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## Civilian Casualties in Gaza Aid Incident Prompt International Concern

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At least 55 Palestinians were reportedly killed and over 150 injured near Zikim in northern Gaza, according to health officials in the region, after gunfire broke out at a location where civilians had gathered for humanitarian aid. The event has led to renewed concern from international observers over the conduct of military operations and the safety of aid distribution sites in the territory.

Casualties were brought to what remains of al-Shifa Hospital, which has been operating at reduced capacity due to sustained damage and supply shortages. Among the victims was the father of 15-year-old Mohammad Basem Rayhan, who was reportedly killed by gunfire while waiting at the aid location. Mohammad returned to the hospital carrying his father's body, according to journalists present at the scene.

Journalist Nahed Hajjaj reported that the incident occurred at a site intended for aid distribution, raising concerns about the conditions under which civilians are attempting to access basic necessities. Aid agencies have warned that such incidents may undermine ongoing efforts to provide relief to Gaza's population amid a growing humanitarian crisis.

According to data from local health authorities, hundreds of Palestinians have died in recent months not only due to direct conflict but also from complications related to limited access to food, medical care and clean water. The World Health Organization and other international bodies have expressed alarm over the deteriorating humanitarian conditions, particularly for children.

Aid corridors set up in the territory have become a focus of debate. Critics, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, argue that these sites must be protected and should not be located in areas at risk of conflict. If safety cannot be assured, they warn that the effectiveness and legitimacy of aid efforts may be compromised.

Israel has stated that its operations in Gaza are aimed at targeting militant groups and has maintained that civilian casualties are unintended consequences of actions taken in self-defence. However, international human rights groups have called for greater transparency and accountability regarding the planning and execution of such operations.

Some observers have called for a reassessment of Western policy in relation to the conflict, suggesting that ongoing support should be contingent upon adherence to international humanitarian law and improved conditions for civilian populations. While the United Kingdom recognises Israel's right to defend itself, there is growing pressure for British officials to ensure that humanitarian obligations are also being met.

As the situation in Gaza continues to unfold, the focus remains on ensuring secure access to aid for civilians and minimising the risk of further casualties. The international community is monitoring developments closely and weighing possible responses in light of evolving conditions on the ground.