

# Israeli forces battle Hamas in Gaza Strip

31 Palestinians killed; Gaza residents voice hope at renewed ceasefire calls

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli forces battled Hamas-led fighters in the northern and southern Gaza Strip yesterday, and Palestinian health officials said Israeli military strikes across the enclave had killed at least 31 Palestinians overnight.

Medics said the deaths resulted from separate Israeli air strikes in Deir Al Balah in the central Gaza Strip and in Khan Younis and Rafah in the south.

The armed wings of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad said fighters had attacked Israeli forces in the central Gaza Strip area with several mortar bombs. Hamas said its fighters also fired mortar bombs against Israeli forces in Khan Younis.

Gaza health authorities list more than 41,534 Palestinians confirmed killed in the assault.

Residents said Israeli forces operating in Rafah and Zeitoun, a suburb of Gaza City, had blown up several homes in both areas as the military continued its operations there. Gaza health authorities list more than 41,534 Palestinians confirmed killed in the assault.

War in Gaza has not let up, even as Israel's battle against Hezbollah in Lebanon has escalated. Many months of diplomatic efforts to reach a Gaza ceasefire have yielded little progress, with Israel refusing any deal to halt the fighting without the total defeat of Hamas.

In recent days the conflict has spread to another major theatre, with Israel launching the biggest airstrikes on Lebanon in nearly two decades, targeting Iran-backed Hezbollah, which has been firing into Israel in solidarity with the Palestinians.

On Wednesday, the United States, France and several other allies called for an immediate 21 day ceasefire across the Israel-Lebanon border while also expressing support for a Gaza ceasefire following intense discussions at UN.

In Gaza, many Palestinians voiced hope that a deal to end the war in Lebanon would also bring an end to the fighting in the Palestinian enclave.

"Since October 8, Hassan Nasrallah conditioned ending the strikes by Hezbollah on ending the Israeli crimes and war on Gaza. This is a big gate of hope that peace may prevail in Lebanon and Gaza," said Tamer Al-Burai, a Palestinian businessman from Gaza City, who is currently displaced in Khan Younis in southern Gaza.



People inspect a heavily damaged building following Israeli airstrikes in el-Karak in Lebanon's Bekaa valley yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Iraqi Islamic Resistance drone hits Israel's port

AFP, Baghdad

The pro-Iran Islamic Resistance in Iraq group said it attacked Israel's Red Sea port of Eilat Wednesday as another group urged more attacks amid soaring tensions over Gaza and Lebanon.

"The Islamic Resistance in Iraq attacked a strategic target in Eilat on Wednesday... using drones," it said in a statement published on Telegram.

Earlier Iraq's Hezbollah Brigades spokesman Abu Ali al-Askari issued an appeal for ramped-up operations against Israel.

The Israeli military said it intercepted a drone approaching Eilat and that another fell in the area. It reported two minor injuries.

Askari said current efforts fell short of the ambitions of the pro-Iran "Axis of Resistance" -- which includes Iraqi militias, Lebanon's Hezbollah and

Yemen's Houthi rebels.

In recent months, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, a network of pro-Iran militias, has claimed several drone strikes on Israeli targets.

"We hope factions in the Islamic Resistance, which support Palestine and Lebanon, will increase the number and severity of their operations," Askari said on Wednesday.

Israel's military has acknowledged several attacks from the east since April, saying it intercepted them but without naming the suspected attackers. Israel's airstrikes have sharply intensified since Monday, when more than 550 people were killed in Lebanon's deadliest day since the end of a 1975-1990 civil war.

The bombing follows attacks last week when pagers and walkie talkies exploded across Lebanon, killing scores of people and wounding thousands.

## Taliban face Hague threat over treatment of women

AFP, Sydney

Afghanistan's Taliban government faces multinational legal action that could land it in the UN's top court over its "contempt" for the rights of women and girls, government officials said.

