

ISRAEL'S ASSAULT ON GAZA: CIVILIANS ONCE AGAIN THE MAIN VICTIMS OF GRUESOME ATTACKS



ACHRS STATEMENT | MEÏSSEN HINDI

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ACHRS strongly condemns the recent air strikes launched by the state of Israel on the Gaza strip and points out that the missiles have hit buildings inhabited by civilians causing the death of 31 Palestinians, including six children, and injuring 265 more. ACHRS denounces the malicious use of lethal weapons and is appalled by the international community's silence that once again resonates.

On Friday, August 5, 2022, the Israeli occupation forces launched a series of missiles hitting residential areas of the center of Gaza. The Times of Gaza reports 650 destroyed buildings since the beginning of the attack. This brutal aggression on the enclave followed days of tensions and was carried out during a military operation targeting Tayseer Jabari, a key figure of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).

The Israeli narrative

The Israeli prime minister Yair Lapid "justified the deadly attacks by declaring they had carried out a precise counter-terror operation against an immediate threat." Indeed, the Israeli authorities claim that the PIJ was preparing an attack on Israeli civilians living in the towns close to the border.

We condemn the repeated attacks on civilians insofar as according to local health authorities 10 people have been killed and 55 more including children have been injured.

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The bizarre timing of the aggression

The timing of the recent attacks on Gaza is not insignificant as they tend to occur in the time leading up to the next Israeli parliamentary elections.

Historically Israeli prime ministers have all used Israel's obsession with "security" to strengthen their popularity and guarantee that their party benefited from the public's trust. In the current context, Israel is undergoing a period of political's uncertainty and instability. After the collapse of the Lapid/Bennett government, new elections will be held in autumn. Therefore, for the time being, Yair Lapid, who is seeking reelection, is putting on a show of excessive demonstration of force to boost his chances at the polls.

Additionally, the PIJ is an Iranian-backed group, and recent events demonstrate that there have been rising tensions between Israel and Iran which culminated with the visit of American president Joe Biden where the United States and Israel pledged to deny nuclear power to Iran.

One can assess that recent diplomatic events and the ongoing political crisis in Israel were the prelude to a rise of tensions between Israel and occupied Palestine, which often translated into direct attacks on besieged Gaza.

This aggression remains highly unlawful and follows a tradition of human rights abuses and humanitarian disasters executed by the state of Israel.

Furthermore, one can argue that the Israeli justifications for these aggressions are highly problematic. When bloody attacks occur, the Zionist state tends to justify killing civilians by blaming Palestinian armed groups. Indeed, it is common in the Israeli discourse to refer to Hamas and other Islamist groups as the ones holding the Palestinians living in Gaza hostages, thus presenting the murder of civilians as necessary damages to ensure the security of Israel against terrorist groups.

The Gaza strip has been referred to by several scholars and lawyers as an "open-air prison," with all points of access being drastically controlled by the state of Israel -- as well as Egypt in coordination with Israel -- since the blockade started in 2007.

The Israeli authorities have also imposed power cuts on the strip and have reduced the number of drinkable water resources available, forcing the inhabitants of the Gaza strip to live in deplorable conditions.

ACHRS brings attention to the fact that civilians are therefore being held hostages by the state of Israel as it restricts their freedom of movement, access to vital goods, and is responsible for the death of numerous civilians since the beginning of the blockade and since the beginning of the occupation 1948.

As the world is becoming more and more aware of the Palestinian struggle, ACHRS emphasizes the recurrent use of the threat of terror attacks on Israel to justify the unlawful and dramatic killing of civilians, which a lot of time include children.

ACHRS points out that the forces at play are completely unequal and that the recent attacks by Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza are mostly intercepted and do not result in human damage. However, the response of Israeli forces is still disproportionate. The United Nations has reported 251 deaths on the Israeli side and 5,590 on the Palestinian side since 2008, the bloodiest episode being in 2014.

As Israel prepares for the third day of "Operation Breaking Dawn" and cities close to the border have been preparing for Palestinian retaliations, ACHRS watches with deep concern as many experts predict that this aggression will continue over the following days with a death toll that will quite certainly increase.