

# Italian probe reveals war crimes: Israel used new weapon prototype in Gaza Strip

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Wounds inflicted by the experimental weapons used in strike on the Gaza Strip.

An investigative report to be aired on Italian television Wednesday raises the possibility that Israel has used an experimental weapon in the Gaza Strip in recent months, causing especially serious physical injuries, such as amputated limbs and severe burns.

The weapon is similar to one developed by the U.S. military, known as DIME, which causes a powerful and lethal blast, but only within a relatively small radius.

The Italian report is based on the eyewitness accounts of medical doctors in the Strip, as well as tests carried out in an Italian laboratory. The investigative team is the same one that exposed, several months ago, the use by U.S. forces in Iraq of phosphorous bombs, against Iraqi rebels in Faluja.

Israel Air Force Maj.-Gen (res.) Yitzhak Ben-Israel, formerly head of the IDF's weapons-development program, told the Italian reporters that "one of the ideas [behind the weapon] is to allow those targeted to be hit without causing damage to bystanders or other persons."

The investigation, by Rai24news, follows reports by Gaza-based doctors of inexplicably serious injuries. The doctors reported an exceptionally large number of wounded who lost legs, of completely burned bodies and injuries unaccompanied by metal shrapnel. Some of the doctors also claimed that they removed particles from wounds that could not be seen in an x-ray machine.

According to those who testified, the wounded were hit by munitions launched from drones, most of them in July.

Dr. Habas al-Wahid, head of the emergency room at the Shuhada al-Aqsa hospital, in Deir el-Balah, told the reporters that the legs of the injured were sliced from their bodies "as if a saw was used to cut through the bone." There were signs of heat and burns near the point of the amputation, but no signs that the dismemberment was caused by metal fragments.

Dr. Juma Saka, of Shifa Hospital, in Gaza City, said the doctors found small entry wounds on the bodies of the wounded and the dead. According to Saka, a powder was found on the victims' bodies and in their internal organs.

“The powder was like microscopic shrapnel, and these are what likely caused the injuries,” Saka said.

The Italian investigative team raised the possibility that the IDF is making use of a weapon similar in character to DIME – Dense Inert Metal Explosive – developed for the U.S. military. According to the official website of a U.S. air force laboratory, it is a “focused lethality” weapon, which aims to accurately destroy the target while causing minimum damage to the surrounding.

According to the site, the projectile comprises a carbon-fiber casing filled with tungsten powder and explosives. In the explosion, tungsten particles – a metal capable of conducting very high temperatures – spread over a radius of four meters and cause death.

According to the U.S.-based website Defense-Tech, “the result is an incredibly destructive blast in a small area” and “the destructive power of the mixture causes far more damage than pure explosive.” It adds that “the impact of the micro-shrapnel seems to cause a similar but more powerful effect than a shockwave.”

The weapon is supposed to still be in the testing phase and has not been used on the battlefield.

The Italian reporters sent samples of the particles found in wounds of injured in the Gaza Strip to a laboratory at the University of Parma. Dr. Carmela Vaccaio said that in analyzing the samples, she found “a very high concentration of carbon and the presence of unusual materials,” such as copper, aluminum and tungsten. Dr. Vaccaio says these findings “could be in line with the hypothesis” that the weapon in question is DIME.

On the matter of DIME, Ben-Israel told the Italian reporters that “this is a technology that allows the striking of very small targets.”

The report says that the weapon is not banned by international law, especially since it has not been officially tested.

It is believed that the weapon is highly carcinogenic and harmful to the environment.

The non-governmental organization Physicians for Human Rights has written to Defense Minister Amir Peretz requesting explanations for the aforementioned injuries to Palestinians. Amos Gilad, a senior adviser to the minister, is supposed to meet with the group on the matter in the near future.

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