

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Israel/Gaza: Operation 'Cast Lead' - 22 Days of Death and Destruction

Facts and Figures

Gaza

- Some 1,400 Palestinians were killed, including some 300 children, and hundreds of other unarmed civilians, including more than 115 women and some 85 men aged over 50 during the 22-day Operation "Cast Lead".
- Many Palestinian civilians were killed in attacks by high-precision weapons which are capable of pinpoint strikes and can hit within a meter of their targets and which have exceptionally good optics allowing those carrying out or directing the strikes to see the targets in detail.
- Many other Palestinian civilians were killed in indiscriminate and reckless attacks using imprecise weapons which should never be used in densely populated civilian areas.
- More Palestinians were killed and more properties were destroyed in the 22-day military campaign than in any previous Israeli offensive.
- The Israeli army has put the death toll at 1200 and maintains that most of those killed were not civilians but it has failed to provide any lists or any information indicating on what they base their figures.
- Thousands of Palestinian were left homeless. Hundreds of businesses and public buildings were destroyed. In most of the cases they investigated in Gaza Amnesty International delegates found evidence that the destruction was wanton and deliberate and could not be justified on grounds of "military necessity".
- Amnesty International delegates investigated dozens of cases comprising more than 300 victims, more than half of them women and children.
- Israeli forces repeatedly targeted ambulances and medical crews, killing several medical workers while they were attempting to rescue the wounded and recover the dead.
- Injured civilians who could have been saved died needlessly as Israeli forces frequently denied access to ambulances and others to trying rescue the wounded, recover the dead and bring aid to those in need.
- The borders of Gaza were kept sealed throughout Operation "Cast Lead" and civilians could not flee, and there was nowhere in Gaza where their safety could be guaranteed.
- Israeli forces forced Palestinian civilians on several occasions to serve as "human shields".
- Amnesty International found no evidence that rockets were launched from residential houses or buildings while civilians were in these buildings, but Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups at times launched rockets and located military equipment and positions near civilian homes.

Southern Israel

- Palestinian rocket attacks killed three Israeli civilians and caused severe injuries to 4 people, moderate injuries to 11, and light injuries to 167 others.
- Six Israeli soldiers were killed in the attacks by Palestinian armed groups (and 4 other were killed by Israeli forces in "friendly fire" incidents).

- Several hundred rockets in all were fired by Palestinian armed groups on Southern Israel during operation “Cast Lead” (571 rockets and 205 mortar shells landed in Israel according to the Israeli authorities).
- Rockets launched from Gaza reached towns up to 40km away.
- Thousands of families fled to other parts of the country.
- Several civilian homes and other structures were damaged.
- The ‘Izzeddin al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas’ armed wing, claimed responsibility for most of the rockets launched into Israel.
- Other armed groups which claimed rockets and mortar attacks against Israel include the armed wings of Fatah, of Islamic Jihad and of the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine).

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