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Nine weeks on, Israel continues to pound Gaza despite mounting worldwide outrage

GAZA STRIP

Two weeks after a truce collapsed, the Israel-Hamas war is now raging across the entire Palestinian enclave and a humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding.

The relentless bombings and ground assault have left Gaza in ruins, killing more than 18,700 people, mostly women and children, and causing “unparalleled” damage to roads, schools and hospitals.

Yesterday, Israel pounded the length of the Gaza Strip, killing families in their homes even as Washington sent an envoy to encourage its ally to guard better against civilian casualties.

War to last several months

Israel's defence minister told the US official that the fight with Hamas in Gaza would “last more than several months”.

“It will require a long period of time — it will last more than several months — but we will win and we will destroy them,” Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant told visiting White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan.

In Rafah, jammed with people in makeshift tents on Gaza's southern edge, people wept at a morgue where bodies of those killed in the latest strikes were wrapped in bloodied shrouds.

Some were small children. Israel has brushed off calls for a ceasefire, including a resolu-



AFF

■ A Palestinian woman reacts following Israeli bombardment in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. Israeli leaders say they intend to press ahead with the Gaza war, despite coming under increasing international pressure, including from key ally, the US.

tion at the UN Security Council blocked by a US veto last week and another that passed overwhelmingly in the General Assembly this week.

Spread of diseases, hunger

Wintry rain lashed the territory, where the UN estimates 1.9 million of Gaza's 2.4 mil-

lion population have been displaced, living in makeshift tents as supplies of food, drinking water, medicines and fuel run low.

The UN warned the spread of diseases - including meningitis, jaundice and upper respiratory tract infections - had intensified.

The UN Palestinian Refugee Agency said hungry people were stopping trucks and eating food aid immediately. “We meet more and more people who haven't eaten for one, two or three days,” Philippe Lazarini told reporters in Geneva.

Elsewhere in the north in Jabalia, Gaza's health ministry

said Israeli forces had stormed a hospital, detaining and abusing medical staff and preventing them from treating wounded patients, at least two of whom had died. Twelve children were in the intensive care unit where the electricity had been cut.

—Agencies

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