

Giorno 119 dell'Operazione Al-Aqsa Flood: Israele promette di avanzare verso Rafah, lasciando i palestinesi senza nessun posto dove fuggire

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Vittime

- Oltre 27.131 morti* e almeno 66.287 feriti nella Striscia di Gaza.
- 112 palestinesi sono stati uccisi e 148 feriti nelle ultime 24 ore
- Oltre 387 palestinesi uccisi nella Cisgiordania occupata e a Gerusalemme est
- Israele rivede il numero stimato delle vittime del 7 ottobre riducendolo da 1.400 a 1.139.
- 558 soldati israeliani uccisi dal 7 ottobre e almeno 3.221 feriti.**

* Questa cifra è stata confermata dal Ministero della Sanità di Gaza il 2 febbraio. Alcuni gruppi per i diritti umani stimano il numero delle vittime a più di 33.000 se si considerano i presunti morti.

** Questa cifra è diffusa dall'esercito israeliano.

Sviluppi chiave

- Il ministro della Difesa israeliano Yoav Gallant: “La vittoria non sarà completa finché l'esercito non si espanderà a Rafah”.
- Ci sono 1,9 palestinesi attualmente rifugiati a Rafah, che è l'ultimo posto nella Striscia di Gaza ad essere stato dichiarato “zona sicura”. I palestinesi temono un massacro se l'esercito israeliano dovesse invadere il territorio.
- UNICEF: 1 milione di bambini a Gaza necessitano di supporto per la salute mentale
- ONU: L'assalto israeliano a Gaza è diventato il conflitto più mortale della storia per i giornalisti
- Società dei Prigionieri Palestinesi : 25 palestinesi arrestati la scorsa notte in una serie di raid in tutta la Cisgiordania. Il numero dei palestinesi detenuti dal 7 ottobre è ora 6.485
- Secondo un nuovo sondaggio , la metà degli adulti statunitensi afferma che Israele è andato troppo oltre nella sua guerra con Gaza.
- Il presidente degli Stati Uniti Joe Biden firma un ordine esecutivo che imporrebbe sanzioni ai coloni israeliani che commettono atti di violenza che minano la sicurezza in Cisgiordania.

- Gli arabo-americani protestano contro Joe Biden nel Michigan e lanciano la campagna #AbandonBiden sui social media per attirare l'attenzione sul modo in cui il presidente degli Stati Uniti ha deluso la comunità arabo-americana con le sue azioni a Gaza
- OCHA: 372 palestinesi sono stati uccisi, tra cui 94 bambini, in violenze legate al conflitto (compresi attacchi di coloni estremisti) nella Cisgiordania occupata.
- Belgium has summoned its ambassador after their development agency's office was destroyed in Gaza.

Displaced Palestinians trapped as Israeli Defense Minister vows to move into Rafah

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant has officially declared that “victory will not be complete until the military expands into Rafah,” the southern-most enclave of the Gaza Strip that is currently sheltering around 1.9 million Palestinians.

“The Khan Younis Brigade of the Hamas organization is disbanded, we will complete the mission there and continue to Rafah,” he wrote in a post on the social media platform X.

“The great pressure that the forces exert on Hamas targets brings us closer to the return of abductees more than anything else. We will continue to the end, there is no other way.”

While most Palestinians would much prefer to go home than to evacuate the Gaza Strip completely, even those who wish to leave Gaza cannot do so easily; the Egyptian government has effectively closed the border, citing concerns that opening it could undermine a future Palestinian state.

As a result, Palestinians who do wish to leave can only do so through bribing Egyptian “fixers” with connections to the intelligence apparatus, who are currently charging desperate Palestinians as much as \$10,000 per head as a “coordination fee” for anyone trying to leave the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing. Many Palestinians—including Palestinian-Americans who are trying to help their families in the absence of any assistance from the Biden administration—are turning to GoFundMe to raise money to cover the cost of crossing the border.

“People who are on the list in Gaza are, unfortunately, only the rich,” Fatima, a refugee from Gaza, whose family raised \$20,000 on GoFundMe to get her mother and two sisters out of Gaza, told The Daily Beast.

For most ordinary Palestinians, this is unfeasible—and they’re left fearing what will happen if Israeli tanks come, and there is nowhere to turn.

