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# **'We are not attacking civilians': Hamas says amid Operation Al-Aqsa Storm**

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**The Palestinian resistance movement  
Hamas has rejected accusations of  
targeting civilians.**

**Fighting raged across the occupied territories since the resistance groups launched Operation Al-Aqsa Storm on Oct. 7.**



Palestinians celebrate next to a destroyed Israeli tank at the Gaza Strip fence on October 7, 2023.

Osama Hamadan, senior spokesperson of Hamas, has told *Al Jazeera* that they are not attacking civilians.

"You have to differentiate between settlers and civilians; settlers attacked Palestinians," Hamdan said.

"We are not targeting civilians on purpose. We have declared settlers are part of the occupation and part of the armed Israeli force. They are not civilians," Hamadan added.

His remarks came after a number of Western-backed rights groups, including Amnesty International, accused the resistance movement of killing "Israeli civilians" in their retaliatory strikes.

Asked whether civilians in southern Israel were considered settlers, the Hamas spokesman said, “Everyone knows there are settlements there.”

On Saturday, the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement launched its large-scale operation, with a heavy barrage of rockets in response to Israel’s desecration of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and increased settler violence.

At least 400 Israeli settlers and forces have died as a result of the large-scale operation — code-named Al-Aqsa Storm — and more than 2000 others have sustained injuries.

Following the operation, a spokesperson for the Israeli defense forces confirmed that Israeli settlers and soldiers are held captive in Gaza. However, the spokesperson declined to specify the number of hostages.

According to Israeli media outlets, unofficial estimates suggest that approximately 750 Israeli soldiers and settlers have been missing since fighting broke out.

Hospital officials in the Gaza Strip have recorded the death of 320 Palestinians and the injury of 1,990 others. A large number of buildings, homes, and public facilities have also been badly damaged due to heavy Israeli bombardments.

The Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, said on its Telegram channel that the group had directed a “major missile strike on the settlement of Sderot with 100 missiles.”

The Qassam Brigades also called on Palestinians “to join this battle” as fighting between Israeli forces and Hamas fighters continues.

Meanwhile, Mohannad Aklouk, Palestine’s permanent representative to the Arab League, said he had submitted a request for an emergency meeting of the regional body’s foreign ministers in the wake of the latest Israeli onslaught.

"The urgent meeting comes in light of the ongoing Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, including the escalation of incursions into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound by thousands of settlers and Israeli officials over the past days," Aklouk was quoted as saying by the official Wafa news agency.

The retaliatory operation by Hamas on the occupied territories is the largest after the 11-day Israeli war against the Gaza Strip in May 2021, which took place after weeks of violence against Palestinians in Al-Quds and a brutal crackdown on worshipers at the al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as attempts to steal their land in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood.

At least 260 Palestinians, including over 60 children, were killed during the Israeli offensive as the Gaza-based resistance movements retaliated. The regime was eventually forced to announce a ceasefire brokered by Egypt.

Source: [Orinoco Tribune](https://www.orinocotribune.com/2023/10/11/260-palestinians-killed-in-israeli-offensive/)

