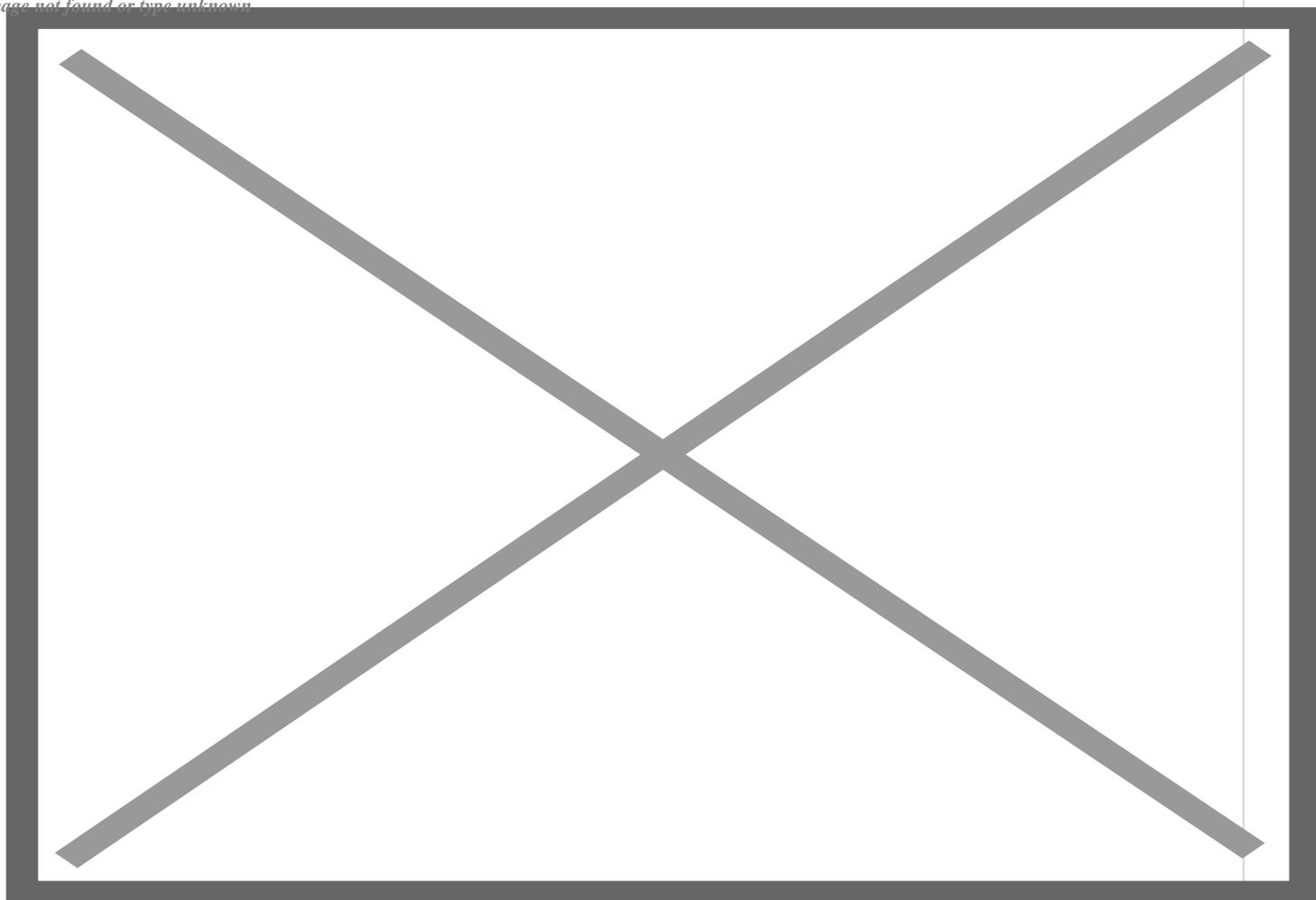


Israeli attacks kill at least 31 as Gaza blockade accelerates starvation

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A Palestinian man embraces the body of his 5-year-old son

Gaza City, May 7 (RHC)-- Israeli attacks on Gaza have killed at least 31 people as its more than two-month blockade of the besieged and bombarded enclave has caused acute food shortages, accelerating

the starvation of the Palestinian population.

The Israeli attacks were scattered across Gaza on Wednesday, with 13 people killed in a strike targeting al-Karama School in the Tuffah neighbourhood in Gaza City. Also in the north, another three people were killed and several were wounded in a strike on a house in Jabalia. Eight people were also killed, a father, his children and cousins, including five in a strike on a home in Khan Younis city in the south.

Another three people were killed, including a child, after a tent shelter was hit in Deir el-Balah, the central Gaza Strip. A wife and husband were also killed when a house was hit in Bani Suheila village, east of the Strip.

The attacks come as Gaza's civil defence agency said on Tuesday night that 31 people had been killed and dozens wounded after an Israeli attack on a school sheltering displaced people in the Bureij refugee camp in the central Strip.

The intensified attacks are compounded by an Israeli blockade on essential supplies since March 2, leaving the enclave deprived of fuel items and food, including a worsening shortage of flour. Aid groups have said food supplies are close to total depletion.

A mother of six sheltering at a United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) facility in Gaza told the agency they had run out of all types of food, with only bread available. "The State of Israel must lift the siege," UNRWA wrote on X.

"There must be a concerted international effort to stop this humanitarian catastrophe from reaching a new unseen level," it added.

Gaza's health sector is also facing the brunt of the ongoing attacks and the blockade, with at least 88 percent of beds in hospitals occupied and a shortage of medical disposables.

On Wednesday morning, Egypt and Qatar, who both mediated the first ceasefire deal alongside the United States, reaffirmed their commitment to an agreement aimed at ending the "unprecedented humanitarian crisis and alleviating the suffering of civilians by fostering the necessary conditions for achieving a comprehensive ceasefire."

"The two countries emphasise that attempts to sow discord among brotherly nations – whether through the casting of doubt, distortion, or media escalation – will not succeed, nor will they deter the two nations from continuing their joint efforts to end the war and the resulting humanitarian catastrophe," a joint statement read, adding that the countries were working alongside the US to reach a deal.

While Israel announced that a new, more intense military offensive would begin in Gaza unless a ceasefire deal was signed, Hamas said talks were pointless.

"There is no sense in engaging in talks or considering new ceasefire proposals as long as the hunger war and extermination war continue in the Gaza Strip," Hamas official Basem Naim told the AFP news agency on Tuesday.

[SOURCE: AFP and NEWS AGENCIES]

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