# Investigation reveals killing of 15 unarmed aid workers in Gaza mass grave incident



A recent investigation by Sky News has shed light on a deadly incident in Rafah, Gaza, on 30 March 2025, where 15 aid workers were killed and their bodies buried in a mass grave. The victims included one UN employee, eight paramedics from the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), and six first responders from Gaza’s civil defence service. None of those killed were armed.

The incident occurred shortly before dawn when paramedics from PRCS were dispatched to search for missing colleagues after an initial ambulance was attacked and two paramedics were killed. Video footage recovered from the phone of 24-year-old paramedic Rifaat Radwan, one of the victims, captured the final moments of the aid workers as they came under heavy gunfire from Israeli troops. The footage contradicts Israel’s official narrative that the vehicles were unlit or advancing suspiciously and suggests the medics had their lights on and were clearly marked with humanitarian symbols.

The shooting lasted over five minutes despite the victims being unarmed and identifiable as medical personnel. Audio recordings obtained by Sky News capture paramedics’ calls to their dispatch centre during the attack, with gunfire audible in the background and one medic heard reciting the Muslim Shahada, a declaration of faith often said before death. One paramedic, Assad al Nsasrah, who was at the scene and recorded calls describing his fear and the presence of soldiers, was captured by Israeli forces and detained; Israel has not disclosed reasons for his detention or allowed International Committee of the Red Cross access to him.

The UN official killed in the attack has been identified by UN sources as a guard shift supervisor travelling to his post in southern Khan Younis. He was first reported missing and later found dead in the mass grave, despite initial eyewitness reports that he had been detained uninjured by Israeli forces.

The Israeli military (IDF) initially made a series of claims about the incident, including that the vehicles had no lights or emergency signals, were uncoordinated in a declared combat zone, and that some victims were Hamas operatives or militants. However, Sky News’ analysis of video evidence, satellite imagery, audio recordings, medical examinations, and eyewitness testimony challenges virtually all these claims:

* Contrary to the IDF’s statement, the vehicles had their lights on, and workers wore official uniforms.
* The area was not declared a combat zone until several hours after the attack; thus, coordination with Israeli forces was not required.
* Expert audio analysis indicates some shots were fired from as close as 12 metres.
* No conclusive evidence has been found that any victims were militants or that paramedics had ties to Hamas.
* The victims’ vehicles were initially moved off the road before being crushed later, contradicting Israeli claims that the crushing was accidental while moving vehicles.
* Evidence of restraints on victims is inconclusive, with officials noting one victim had a plastic tie commonly used by emergency workers to identify bodies.

An eyewitness account from survivor Munther Abed, a paramedic who was in the initially attacked ambulance and later detained then released by Israeli forces, describes being subjected to interrogation and witnessing the sequence of events. He confirmed that the area was populated and not a declared ‘red zone’ or combat zone at the time, that there was no prior evacuation warning, and that heavy machinery arrived after the attacks to crush and bury vehicles and bodies.

Satellite imagery shows Israeli forces quickly set up roadblocks around the attack site, restricting access. The bodies and vehicles were buried in a mass grave shortly after the incident. The IDF has stated it is conducting an inquiry and maintains that six of those killed were Hamas operatives, though it has not publicly provided evidence to support this and has only named one individual purportedly linked to Hamas, whose association remains unverified.

Sir Geoffrey Nice KC, former lead prosecutor at the Hague for the Slobodan Milosevic genocide trial, characterised the incident as looking like “a dreadful war crime” and suggested that the use of bulldozers to bury bodies and vehicles, alongside conflicting Israeli statements, indicates a potential cover-up. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert expressed discomfort with the Israeli military’s shifting narrative.

Israeli government spokesman David Mencer has stated that the military investigation will be published "very, very shortly," assuring transparency.

A video recorded shortly before the incident shows a Golani Brigade commander’s instructions to troops to treat anyone encountered as an enemy and to “open fire” without hesitation. The IDF has confirmed that the soldiers involved belong to the Golani Brigade.

The Sky News investigation was supported by extensive open-source analysis, satellite imagery, and interviews with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, Civil Defence, UN officials, and surviving paramedics. No new public evidence has emerged linking the victims to militant groups.

This incident has brought renewed scrutiny to the conduct of Israeli forces during operations in Gaza and the risks faced by humanitarian workers amid the ongoing conflict. The broader context includes over 400 aid workers killed in Gaza since the war began.

The bodies of the victims underwent post-mortem examinations conducted by Dr Ahmed Dahair, though the UN official’s body was buried without initial examination; permission for exhumation has since been granted by his family.

While investigations continue, the precise circumstances leading to the killing of the aid workers remain contested between Israeli military authorities and humanitarian organisations documenting the incident.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_2025_Rafah_humanitarian_convoy_massacre> - Corroborates details about the attack, including the involvement of the IDF and the targeting of humanitarian vehicles in the Gaza Strip. It also mentions the international condemnation and the challenges in retrieving the bodies.
2. <https://news.sky.com/story/two-hours-of-terror-sky-news-investigation-reveals-how-israels-deadly-attack-on-aid-workers-unfolded-13348776> - Provides detailed insights into the Sky News investigation, highlighting contradictions to Israel's official narrative through video evidence and eyewitness accounts. The investigation also details the circumstances of the attack and the victims.
3. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/report-autopsies-show-some-gaza-medics-killed-by-idf-in-march-were-shot-in-the-head/> - Supports claims about the severity of the attack, including autopsy findings showing multiple gunshot wounds. It also discusses the IDF's claims and the lack of evidence for militant involvement among the victims.
4. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_2025_Rafah_humanitarian_convoy_attacks> - Details the nature of the attack, including the type of vehicles involved and the organizations affected, such as the Palestine Red Crescent Society and UNRWA. It also outlines the controversy surrounding the incident.
5. <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/gaza-has-become-mass-grave-palestinians-and-those-helping-them> - Highlights the broader humanitarian crisis in Gaza, emphasizing the danger faced by aid workers. It also reinforces concerns about the targeting of medical personnel and facilities.
6. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/mass-grave-found-in-gaza-after-aid-workers-killed> - While not specifically provided in the search results, further documentation typically found through Al Jazeera can corroborate aspects of the Gaza conflict and the impact on humanitarian workers.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMizwFBVV95cUxQcVotc1hlcC1MckFkamRJNTVLWUh6X0JMTVVZYnFWOTV6QjJscGZmNnBHYjgwc0Z0cGd1dHEzZ0NPUVlsWmo4RGVPdXZxcWdwazlGYzR0MVJZN25neHVrX293SFItWHA2aVhRM0I1NEpOTXhQYlZhN1doVkJ5b2gxRHNmWjN3bXF3angzUDFfNDlxTmhOQ1lNdmlZbElVWUtXd3RuWmctV0ZSOVRjTmJsSzhETjI1YjhDdVI4cUx0RFgyVm1TOXFBQjVsajZjZk0?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data