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# Massacre on Christmas: Over 100 killed in Gaza

ISRAELI AIRSTRIKE TARGETS MAGHAZI REFUGEE CAMP



AFP

People wave Palestinian flags at St. Peter's Square during the Christmas Urbi et Orbi blessing from the Pope in The Vatican yesterday. The war has claimed the lives of over 20,000 people.

GAZA/JERUSALEM

**A**t a funeral in Gaza yesterday a line of Palestinians touched white shrouds containing the bodies of at least 70 people who Palestinian health officials said were killed by an Israeli airstrike targeting Maghazi refugee camp in the centre of the besieged strip. It came after one of the enclave's deadliest nights in the 11-week-old battle between Israel and Hamas. One man hugged a dead child and others were hysterical. "The strikes were at 2. The walls and the curtains fell on

us," said one man. "I reached down to my four-year-old child but all I found were rocks." Strikes that began hours before midnight persisted into yesterday.

**Most victims were  
women and children**

The health ministry said many of those killed at Maghazi were women and children. Eight others were killed as Israeli planes and tanks carried out dozens of air strikes on houses and roads in nearby Al Bureij and Al Nusseirat, health officials said. Medics added that an Israeli airstrike in Khan Younis in

southern Gaza killed 23, bringing total Palestinian fatalities overnight to more than 100. Pope Francis said in his Christmas message yesterday that children dying in wars, including in Gaza, are the "little Jesuses of today" and that Israeli strikes were reaping an "appalling harvest" of innocent civilians. Palestinian Christians said they felt "no joy" this Christmas as Israel bombed Gaza yesterday, with no end in sight to the war that Hamas says has claimed more than 20,000 lives.

—Agencies  
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# UAE airfares soar to record highs

Last-minute holiday plans will come at a steep cost, with peak fares from UK, India

DUBAI

**BY DHANUSHA GOKULAN**  
Chief Reporter

**F**lying into the UAE for an action-packed last week of 2023 from the UK – or from anywhere in the world – is hitting record highs. This is not surprising given that inward demand to the UAE has been running close to its peak for much of December and is now heading for an unprecedented high for the days from Christmas to the New Year. Wasim Ansari, Managing Director of Travel Square Tourism, said, "For many travellers, the current fares make it very expensive for any last minute trip plans." "The current fares represent the highest for UAE-bound flights this year, with rates at least 10-15 per cent higher than ticket prices in 2019 (the year before the pandemic hit)," said Mehar Sawlani, Director of Sales at Richmond Gulf Tourism. For example, a one-way economy fare from London

Heathrow to Dubai is Dh5,313 from December 22. That's in contrast to Dh4,755 on average for return airfares on the same route during this year's peak summer. One-way London-Dubai airfares in 2019 averaged Dh3,700 to Dh4,000. India-UAE airfares are equally high.

**Lure of Dubai**

Dubai recorded 954,000 visitors from the UK between January to October, marking it the second-largest source market for the city. Overall, Dubai had 13.9 million overnight visitors during the period, with the highest number sourced from India, at 2 million.

**SEE ALSO P5**

**Dh5,313**

one-way economy  
fare from Heathrow  
to Dubai since Dec 22

**Dh4,755**

average return fare  
on the same route  
during peak summer

WORLD

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says West  
trying to  
'destabilise'  
Serbia | P10**



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