Photographer Hatem Khaled, a Reuters contractor, sits in a car, after being wounded in Israel

Photographer Hatem Khaled, a Reuters contractor, sits in a car, after being wounded in Israeli strikes on Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, Aug. 25, 2025, that killed journalists, including Reuters contractor and cameraman Hussam al-Masri. (OSV News photo/Ramadan Abed, Reuters)

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Days after the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem expressed hope that "hearts can change even in the Holy Land," at least 20 people -- including five journalists -- have been reported killed in Israeli strikes on Nasser Hospital, located in southern Gaza.

BBC News has verified several videos of the Aug. 25 attack, showing two strikes on the facility.

In a livestream video by Al Ghad TV, emergency workers are seen responding to an initial blast aimed at the building's top floor. Journalists were among those gathered to record the rescue efforts when a second strike took place.

Among those slain in the strikes were Reuters cameraman Hussam al-Masri; freelance journalist Mariam Dagga, who had worked with the Associated Press;

Mohammed Salama of Al Jazeera and Middle East Eye; freelance journalist Ahmad Abu Aziz, who worked with Middle East Eye; and Moas Abu Taha, whose media affiliations are still being confirmed.

Their deaths follow those of six other journalists who died in an Aug. 10 strike on Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City.

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A man holds the equipment used by Palestinian cameraman

A man holds the equipment used by Palestinian cameraman Hussam al-Masri, who was a contractor for Reuters, at the site where he was killed along with other journalists and people in Israeli strikes on Aug. 25, 2025, Nasser Hospital, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip. This still image was taken from what was a video shot by Reuters contractor Hatem Khaled, who was wounded shortly afterwards in another strike while he was filming the site. (OSV News photo/Hatem Khaled, Reuters)

In an Aug. 25 statement, Israel Defense Forces confirmed the latest strike, noting that it "regrets any harm to uninvolved individuals and does not target journalists as such."

IDF’s chief of general staff "instructed to conduct an initial inquiry as soon as possible,” the IDF said. "The IDF acts to mitigate harm to uninvolved individuals as much as possible,"

The latest strikes have drawn international condemnation, with World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus posting on X that the blast hit critical areas in the hospital, including its emergency department, inpatient ward, surgical unit and emergency staircase.

The strike comes just three days after the global day of prayer and fasting for peace called by Pope Leo XIV on Aug. 22 -- the feast of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary -- amid a surge in global conflict, particularly in the Middle East and Ukraine.

Speaking to Vatican News ahead of the observance, Latin Patriarch Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa said he was "grateful for this attention to the theme of peace."

He added, "It is the only thing that at this moment we can do: to pray and to fast, to keep our attention directed toward God. It is the only thing we can do right now so that the hearts of men may change."

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At the same time, he said, prayer is not "a magic formula that solves problems," but rather a means of transforming hearts to reject violence and hatred, and embrace fraternity, mutual respect and goodness.

"Prayer also serves to create this bond with people of all faiths who, despite everything, still want to believe that the heart of man, even in the Holy Land, can change," the cardinal told Vatican News, adding that the day of prayer would confirm “Christ is not absent from Gaza."

The Israel-Hamas war – sparked by the latter’s Oct. 7, 2023 attack on Israel -- has seen more than 62,000 Palestinians killed, according to the Hamas-run Gaza health ministry. Some 1,200 Israelis have been slain and more than 5,400 injured. Of the 251 Israeli hostages taken by Hamas that Oct. 7, 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.

Along with the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, a famine has been formally declared by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, a global food security metric used by a consortium of hunger relief agencies.