

Israeli military kills dozens in latest attacks on hungry Gaza aid seekers



Reports suggest as many as 71 people have died in rising daily killings as hungry seek food at GHF sites

Hamam Al-Farani sits along with other family members as the body of his father, Alaa, is

Gaza City, June 24 (RHC)-- Israeli forces and drones have reportedly killed dozens in the latest attacks on people seeking aid in Gaza. The violence, carried out as Palestinians waited for aid at distribution sites across the enclave on Tuesday, may have killed as many as 50 people in total, according to Palestinian health workers and witnesses, although figures remain unverified.

The killings are the latest in a wave of daily carnage near aid distribution points established late last month by the controversial Israeli and United States-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), which the head of the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNWRA) has labelled a "death trap".

Sources in Gaza hospitals told Al Jazeera that up to 50 people had been killed by Israeli fire near aid distribution centres since dawn, along with 21 others across the territory.

Medical sources reported that at least 25 people were killed in an incident on Salah al-Din Street south of Wadi Gaza in central Gaza, according to The Associated Press news agency. More than 140 other people were injured, 62 of them critically.

Footage posted on social media site Instagram, and verified by Al Jazeera's Sanad agency, showed bodies being brought to al-Awda Hospital in the nearby Nuseirat refugee camp.

Similar scenes were reported from the Nasser Medical Complex to the south in Khan Younis, following unverified reports that the Israeli army had targeted people waiting for aid on al-Tina Street.

People approaching an aid point in Gaza City were also killed, Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud reported from the city in the north of the territory, as well as Rafah in the south.

"Casualties were brought to various health facilities, including al-Shifa Hospital [in Gaza City]," he said. "The emergency ward there turned into a bloodbath, and many died waiting for medical care."

Witnesses told AP that Israeli forces had opened fire as people were approaching the aid trucks. "It was a massacre," said Ahmed Halawa, reporting that tanks and drones had fired "even as we were fleeing."

The Israeli military said it was reviewing reports of casualties from fire by its troops after a group of people approached soldiers in an area near the militarized Netzarim Corridor. Israel has said that previous shootings near GHF aid sites have been provoked by the approach of "suspects" towards soldiers.

Witnesses and humanitarian groups have said that many of the shootings took place without warning. The killing of aid seekers has become an almost daily occurrence since the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) took over the distribution of food and other vital supplies.

The foundation launched its aid distribution programme in late May after Israel had completely cut off supplies into Gaza for more than two months, prompting warnings of mass famine.

The United Nations has refused to work with the GHF, citing concerns that it prioritises Israeli military objectives over humanitarian needs, and condemned it for its "weaponisation" of aid.

The GHF distribution sites have been plagued by scenes of chaos and carnage. More than 400 people have been killed and 1,000 wounded by Israeli soldiers since the GHF aid rollout began.

The head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, Philippe Lazzarini, said on Tuesday that the system for aid distribution in Gaza was "an abomination".

“The newly created so-called aid mechanism is an abomination that humiliates and degrades desperate people,” said at a news conference in Berlin. “It is a death trap costing more lives than it saves.”

In a letter published on Monday, the International Commission of Jurists — a human rights NGO of prominent lawyers and judges — joined 14 other groups in condemning the GHF and calling for “an end to private militarized humanitarian aid operations in Gaza”.

Philip Grant, executive director of Geneva-based NGO TRIAL International, said GHF’s model of militarised and privatised aid delivery “violates core humanitarian principles”.

He added that those who enabled or profited from the GHF’s work faced a “real risk of prosecution for complicity in war crimes, including the forcible transfer of civilians and the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.”

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