Australia, Canada, Germany and Netherlands announced in New York they were initiating the proceedings, which could lead to a hearing at the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

"The Taliban have demonstrated their contempt for human rights..." Australian foreign minister told reporters on the sidelines of the UNGA.

## Taiwan detects 29 Chinese fighter jets around island

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan's defence ministry said yesterday that 29 Chinese fighter jets and drones were detected around the democratic island, following a 24-hour period that saw a surge in military movement by Beijing's forces.

China, which claims democratic Taiwan as part of its territory, sends warplanes, drones and naval vessels around the island nearly every day.

The latest ramp-up in military movement came after Japanese media reported that a Japanese warship sailed through the sensitive Taiwan Strait for the first time to assert its freedom of navigation.

Yesterday, Taiwan's defence ministry said 43 Chinese military aircraft and eight naval vessels were detected in a 24-hour period ending at 6:00 am (2200 GMT Wednesday). It also released an illustration that showed the aircraft surrounding the island except for the northeastern coast.

By afternoon, the ministry reported an additional 29 aircraft -- including fighter jets and drones -- had been detected since 8:00 am.

"Out of those, 21 crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait," it said.

## KEFFIYEH BAN Jhumpa Lahiri rejects Noguchi Museum award

REUTERS, Washington



Pulitzer Prize winning author Jhumpa Lahiri declined to accept an award from New York City's Noguchi Museum after it fired three employees for wearing keffiyeh head scarves, an emblem of Palestinian solidarity, following an updated dress code.

"Jhumpa Lahiri has chosen to withdraw her acceptance of the 2024 Isamu Noguchi Award in response to our updated dress code policy," the museum said in a statement on Wednesday.

"We respect her perspective and understand that this policy may or may not align with everyone's views." Lahiri received the Pulitzer Prize in 2000 for her book "Interpreter of Maladies."

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This handout picture released by the Bolivian Civil Defense shows Venezuelan firefighters fighting the wildfires in the area of San Ignacio de Velasco, Santa Cruz Department, Bolivia, on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## ‘Business as usual’ will flood Pacific islands

Nasa climate models show

AFP, Sydney

Within 30 years, sea levels will rise at least 15 centimetres on several Pacific island nations, regardless of what cuts are made to greenhouse gas emissions, new Nasa analysis shows.

Under different emission scenarios, researchers projected sea level rises for Tuvalu, Kiribati, Fiji and Nauru, finding some countries could experience localised flooding a few times a year.

Others could be submerged for nearly half a year, according to the analysis released Wednesday.

Almost the entire country of Tuvalu is vulnerable to flooding, Nasa found.

Even under a best case scenario -- if global warming is limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels -- sea levels will rise 23 centimetres (nine inches) by 2054.

"Everyone (in Tuvalu) lives by the coast or along the coastline, so everyone gets heavily affected by this," said youth climate activist Grace Malie, who is from the island.

"The future of the young people of

Tuvalu is already at stake," Malie added.

Under a business-as-usual scenario, Tuvalu could face sea levels rising 27 centimetres, and 30 centimetres under a worst-case scenario.

The low-lying archipelago has a mean elevation of just two metres (6.5 feet) above sea level and two of Tuvalu's nine islands have already largely disappeared.

Nasa researcher Ben Hamlington said rising seas vary from region to region -- due to melting glaciers or topography of coastlines -- but Pacific projections were "surprisingly consistent".

## Heavy rains paralyse Mumbai

At least 4 dead

REUTERS, Mumbai

Torrential rain lashed India's financial capital Mumbai, triggering floods and killing at least four people as well as paralysing the city and forcing schools to close yesterday before easing slightly in the afternoon.

Some parts of Mumbai recorded around 275 mm (11 inches) of rain on Wednesday evening, which crippled road traffic and delayed the trains millions of city residents use every day.

Four people died from rain-related incidents, officials said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi cancelled a trip to the city of Pune, nearly 200 kms, (124 miles) from Mumbai, after authorities declared a red alert due to the rain.