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# Israel intensifies its forced displacement campaign in Gaza, targets shelter centres housing refugees



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Israel-Palestinian Territory

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**Geneva** – Israel's intensification of its military assaults on the Gaza Strip's shelter centres is part of a declared effort to carry out its displacement plans against the Gazan people, give them the impression that there is nowhere safe for them to live within the

Strip, and worsen their suffering amid the genocide that has been ongoing since 7 October, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor said in a statement issued Monday.

The Geneva-based organisation stressed that Israel's deliberate attacks on Gaza's shelter centres explicitly violate the rules of international law, particularly international humanitarian law. Shelter centres are supposed to be considered safe places, and Israel bears responsibility for the security of those who seek refuge inside them. Given that most victims of these attacks are civilians, including women and children, it is also evident that the methods used to carry out the attacks violate the principle of discrimination and fail to consider the standards of proportionality and military necessity. This could amount to serious violations and war crimes in accordance with international humanitarian and criminal law.

In this regard, Euro-Med Monitor pointed to public statements made by a number of senior Israeli officials regarding potential countries willing to accept large numbers of Gaza Strip residents, and the Israeli officials' desire to relocate Gazans forcibly.

Bezalel Smotrich, Israel's far-right Minister of Finance, called on Sunday for encouraging the "voluntary emigration" of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip. He called for Palestinian residents of Gaza to leave the besieged enclave, making way for the Israelis who

could “make the desert bloom” “if [they] act in a strategically correct way”.

Smotrich added, “If there are 100,000 or 200,000 Arabs in Gaza and not two million, the whole discourse of the day after [the war] will be completely different.”

A week ago, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that he is pushing for plans to implement a policy of “voluntary migration” on Palestinians in Gaza in the hope of evacuating them to other countries. “Our problem is the countries that are willing to absorb [them], and we are working on it,” Netanyahu said.

The Israeli army ordered approximately 1.1 million people living in the northern part of the Gaza Strip to evacuate to the south on 12 October 2023, according to the Euro-Med Monitor. No assurance was given that they would be permitted to return, however, or that their safety would be ensured while they were being displaced. Conversely, the Israeli army frequently targeted Gazans as they were forcibly evacuated along routes that Israel specifically designated as safe.

The rights group noted that the Israeli army threatened to label the people of Gaza City and its northern region as “terrorists” if they did not comply with the evacuation orders. This reveals a blatant disregard for the principle that distinguishes between combatants and civilians, Euro-Med

Monitor said, and stated that the prohibited act of purposefully launching military strikes against civilian residents who do not actively take part in hostilities is deemed a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Over the past few weeks, the Israeli army has expanded its indiscriminate attacks and forced evacuations throughout the Gaza Strip, pushing hundreds of thousands of displaced people into severe overcrowding in Rafah City on the border with Egypt. With more than 12,000 people per square kilometre living there, Rafah is currently thought to be the most densely populated area in Gaza. The already congested space and scarce resources have been made worse by the recent wave of displaced people.

Euro-Med Monitor said that Israel's insistence on keeping the vast majority of the Gaza Strip's population displaced means that most Gazans will continue to be denied necessary health care, including those suffering from chronic diseases as well as pregnant women, amid the continued Israeli ban on humanitarian aid, food, and medical supplies.

Those displaced have been forced to erect tents in open areas in Rafah and Gaza's central governorates. Further, they are unable to obtain basic sanitary amenities and supplies, such as hygienic toilets and personal care products, which worsens the spread of infectious diseases and raises the risk of a widespread health catastrophe.

Initial monitoring by the Euro-Med Monitor revealed that the Israeli army was persistently targeting residential homes and shelters for displaced people in different parts of the Gaza Strip, including:

31 December 2023: Attacks on the Sakina Bint Al-Hussein School in Deir Al-Balah, central Gaza Strip, resulted in the deaths and injuries of dozens of displaced Palestinians.

30 December 2023: A displaced Palestinian was killed and 10 others were injured in an Israeli artillery shelling targeting the Siham A School in the Khan Yunis camp in the southern Gaza Strip.

