

Israeli genocidal attacks in Gaza kill at least 80 in heavy bombardment after ceasefire deal announced



One Israeli strike on a house in Gaza City killed 18 people as Palestinians nervously await the

start of the ceasefire on Sunday.

Wounded people, including children, are brought to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah, Gaza, following attacks in the early hours of Thursday [Ashraf Amra/Anadolu]

Gaza City, January 16 (RHC)-- Israeli forces have killed at least 82 people in Gaza, medical sources told Al Jazeera, including at least 30 people in Gaza City in the hours since Hamas and Israel announced they had reached a ceasefire agreement.

One attack on a house near the Engineers Union Building in Gaza City in the north of the Gaza Strip on Wednesday night killed at least 18 people, Al Jazeera Arabic's correspondent reported.

The Palestinian Civil Defence also said it retrieved the bodies of 12 people from Gaza City's Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood. In central Gaza, five people were killed in an Israeli drone strike that targeted a gathering of people in the Karaj area in the Bureij camp.

The death toll, which was counted from dawn on Wednesday, continued to rise as Palestinians returned to shelter in their tents after briefly celebrating news of a ceasefire deal that was reached between Israel and Hamas on Wednesday evening.

"For a couple of hours, people turned this whole area into a stage of celebration, something we are not used to seeing here as this area used to be a stage for funerals for the victims of the war and a space filled with agony and sadness," said Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud, reporting from Deir el-Balah in central Gaza.

But the ceasefire does not start until Sunday and people in Gaza fear worse is to come before the Israeli bombing stops, Mahmoud said. "We are expecting a surge in attacks by drones and heavy artillery, and that's what caused people to end the celebrations after two hours," he said.

Al Jazeera's Anas al-Sharif, reporting from Gaza City, said intense Israeli attacks there had "extinguished" the joy people felt at the initial announcement of the ceasefire. "Just hours ago there was an atmosphere of joy and relief among residents here when the ceasefire announcement was made from Doha, stating that it would take effect in the coming days," al-Sharif said.

"However, immediately after the announcement, Israeli warplanes extinguished that joy for the people – striking hospitals, shelters and homes with direct air strikes."

Both Israel and Hamas have publicly acknowledged a ceasefire and captive exchange deal has been reached, although Israel has said some final details are still to be hashed out before the agreement is sealed.

In a statement, the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he had spoken with Israel's negotiating team in Doha at dawn on Thursday, who briefed him on disagreements with Hamas related to which Palestinian prisoners will be released in exchange for captives during the first phase of the deal.

As of January 1, 2025 there are at least 10, 221 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, excluding the unknown numbers of Palestinians taken from Gaza and detained by the military, including Dr Hussam Abu Safia, the director of north Gaza's Kamal Adwan Hospital, which was destroyed by Israeli forces.

Izzat al-Risheq, a member of Hamas's political bureau, earlier said the ceasefire deal met all of the Palestinian group's conditions including the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, the return of displaced people to their homes and a permanent end to war in the enclave.

The exact time the ceasefire is due to start on Sunday is not yet known, though the entire process will be implemented in three phases.

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