

**Rise in Civilian Killings in the Gaza Strip****21 June 2006**

Since 9 June, 32 Palestinians have been killed and 91 others injured by Israeli military air strikes and artillery shelling inside the Gaza Strip.<sup>1</sup> Ten of the Palestinians killed were children, including six children aged five years and under.

**Chronology of recent casualties**

- 21 June - At 18:15 an Israeli drone fired a missile targeting a Palestinian vehicle north-east Khan Younis. The missile missed the car that was its target, hitting a Palestinian house instead, killing two Palestinians, including one woman, and injuring 11 other Palestinians, six of whom were children.
- 20 June - Three children aged 4, 5 and 16 years were killed, and 12 others injured, seven of whom were children, in the Sheikh Radwan district of Gaza city by an Israeli air strike. The intended target of the Israeli air strike was escaped unharmed.
- 15 June – Three Israelis were injured by homemade rockets fired towards Sderot in Israel.
- 13 June - Eleven Palestinians including a father, his two sons aged four and six years, were killed along with two Palestinian paramedics when the Israel Air Force (IAF) launched two air strikes, targeting a vehicle carrying members of Islamic Jihad armed with rockets. Thirty-two Palestinians were injured.
- 11 June – Three Israelis were wounded, one seriously, when a rocket landed outside Sapir Academic College in Israel.
- 9 June - Seven members of a Palestinian family, including five children, were killed on a northern Gaza beach by an explosive devise. Thirty-three other Palestinians were also injured, including 11 children.<sup>2</sup>

**Escalation in violence in the Gaza Strip**

In the last three months, Palestinians have fired 479 homemade rockets towards Israel. During the same period, the IDF fired 7,599 artillery shells into the Gaza Strip.

	Jan – Mar 06	Apr – 20 Jun 06	Total
Homemade Palestinian rockets	417	479	896
IDF artillery shells	781	7599	8380
IAF missile strikes	71	71	142

The Government of Israel states that it fires artillery shells into open areas along the eastern border of the Gaza Strip with Israel and into the area covering the former northern settlement bloc to inhibit the movement of members of Palestinian militant groups. However, casualties have occurred amongst the civilian population in these areas with seven Palestinians killed, including two children, and 74 injured since the end of March. These 81 Palestinian casualties do not include members of the Palestinian killed and injured on a northern Gaza beach on 9 June.

After 9 June, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) announced that it was suspending artillery shelling into the Gaza Strip. However, the IAF, in response to the continued firing of homemade rockets by Palestinians, has escalated the use of air to ground missile strikes against suspected targets. While up to eight targeted people have been killed in such attacks since 11 June, this number is exceeded by casualties amongst innocent bystanders.

In response to the killing of the three Palestinian children on 20 June, the UN Secretary-General called on Israel “... to respect international law and to ensure that its actions are proportionate and do not put civilians at grave risk”. The Secretary-General also stated that he is mindful of “Israel’s legitimate security concerns in light of continuing rocket fire, which endangers Israeli civilians, and calls on the Palestinian Authority to do all in its power to halt such actions”.

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<sup>1</sup>This figure does not include those Palestinians killed during ongoing internal clashes.

<sup>2</sup> Media reports said that they were killed by a missile fired an Israeli naval vessel. An internal IDF investigation claimed that these allegations have not been proven.