

More Than 100 Killed in 14 Hours as Gaza Death Toll Rises Above 1,200

US continues to back Israeli assault despite international condemnation

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Global Research, July 29, 2014

[Common Dreams](#)

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Israeli forces' flares light up the night sky of Gaza City on early Tuesday, July 29, 2014. A truce between Israel and Hamas militants in Gaza remained elusive as diplomats sought to end the fighting at the start of the Eid al-Fitr holiday, marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. (AP Photo/Khalil Hamra)

The death toll in the Gaza Strip has now passed 1,200 people since Israel began bombing on July 8 and the Palestinian Ministry of Health reports Tuesday that more than 100 people were killed in the fourteen hours from overnight Monday into morning as mosques, homes, and other structures were hit during a sharp intensification of the bombardment.

In addition to homes, Gaza's main power plant was struck by Israeli shells which caused a massive explosion and a fire that sent thick plumes of black smoke into the air. Already suffering from massive power outages and a water crisis that puts the entire population at risk, the damage to the plant signals that those problems will likely worsen in the days ahead.

[According](#) to the *Ma'an News Agency*:

Earlier statements from the ministry had given the number of dead at around 57 for the morning, but after consultation with hospitals across the Strip the total was revised to more than 100 dead and hundreds more injured.

The Ministry of Health also said that as of Monday night nearly 5,000 homes had been completely destroyed, while tens of thousands more had been partially destroyed.

The United Nations, meanwhile, estimated that more than 215,000 Gazans had fled their home, or more than 10 percent of the besieged coastal enclave's total population.

Late Monday, Israeli authorities had given 400,000 Gazans evacuation orders, but with all the borders closed and the Israeli bombardment and ground invasion continuing in the northern, central, and southern Gaza Strip, the vast majority had nowhere to go except UN shelters.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the military campaign against the people of Gaza will continue until all the tunnels used by Hamas are destroyed.

“We need to be prepared for a protracted campaign in Gaza,” Netanyahu said on Israeli television.

Speaking about the continued attack on Gaza—which head of the UN Human Rights Council last week called could be considered a ‘war crime’—President Obama’s national security advisor Susan Rice on Monday again voiced the administration’s support for Israel’s offensive military campaign against a largely defenseless civilian population.

“Here is one thing you never have to worry about: America’s support for the state of Israel,” said Rice. “ Hamas initiated this conflict. And Hamas has dragged it on.”

The Guardian [reports](#):

[Rice] singled out the vote by the UN human rights council last week in favour of an independent inquiry into alleged violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by Israel. Seventeen countries abstained during the vote, and only one country – the US – voted against.

Rice called the the UN inquiry “one-sided” and said it would “have no positive impact and should never have been created”. “The [United States](#) stood with Israel, and said ‘no’. We were the lone vote in the human rights council. Even our closest friends on the council abstained. It was 29 to one. But the one, as usual, was America. That is what we mean when we say: you are not alone.”

Rice’s remarks were briefly interrupted by a heckler, who later gave his name as Tighe Barry, 50, from Los Angeles. He said he had flown to Washington from California to attend the meeting and belonged to an organisation called Jewish Voices for Peace.

“The truth is, Israel is killing innocent people in Gaza,” he yelled during Rice’s speech, before he was quickly and forcefully wrestled out by security. “Stop the bombing, stop the killing, stop the hate.”

According figures cited by the UN on Monday, more than 173,000 Gazans – nearly 10 per cent of the population – are seeking protection at facilities managed by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([UNRWA](#)), but some of those shelters themselves have come under Israeli fire.

“In the name of humanity,” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon on Monday night called for an “immediate and unconditional” ceasefire in the Gaza Strip which he said was in “critical condition.”

“I repeat my call on Israel and all the parties to do vastly more to ensure the safety of these UN sites and the security of the people who have sought sanctuary there,” the UN chief said.

Defense of Children International-Palestine on Monday said that despite international calls for an end to hostilities—none of which have resulted in anything more than a few hours of respite—the number of children killed in the conflict has surpassed 200.

“Israel is an occupying power that is attacking and destroying an occupied Palestinian civilian population, said Rifat Kassis, executive director of DCI-Palestine. “These civilian deaths are not collateral damage: they are war crimes.”

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