“Most of Gaza’s population is in Rafah,” Emad, a 55-year-old businessman told Reuters News Agency. “If the tanks storm in, it will be a massacre like never before during this war.”

It seems the only hope to stop Israeli tanks from storming Rafah would be a ceasefire—a proposed draft of which is still being considered by Hamas following meetings in Cairo with Egyptian and Qatari mediators this week. The current proposal would involve a 40 day cessation of hostilities, allowing humanitarian aid to come into the enclave, people to return to their homes, and the release of all remaining Israeli civilian hostages.

“We have received the proposal that was put together in Paris but we haven’t yet given a response to any of the parties,” Taher Al-Nono, media advisor to Hamas told Reuters.

“We can’t say that the current stage of negotiation is zero and at the same time we can’t say that we have reached an agreement.”

However, there is widespread disagreement about what will follow. Israel has said that Hamas must be eradicated before it pulls its troops out of Gaza or releases any Palestinian detainees, but Hamas refuses to disband or sign any deal until the Israeli military withdraws. Many fear that this could result in an extended stalemate that leads to more violence.

Meanwhile, as cold weather surges, Gaza’s humanitarian aid crisis continues, as rainwater floods tents in Rafah, and food, medical supplies, and other essential humanitarian aid are still held up at the border. Children are among those who are queuing in long lines for food, and UNICEF has warned that the recent decision of the U.S. and several other countries to withdraw funding from UNWRA could make this even worse.

According to UNICEF, 17,000 children have been separated from their families during the conflict, and nearly all of the children in the enclave require mental health support.

“They present symptoms like extremely high levels of persistent anxiety, loss of appetite,” said UNICEF Chief of Communications Jonathan Crickx.

“They can’t sleep, they have emotional outbursts or they panic every time they hear a bombing.”

Raids across the West Bank, U.S. sanctions on settlers, anger among Arab-Americans.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces continue to conduct raids across the West Bank, arresting 25 people just last night, bringing the total number of Palestinians who have been detained since October 7 up to 6,485 individuals.

Israeli settlers torched a car and attacked several homes in Nablus last night, just a few hours after U.S. President Joe Biden signed an Executive Order that imposed sanctions on four Israeli settlers deemed to have engaged in violent attacks that threaten to “undermine security” in the West Bank.

But this is just a fraction of those who have committed acts of violence. Since October 7, OCHA has recorded 477 Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, resulting in 48 Palestinian casualties.

While progressive Jewish groups in the United States have welcomed the announcement, some analysts—like Birzeit University Assistant Professor Basil Faraj claim that it is “too little too late,” and is an empty gesture to appease Palestinian and Arab-American communities.

Nevertheless, President Biden’s approval ratings among Arab-Americans are at an all-time low as Palestinian and other Arab-Americans rallied in Michigan, a swing state that many argue is essential to Biden’s campaign.

“Non c’è niente che mi farà mai votare per un presidente genocida”, ha detto ad Al Jazeera un manifestante identificato come Hawraa. “Non solo io, ma tutti gli altri. Tutta la mia comunità araba non voterà mai per quest’uomo”. Alcuni elettori si sono rivolti ai social media con la campagna #AbandonBiden, che sperano possa prendere piede negli stati teatro della battaglia.

Diversi altri leader della comunità palestinese-americana hanno recentemente rifiutato un incontro con il segretario di Stato americano Antony Blinken per discutere della situazione umanitaria a Gaza.

"Da dove posso iniziare a cercare di incontrare qualcuno che ritengo sia il principale responsabile dell'uccisione di tutta la mia famiglia e che ha avuto quattro mesi per impedire effettivamente che la mia famiglia venisse uccisa?" Lo ha detto all'Huffington Post Tariq Haddad, un cardiologo della Virginia che ha perso 90 familiari nell'assalto israeliano a Gaza

Caos regionale

L’esercito americano continua a colpire i droni Ansar Allah nello Yemen e a pianificare attacchi di ritorsione contro obiettivi iraniani in Iraq e Siria dopo che tre soldati americani sono stati uccisi da un drone iraniano in Giordania all’inizio di quest’anno. È il primo caso di personale militare statunitense ucciso dal 7 ottobre, e molti temono che ciò possa degenerare in una guerra regionale con il coinvolgimento di sempre più paesi.

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