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## Gaza Strip. Fr Romanelli (parish priest): "A small support network created in the parish." Unicef, "57 children killed." UN diplomatic stalemate

"Artillery shelling continues throughout the Gaza Strip, including in the city centre, hitting also a number of buildings thought to be safe. Unfortunately, there are no signs of a truce", Father **Gabriel Romanelli**, parish priest in Gaza, told SIR after yet another night of fighting between Hamas militiamen and the Israeli army. "Increasing numbers of families are left homeless, with an estimated several thousand internally displaced," the priest said, confirming the figures reported by UNRWA, the UN Agency for Palestinians, according to which "about 42,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have reportedly been forced to leave their homes as a result of Israeli attacks against Hamas. The displaced took shelter in 50 schools run by the UN Agency." Over 2,500 people were left homeless after their homes were destroyed in the bombings.



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"Several of our faithful were among them. However, thank God, we did not suffer any victims. Our parish has created a small support network," added Father Gabriel. We are asking the members of our Christian community to ascertain their condition, bringing them food and medicines. Special attention is given to children and the elderly. We continue praying for an end to this tragedy that has killed over 50 children", he concluded.



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. One week of shelling and rocket attacks left over 55 children dead in the State of Palestine and two in Israel. School facilities in Gaza have been destroyed, private homes and offices razed to the ground and families were left homeless. Schools, houses and buildings were damaged in Israel. "Fear and devastation are mounting on both sides," denounced UNICEF Director-General Henrietta Fore, "the violence, killings and hatred must stop. International human rights and humanitarian law must be respected. Civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected. The only way forward is through diplomacy - for the good of all children and their future." Despite the ongoing violence, UNICEF continues delivering aid to the Gaza Strip with supplies such as saline solutions, glucose, antibiotics, oral rehydration solutions, and equipment for water distribution and purification. "We are requesting access for humanitarian purposes to bring much-needed assistance," Fore reiterated.  
**Diplomatic stalemate.** No positive news on the diplomatic front either: the UN Security Council, which held an emergency meeting yesterday to discuss the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, failed to deliver concrete results, with the US reportedly blocking a text denouncing the violence of both sides and calling for a ceasefire. Also yesterday, the special representatives of the Middle East Quartet, which comprises the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and Russia, held an online meeting to discuss actions to be taken for a rapid de-escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A statement released by the Russian Foreign Ministry reaffirms the need for "strict compliance with the norms of international humanitarian law and to create favourable conditions for unblocking the prospect of a political solution and resuming Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, based on relevant UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the principle of two States, Palestine and Israel, living together in security and peace."

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