29 December 2023: Israeli gunfire and artillery shelling inside the Abu Helu school in the Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip resulted in the deaths of two displaced Palestinians and the injuries of several others.

27 December 2023: Dozens of displaced Palestinians were killed and injured in an Israeli artillery shelling of Al-Maghazi Girls' School in the central Gaza Strip.

27 December 2023: Three displaced people were killed and several others were injured in an Israeli bombing in the vicinity of the Khaled bin Al-Walid school in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip.

25 December 2023: A number of displaced people were injured in an Israeli bombing of the Ebad Al-

Rahman School on Al-Jalaa Street in Gaza City.

24 December 2023: Dozens of displaced Palestinians were killed and injured in an Israeli bombing in the vicinity of Al-Rafi'i School in the town of Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip.

23 December 2023: A pregnant woman was seriously injured in an Israeli artillery shelling in the vicinity of the Khaled School in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip.

22 December 2023: A displaced child was killed in Israeli gunfire that targeted Al-Rafi'i School in the town of Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip.

20 December 2023: Dozens of displaced people were killed and injured in intense Israeli bombing in the vicinity of a school housing displaced people in Rafah, in the far south of the Gaza Strip.

20 December 2023: Dozens of displaced people were killed and injured in an Israeli bombing of Al-Mustaqbal school in Al-Sabra neighbourhood, south of Gaza City.

19 December 2023: A displaced person was killed and at least another was injured in Israeli gunfire that targeted Al-Hanawi School in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip.

18 December 2023: Three displaced people were injured, one of them seriously, in an Israeli bombing

that targeted the vicinity of the Qandila School in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip.

17 December 2023: Dozens of displaced people were killed and injured in an Israeli bombing in the vicinity of the Abu Tammam School in the town of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip.

15 December 2023: Dozens of displaced people were killed and injured in an Israeli bombing in the vicinity of the Shadia Abu Ghazala School in the northern Gaza Strip.

15 December 2023: Dozens of Palestinians, including photojournalist Samer Abu Daqqa, were killed in an Israeli artillery shelling on the Farhana school in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip.

14 December 2023: 14 displaced Palestinians were killed in an Israeli bombing on a school in the northern Gaza Strip.

13 December 2023: Dozens of displaced people were killed and injured in an Israeli bombing on the Abu Hussein school in the Jabalia camp in the northern Gaza Strip.

11 December 2023: Dozens of displaced people were killed and injured in an Israeli bombing of a school in a camp in the northern Gaza Strip.

9 December 2023: Dozens of displaced people were killed and injured in an Israeli bombing on the

Khalifa School in the town of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip.

8 December 2023: Israeli special forces executed four displaced persons after storming the Cairo School in Gaza City.

7 December 2023: A number of displaced people were killed and injured in an Israeli bombing on the Khalifa School in the town of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip.

5 December 2023: A number of displaced people were killed and injured in an Israeli bombing of both the Palestinian and Al-Falah schools in Gaza City.

4 December 2023: Five displaced people were killed in an Israeli bombing of a school in the Ma'an area in Khan Yunis, south of the Gaza Strip.

2 December 2023: 20 displaced people were killed in an Israeli bombing on the Salah al-Din School in Gaza City's Daraj neighbourhood.

25 November 2023: Dozens of Palestinians were killed and injured in an Israeli bombing of the UNRWA-run Al-Faluja school in the town of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip.

23 November 2023: Israeli aircraft targeted a charity building behind the Kuwaiti Hospital, killing and wounding dozens of Palestinians in a shelter centre.

21 November 2023: Israeli artillery bombed the vicinity of the Khalifa school in the centre of the Beit Lahia project, sheltering more than 8,000 displaced people. Dozens of displaced people were killed and injured in the attack.

20 November 2023: Israeli artillery bombed the Kuwait School in the northern Gaza Strip, which was sheltering thousands of displaced people. Dozens of casualties were reported due to the attack.

19 November 2023: Dozens of Palestinians were killed and injured in an Israeli bombing targeting the Amr Bin Al-Aas School in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood, north of Gaza City.

