

IDF Strikes Hamas Command Center Located in Gaza School, Refutes Hamas Claim of 100 Casualties

The Israeli military struck an “active” command center that Hamas had established in a school in Gaza City on Saturday. Gaza’s Hamas-run civil defense agency claimed that over 100 people died in the Israeli strike that it labeled a “horrific massacre,” saying a large number of civilians had gathered for dawn prayers in the complex.

However, the Israeli military has refuted Hamas’ official casualty figures.

Israel Defense Forces stated it had implemented “many steps to minimize civilian casualties when it struck the Hamas command center at the Al-Taba’een school complex in Gaza City. The IDF reportedly used “precision munitions” and various intelligence, including aerial surveillance before the strike.

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“According to a preliminary examination, the numbers published by the government media office in Gaza – which acts as a media arm of Hamas – are exaggerated and do not match the information available in the IDF, the precise munitions used, and the accuracy of the strike,” the IDF said in an official statement.

The IDF underscored that the school was targeted as intelligence indicated the presence of 20 terrorists operating in the school, including “senior commanders.”

Several hours later, the IDF released 19 names of terrorists it said were confirmed to have been killed in the strike.

The army accused the Hamas terrorist organization of “systematically [violating] international law and [operating] from within civilian shelters, brutally exploiting the civilian population and institutions as human shields for their terror activities.”

In addition, it released footage of the strike, emphasizing it was “carried out using three precision weapons, which, according to experts, cannot cause damage that matches the casualty reports of the government information office in Gaza.”

“Furthermore, as a result of the attack no substantial damage was caused to the compound... as seen in the photograph after the attack,” the army added.

Hamas has a history of systematically inflating the number of Palestinian civilian casualties to increase international pressure on Israel to stop the war. Furthermore, Hamas terrorists deliberately embed themselves in civilian areas, such as hospitals, schools and mosques in flagrant violation of international law.

The IDF stressed that “steps were taken to reduce the chance of harming civilians, including the use of precision weaponry with a reduced warhead,” before the attack.

Images from the impact site on social media depicted bodies, but it remains uncertain whether they were Hamas militants or civilians. Since Hamas militants often wear civilian clothing, it often counts them as civilian casualties. Moreover, the Hamas-controlled agency in Gaza has not yet released visual proof supporting the claim of over 100 fatalities.

According to Army Radio, the location where the 20 terrorists were attacked is a prayer floor in a multi-story mosque inside

the school complex. The IDF estimates that the floor was too small to contain the claimed number of 100 victims, in addition to intelligence information indicating that the room served as a terror headquarters.

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The military also reportedly kept the building under constant intelligence supervision during and after the strike, and can exclude the possibility that part of the building collapsed or any other reason that could cause mass casualties.

The army added that a small fire broke out after the strike because of exploding ammunition but was contained to the attacked floor.

In December, a Gaza hospital director admitted that Hamas terrorists had transformed his clinic into a military facility. Hamas terrorists have operated in Gaza's largest hospital Al-Shifa and various other civilian structures, making the coastal enclave a significantly challenging battleground for the IDF.

On Thursday, the IDF began to issue evacuation notices to Gaza civilians living in Khan Younis.

On Thursday, the IDF re-entered Khan Younis in southern Gaza after Hamas terrorists began to launch rockets targeting Israeli communities from that location.

IDF Arabic spokesman Col. Avichay Adraee published a list of the zones that need to be evacuated, saying the IDF would "forcefully operate" against terror groups in those areas.

"Hamas and the terrorist organizations continue to carry out terrorist activity in your area and shoot at the communities of the State of Israel. The IDF will act forcefully against

them, for your safety immediately evacuate the humanitarian space."

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