



Numerous Recent Israeli Strikes Against Civilian Sites in Gaza

The grueling and longstanding war taking place in the Gaza Strip continues to violate the human rights of thousands of innocent civilians. In the last week, Israel has carried out numerous strikes against civilian sites in Gaza, adding to its growing list of war crimes. From striking schools being used to shelter the displaced to lobbing bombs directly into civilian camps where families gathered and children slept, Israel's destructive war under Netanyahu has been rife with human rights abuses and war crimes. The Israeli military offensive in Gaza has resulted in nearly 40,000 deaths, and the complete and utter destruction of much of the besieged Palestinian enclave.

With the war raging on since last October and causing so much wanton destruction, human rights violations, UN casualties, and civilian population suffering, one must wonder what could prompt a halt to the catastrophic hostilities. The harmful tactics used by Israel have not helped attempts at de-escalation either. As of now, Hamas still holds over 100 known hostages, and efforts to initiate an immediate and lasting ceasefire have been consistently derailed. Many fair-minded analysts have contended that Israel has intentionally done so and sabotaged any potential deal by utilizing methods such as the introduction of new demands late on in the negotiation process. Israeli officials have shown a consistent pattern of retreating from or hindering negotiations as possible agreements draw closer, and have been credibly accused of obstructing progress that could bring an end to the conflict on multiple occasions in recent months. Despite Hamas' holding of hostages, Israel has indiscriminately bombed 30 out of 36 hospitals in Gaza, and deliberately destroyed buildings that were in supposed "safe zones."

Earlier this month in July, Israel conducted one specifically heinous act by striking the al-Mawasi area. This was designated as a "safe zone," and civilians had therefore gathered there. This attack killed at least 90 people and injured 300 others, and unfortunately, was only one of several reprehensible acts conducted by Israeli forces in a short period of time. Israel also managed to strike five schools, including a United Nations-run school in the Nuseirat area, which killed 17 and wounded scores of others. The Nuseirat attack, in particular, highlights the blatant disregard for human life that Israel continues to display. The school, which is in another one of the designated "safe" areas, was hosting several families and their children who were outside playing and visible to any aircraft at the time. Israeli airstrikes continue to kill innocent civilians and non-combatants in "safe zones," and have shown no sign of stopping.

Israel has bombed an estimated 70% of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) facilities in the region, consistently and repeatedly carrying these out against the civilian population, blocking and at times striking aid trucks, and destroying much of Gaza's infrastructure. The risk of famine continues to rise in the region, which is not helped by the aid delays and logistic troubles presented by the ongoing conflict. By all counts, the label of genocidal actions and systematic targeting placed upon what Israel is doing in cases at both the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) appear to have merit.

The supposed justifications given by Israel for its abusive actions have been inaccurate and wholly ineffective at explaining and waving away the truth of what is happening in Gaza. Of course, Hamas has committed its own

series of atrocities, but the inexcusable Israeli military actions combined with the destructive capability of the weapons used when it comes to striking so-called “targets” is appalling. These egregious strikes have not only destroyed over half of all buildings in Gaza, but they have claimed the lives of innocent civilians and those who have bravely chosen to report on and assist the Palestinian people. Around 150 journalists and over 200 UN aid workers have been killed during the conflict, in yet another major red flag for how Israeli forces have carried out the war.

With the tidal wave of evidence, global admonishment, and formal legal reprisals, it should make little sense for U.S. armaments to continue flowing to Israel. However, just recently, the U.S. has agreed to resume sending 500-pound bombs to Israel. This comes as part of the agreed-upon \$1 billion in weapons that the current administration has decided to send. The delivery of the new ordinance to Israel despite the array of proof of its major war crimes and human rights violations will only serve to potentially escalate the conflict further, lead to more civilian casualties, and risk emboldening bellicose behavior which could manifest into wider-scale hostilities in the region.