

25 killed in Gaza as Blinken pushes for truce

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CAIRO: Israeli airstrikes on Sunday killed 25 people, including six children, in Gaza as US

Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Tel Aviv to advance ceasefire talks.

Palestinian health authorities confirmed that the children and their mother were killed in a strike on Deir Al-Balah, while Israeli forces claimed they targeted rocket launchers in Khan Yunis, killing 20 more Palestinians. Since October last year, the death toll in Gaza has surpassed 40,099, mainly civilians.

Efforts for a ceasefire have intensified, with the US, Egypt, and Qatar mediating talks. Blinken is scheduled to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and President Isaac Herzog before heading to Egypt for further discussions. Previous talks in Doha

were boycotted by Hamas following the death of its leader Ismail Haniyeh.

At a funeral in Deir Al-Balah, Mohammed Khattab, whose six grandchildren were among the dead, asked, “What was their crime? Did they attack Israel or launch rockets?”

After 10 months of conflict, Gazans remain desperate for safety. Families are being forced into overcrowded areas like Deir Al-Balah and Al-Mawasi, where conditions are dire. “We are tired of displacement,” said resident Tamer Al-Burai.

Israeli forces have ordered evacuations of northern Khan Yunis and eastern Deir Al-Balah. The UN reports that only 11% of Gaza remains designated as a “safe” zone.

Meanwhile, three UN peacekeepers were injured by a blast near Lebanon’s southern border.