MEDIA STATEMENT

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
Occupied Palestinian Territory

UN Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territory

Ramallah

23 September 2025

Israel's tactics are inflicting terror on the Palestinian population of Gaza City and forcing tens of thousands to flee

The UN Human Rights Office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory decries the Israeli military tactics that have seen a sharp increase in the number of civilians it is killing in Gaza City. This escalates from existing tactics in previous weeks of targeting civilian infrastructure as well as the unlawful destruction of residential buildings and neighbourhoods under its control, which continued and contributed to the mass displacement. Meanwhile, Israeli authorities, especially the Minister of Defence, have publicly threatened to destroy Gaza City if Hamas does not comply with Israel's demands. Such tactics and statements seem intended to inflict terror and fear amongst civilians and to force them to leave northern Gaza.

During the 48 hours of 12 and 13 September, the UN Human Rights Office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory recorded 44 incidents involving attacks on residential buildings in Gaza City. Three such incidents out of 44 resulted in fatalities, with 8 Palestinians killed in total. However, this last weekend saw a marked increase in the number of fatalities. During the 48 hours of 19 and 20 September, we recorded 18 incidents involving attacks on residential buildings in Gaza City, out of which 8 incidents resulted in fatalities, with at least 51 Palestinians reportedly killed in total, with more likely remaining under the rubble. Reports indicate that almost all those killed are civilians.

The deadliest incident was the strike that took place on 20 September without warning on a residential block, including three inhabited residential buildings belonging to the Daghmash family, in As Sabra, southern Gaza City. The attack reportedly resulted in the killing of at least 20 family members, including 4 women and 12 children, with dozens reported as missing under the rubble. Tragically, another residential building of the Daghmash family in the same area had been struck the day before, killing 8 family members, including at least 1 woman and 4 girls.

These killings, in addition to the steady advance of the Israeli ground forces towards western Gaza City, demolishing residential buildings under its control on the way, appear to have resulted in renewed waves of mass forced displacement to the south of Gaza where there is no space, infrastructure or basic necessities to support the influx of Internally Displaced Persons and where the Israeli military continues to strike IDP shelters. Between 17 and 20 September, reportedly 81,621 Palestinians were displaced from the northern to southern Gaza, in comparison to 68,826 displaced between 10 and 14 September, according to the Site Management Cluster.

Palestinian armed groups are prohibited by international law from any intentional co-location of military objectives and civilians or persons *hors de combat* with the specific intent of trying to prevent the targeting of those military objectives, but any such practice, whether alleged or proven, does not negate Israel's obligation to ensure strict compliance with the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution required by International Humanitarian Law and to protect the civilian population of Gaza.

The Israeli military attacks on civilians and civilian objects are driving Palestinians out of Gaza City, while the destruction of their homes is making it likely that this displacement will be permanent. The UN Human Rights Office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory reiterates its calls on Israel's military to immediately end the killing of Palestinian civilians and the wanton destruction of Gaza City, which appears to be focused on causing a permanent demographic shift, which is tantamount to ethnic cleansing. The conduct of the Israeli military in Gaza also raises concerns of the commission of the whole range of crimes under international law. The international community must take concrete actions to stop the senseless destruction, killings and displacement.

ENDS

For more information and media requests, please contact:
ohchr-opt-media@un.org

Tag and share
Twitter @OHCHR_Palestine
Facebook UN Human Rights Palestine