News



Smoke rises after an explosion in Gaza, as seen from the Israeli side of the Israel-Gaza border, July 29, 2025. (OSV News/Reuters/Amir Cohen)

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July 30, 2025

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As violence and starvation deepen in Gaza, the pastor of the area's only Catholic Church told a pontifical charity, "We remain in the hands of the Lord."

Fr. Gabriel Romanelli of Holy Family Parish in Gaza — who sustained a leg injury in a widely condemned July 17 Israeli strike on the church that killed three and wounded more than 10 — shared his latest thoughts in a message to Aid to the Church in Need.

According to a July 29 ACN news article, the Argentine-born Romanelli told the charity that he and his community remain "deeply affected by the facts" of the July 17 attack, but "continue to do good, protecting the children, the sick and the wounded.

"Here we are, after these terrible days of war, and especially these bombings: 15 people were hit, three of them died and two are still in serious condition," Romanelli told ACN.

The priest said he was grateful for assistance provided by the agency and all those who help sustain the church in the Holy Land.

"Firstly, I want to say thank you for the prayers and friendship of Aid to the Church in Need, which fill our hearts," said Romanelli. "And besides that, I know that ACN has plenty of initiatives to help the Christians in the Middle East, especially in these parts of the Holy Land, in the West Bank and in Gaza."

Romanelli's voice was "filled with hope," said ACN. "We wait for peace. It is absolutely necessary. Once more, thank you so much for all the spiritual, moral and material help," said Romanelli. "May God bless you and may the Virgin Mary protect all ACN benefactors, their families and loved ones."

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Since the start of the Israel-Hamas War, which was sparked by the latter's Oct. 7, 2023 attack on Israel, hundreds have sheltered at the Holy Family complex.

In December 2023, a woman named Nahida and her adult daughter Samar were killed by Israeli firepower at Holy Family as they walked to the convent. In a statement at the time, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem said they had been shot "in cold blood," with "one … killed as she tried to carry the other to safety." Seven others were wounded in that attack.

So far, more than 60,000 Palestinians have died in the Israel-Hamas war, according to the Hamas-run Gaza health ministry. Some 1,200 Israelis have been killed and more than 5,400 injured. Of the 251 Israeli hostages taken by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, 50 remain in captivity, with only 20 of them believed to still be alive, with 83 of the hostages confirmed killed to date. More than 100 were released later in 2023; eight were rescued by Israeli forces.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC — a measurement initiative by a global consortium of food security organizations and agencies, including Catholic Relief Services — has warned that Gaza is at risk of famine, with both serious and critical levels of acute malnutrition throughout the densely populated region. "Increasingly stringent blockades" by Israel have "dramatically worsened" conditions, said the IPC.