**Deliberate attacks**

Mitchell Zimmerman

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Israel has come under intense criticism for killing aid workers helping the civilian victims of its war in Gaza.

Most recently, an Israeli drone fired three missiles at a World Central Kitchen convoy, killing all seven humanitarian aid workers present. The trucks were clearly marked and their route had been preapproved and coordinated with the Israeli military.

Celebrity chef Jose Andres, who heads the organization, believes the attack was deliberate. Israeli forces targeted the convoy “systematically, car by car,” he reported.

“This is not an isolated incident,” agrees Jamie McGoldrick, a senior United Nations relief official. “There is no safe place left in Gaza.” McGoldrick is right. Since the start of the war, over 200 humanitarian aid workers have been killed in Gaza.

“Repeatedly, aid workers who are providing life saving assistance to populations in need are being killed with total disregard,” the International Rescue Committee has charged. “Aid convoys have been attacked, and shelters and hospitals supported by the humanitarian community are continuously being damaged or destroyed under Israeli bombardment.” It wasn’t even the first time a World Central Kitchen was attacked. Just a few days earlier, an Israeli sniper fired on a WCK car headed for a food warehouse in Gaza.

The Israel Defense Force (IDF) apologized for the latest attack, calling it a “grave mistake”. But reports by the Israeli newspaper Haaretz cast doubt on that claim. Three separate vehicles, stretched across a mile and a half, were all fired on.

After the first car was hit, some of the passengers switched to one of the other cars and notified the Israelis that they were attacking aid workers. But the Israeli drone fired another missile, hitting the second car. As a third car approached to collect the wounded, a third missile struck them.

The Israelis said the strike “was launched because of suspicion that a terrorist was traveling with the convoy,” claiming they’d seen an armed man, Haaretz reports. The only mistake, according to the military, was that the armed man was actually not in any of the WCK vehicles when they were attacked.

But even that’s no justification.

Given the now lawless nature of northern and central Gaza, which has been obliterated by Israeli bombing and shelling, it’s reasonable that an armed man who was not a terrorist might accompany food supplies. Even then, “suspicion” that an armed man might be a terrorist cannot justify killing an entire humanitarian mission.

The attack has had a chilling effect on aid delivery to starving Gazan civilians. “In the wake of the attack that killed seven of its workers,” The New York Times reports, “World Central Kitchen stopped its work in Gaza and sent three ships with hundreds of tons of food back to port in Cyprus.” Other aid groups are also suspending operations in Gaza.

Is this all the result of a regrettable “mistake”? Perhaps not. Increasingly, experts view these incidents as evidence of a deliberate strategy to starve Palestinian civilians.

Excerpted: ‘Biden Shouldn’t Give Israel Weapons to Kill Aid Workers’.

Courtesy: Commondreams.org