18 November 2023: Hundreds of Palestinians, mostly women and children, were killed and injured in two Israeli massacres in both the Tal Al-Zaatar and Al-Fakhoura schools in the northern Gaza Strip's Jabalia camp.

17 November 2023: Israeli aircraft bombed the UNRWA-run Al-Falah school in Al-Zaytoun neighbourhood, in the southern part of Gaza City, which had been sheltering displaced people. Dozens of deaths and injuries were reported in the attacks.

15 November 2023: At least three Palestinians were killed and dozens injured in an Israeli air strike on the Malaysian School in the Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip.

13 November 2023: Israeli aircraft bombed a UNRWA-run school in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip that was sheltering displaced persons, claiming the lives of dozens.

11 November 2023: UNRWA reported that Israeli forces had invaded two of its health facilities and one of its schools in the northern Gaza Strip, forcing the displaced people who were taking refuge there to flee south. The two health facilities had then been bombed.

11 November 2023: Dozens of people were killed and injured when Israeli aircraft bombed the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) headquarters in Gaza City's Al-Nasr neighbourhood, which serves as a shelter for displaced people.

11 November 2023: Approximately 500 displaced people were being housed at the Swedish Clinic's headquarters in Al-Shati camp, west of Gaza City, when it was raided by the Israeli army. The precise number of casualties is still unknown.

10 November 2023: At least 50 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli bombing on Al-Buraq School, which was sheltering hundreds of displaced people, in Gaza City's Al-Nasr neighbourhood.

8 November 2023: An Israeli bombing of a UNRWA-run school in Tal al-Hawa neighbourhood, in the west part of Gaza City, resulted in the deaths of dozens of Palestinians.

4 November 2023: 20 Palestinians were killed and dozens injured in an Israeli bombing on Al-Falujah School, which was housing thousands of displaced people in the northern Gaza Strip's Jabalia camp.

4 November 2023: Israeli aircraft targeted the Osama bin Zaid School, which was sheltering thousands of displaced people in the northern Gaza Strip's Al-Saftawi area. The attack resulted in dozens of deaths and injuries.

3 November 2023: An Israeli bombing of a government school in the northern Gaza Strip's Jabalia camp, which houses hundreds of displaced people, resulted in 27 deaths and numerous injuries.

2 November 2023: Israeli aircraft bombed the vicinity of the UNRWA-run Abu Assi School in the Beach camp, in the western part of Gaza City, which houses thousands of displaced people. Five people were killed and dozens more were injured during the attack.

30 October 2023: At least 20 people were killed and dozens were injured in an Israeli bombing that targeted the Tal al-Qamar Hall, east of Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip, sheltering hundreds of displaced people.

19 October 2023: At least eight people, including women and children, were killed in an Israeli bombing of the Greek Orthodox Church of St.

Porphyrios in Gaza, where hundreds of displaced people took refuge.

18 October 2023: Israeli aircraft bombed a UNRWA-run school in Khan Yunis, leaving dozens of deaths and injuries.

15 October 2023: Israeli aircraft bombed the headquarters of a charitable organisation sheltering dozens of displaced people in Rafah, leaving 11 people dead and dozens injured.

15 October 2023: Israeli warplanes targeted a residential building near Al-Najma Roundabout in central Rafah, housing displaced people. Dozens of casualties were reported during the attack.

13 October 2023: 17 people were killed in an Israeli bombing of a residential building belonging to the Abu Madian family in the Bureij camp in the central Gaza Strip. The building was housing approximately 70 individuals, the majority of whom were displaced persons.

According to Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, Israel is determined to carry out the forcible displacement of civilians in the Gaza Strip, beyond the bounds of international law. Even more concerning, the rights organisation said, is that Israel has granted itself permission to target and designate as “terrorists” those who defy its appalling evacuation order.

In the absence of a safe haven in the Strip, Euro-Med Monitor emphasised that warning Gazan civilians that their residential areas will be the target of indiscriminate attacks is both ineffective—as evidenced by the scores of deaths documented above—and illegal. An occupying authority such as Israel is required to protect civilians who are unwilling or unable to flee.

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