Israel hits Gaza and Lebanon in deadly strikes

Gaza Strip (Palestinian Territories) (AFP) – Strikes by the Israeli army killed at least 20 people in Gaza on Sunday, the civil defence said, while also hitting a Hezbollah stronghold near Beirut's international airport.



A Palestinian woman reacts as victims of an Israeli strike are transported to the al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip on November 17, 2024 © BASHAR TALEB / AFP

Israel has been fighting on two fronts since September, ramping up attacks on Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah after nearly a year of cross-border clashes alongside its war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

In the latest violence in Gaza, the civil defence service said Israeli air strikes killed at least 20 people, including four women and three children.

A year after the Gaza war was triggered by Hamas's October 7 attacks on its south, Israel vowed to stop the Islamist militants from regrouping in the north of the Palestinian territory and launched a major assault on them.

The deadliest strike on Sunday killed 10 people in the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza, where another strike on a house claimed the life of a woman, said civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal.



In the latest violence in the Gaza Strip, the civil defence service said Israeli air strikes killed at least 20 people, including four women and three children © BASHAR TALEB / AFP

An Israeli drone strike killed five people in the southern city of Rafah, Bassal said, adding another strike killed three women and a child in the Nuseirat camp.

Hamas-run Gaza's health ministry on Saturday said the overall death toll in more than 13 months of war had reached 43,799.

The majority of the dead are civilians, according to ministry

figures, which the United Nations considers reliable.

Hamas’s October 7, 2023 attack that sparked the war resulted in the deaths of 1,206 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Lebanon rescuers mourned

Gaza’s civil defence said 24 people were killed in strikes on Saturday.

On Israel’s second front in the north, AFPTV footage showed several strikes hit Hezbollah’s south Beirut stronghold, shortly after the Israeli military warned people to evacuate.



A Middle East Airlines plane approaches Beirut airport, as smoke rises from the site of an Israeli strike that hit the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital, on November 16, 2024 © IBRAHIM AMRO / AFP

Columns of smoke were seen rising over the capital’s southern

suburbs, where Lebanon’s only international airport is located.

Further south, overnight Israeli air strikes and shelling hit the flashpoint town of Khiam, the Lebanese state-run National News Agency reported.

The bombardment came after Israel’s military reported a “heavy rocket barrage” on Haifa late Saturday and said a synagogue was hit, wounding two civilians.

Israel has escalated its bombing of Lebanon since September 23 and has since sent in ground troops, following almost a year of limited, cross-border exchanges of fire begun by Hezbollah militants in support of Iran-backed Hamas in Gaza.

Its military on Saturday said Hezbollah had already “paid a big price”, but vowed to keep fighting until tens of thousands of Israelis displaced from the north can return home.

Israeli forces also shelled the southern area of Lebanon along the Litani River, the NNA said on Sunday.

The news agency had earlier reported strikes on the southern city of Tyre, including in a neighbourhood near UNESCO-listed ancient ruins. Israel’s military said late Saturday it had hit Hezbollah sites in the area.

Hezbollah said it fired a guided missile that set an Israeli tank ablaze in the southwestern Lebanese village of Chamaa.

Late Saturday, Hezbollah said it had targeted five military bases including the Stella Maris naval base.

In eastern Lebanon, funerals were held for 14 civil defence staff killed in an Israeli strike on Thursday.

“They weren’t involved with any (armed) party… they were just waiting to answer calls for help,” said Ali al-Zein, a relative of one of the dead.

Gaza famine alert

Lebanese authorities say more than 3,452 people have been killed since October last year, with most casualties recorded since September.



Palestinian children receive a hot meal at the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza on November 16, 2024 © Eyad BABA / AFP

Israel announced the death of a soldier in southern Lebanon, bringing to 48 the number killed fighting Hezbollah.

A UN-backed assessment on November 9 warned famine was imminent in northern Gaza, amid the increased hostilities and a near-halt in food aid.

Israel has pushed back against a Human Rights Watch report this week alleging that its mass displacement of Gazans amounts to a “crime against humanity”, as well as findings from a UN Special Committee pointing to warfare practices “consistent with the characteristics of genocide”.

A foreign ministry spokesman dismissed the HRW report as “completely false”, while the United States – Israel’s main military supplier – said accusations of genocide “are certainly unfounded”.

In Israel, police said they arrested three suspects after flares shot near the home of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the central city of Caesarea, south of Haifa, while he was away.

The site of a reported Israeli strike in the Mazzeh district of Damascus on November 14, 2024 © LOUAI BESHARA / AFP

The incident comes about a month after a drone targeted the same residence, which Hezbollah claimed.

Demonstrators in Tel Aviv on Saturday reiterated demands that the government reach a deal to free dozens of hostages still held in Gaza.

The protest came a week after mediator Qatar suspended its role until Hamas and Israel show “seriousness” in truce and hostage-release talks.

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