Red Crescent Society training centre located within the hospital complex," Tedros wrote on X.



Adding his voice once again to repeated international calls for an immediate ceasefire, Tedros described the hospital bombardment as "unconscionable". "Gaza's health system is already on its knees, with health and aid workers continuously stymied in their efforts to save lives due to the hostilities."

Many of those sheltering at Al-Amal when it was shelled had now left, the WHO Director-General said, while those remaining were "extremely fearful for their safety and planning to leave a place they had turned to for refuge and protection".

Under international humanitarian law the hospital "should be a protected space…and today it was hit twice", said Dr. Ayadil Saparbekov, WHO Team Lead for Health Emergencies, speaking from the facility in a video posted on X, during a UN assessment mission to the hospital that indicated extensive damage.

"The war should stop, the healthcare workers and health facilities should be protected."

Nowhere is safe

The latest humanitarian update from UN aid coordination office OCHA described **"heavy Israeli bombardment from air, land and sea**…across most of the Gaza Strip" on Tuesday, along with **continued rocket fire into Israel** by Palestinian armed forces.

Clashes on the ground were also reported in the southern town of Khan Younis, along with "heavy strikes" in Gaza city to the north.

OCHA also highlighted reports of multiple fatalities in areas where Palestinians had relocated to, "following orders from Israeli forces to move from northern Gaza".

Rising death toll

Citing Gaza's health authority, the UN humanitarian update said that 207 Palestinians had been killed from 1 to 2 January, and another 338 people injured.

Between 7 October and 2 January, the war has claimed at least 22,185 Palestinian fatalities in Gaza - about 70 per cent of them are believed to be women and children. Up to 7,000 people are missing, with many presumed to be buried under the rubble.

According to the Israeli military, since the start of the ground operation in Gaza, 171 soldiers have been killed, and 983 soldiers injured.

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