

WORLD NEWS

'We have nothing': Palestinians return to utter destruction in Gaza City after Israeli withdrawal

Gaza City hospital partially resumes operations, after Israeli assault in area prompted evacuation

Photos 2

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SHIJAIYAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Palestinians returned to breathtaking scenes of destruction in the Gaza City district of Shijaiyah after Israeli troops withdrew, ending a two-week offensive there. Civil defense workers said Thursday that so far, they had found the bodies of 60 people in the rubble.

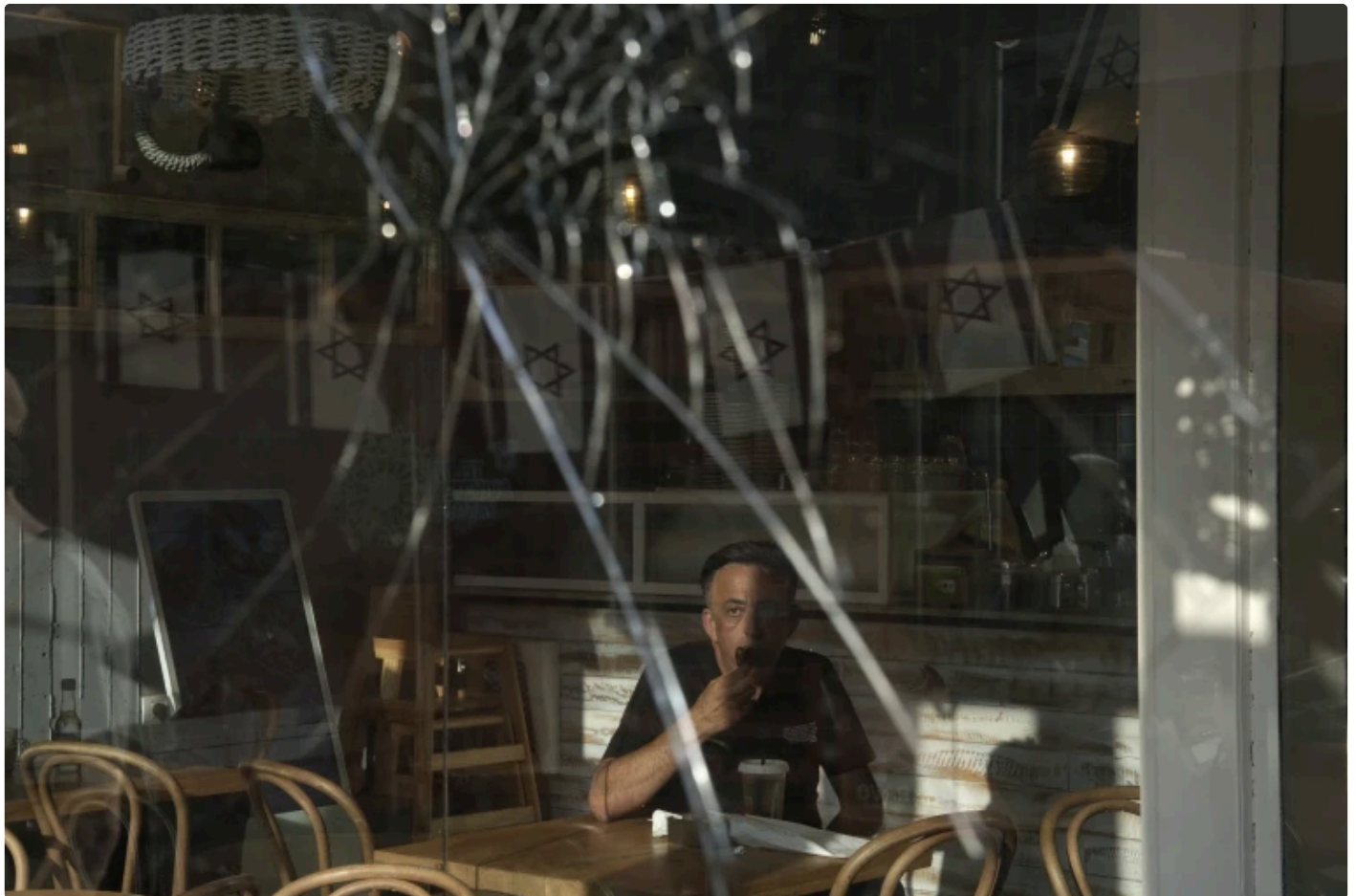
Families who fled the assault ventured back into Shijaiyah to see [the condition of their homes](#) or salvage whatever they could.

Nearly every building was flattened to rubble for block after block, leaving giant piles of concrete and twisted rebar. Here and there, grey gutted concrete frames still stood a few stories high. The ever-present buzzing sound of Israeli military drones hung in the hot summer air as people on bicycles or horse-drawn carts made their way over dirt paths where the streets had apparently been bulldozed away.

Sharif Abu Shanab found his family's four-story building collapsed. "I can't enter it. I can't take anything out of it, not even a can of tuna. We have nothing, no food or drink," he said.

Since fleeing the district, his family sleeps in the streets, he said. "Where do we go and to whom? ... We have no home or anything," he said in despair. "There's only one solution, hit us with a nuclear bomb and relieve us of this life."

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The Israeli military has invaded Shijaiyah several times in the nine-month [war against Hamas militants in Gaza](#). Its latest assault began in late June, when it said it was pursuing militants who had regrouped in the district. The assault sent some 80,000 people fleeing Shijaiyah, most into nearby areas, and it is not known how many people remained in the district during the fighting.

The Israeli military said in a statement Wednesday evening that its operations in Shijaiyah had ended. It said its troops had killed dozens of militants and destroyed eight tunnels in the area. Those claims could not be independently confirmed.

Gaza's Civil Defense organization said that during Israel's offensive, its emergency crews had largely been unable to respond to calls for help from residents in destroyed buildings. After the Israeli pullout, its crews entered and recovered 60 bodies, it said, adding that the search was ongoing. More bodies were believed buried under rubble, but the organization has little heavy equipment to clear debris.

The United Nations estimated earlier this week that about 300,000 Palestinians were still in northern Gaza, after [much of the population left earlier in the war](#). Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people

are now experiencing widespread hunger while crammed into squalid tent camps.

Israel launched the war in Gaza after [Hamas' Oct. 7 attack](#) in which militants stormed into southern Israel, killed some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducted about 250. Since then, Israeli ground offensives and bombardments have killed more than 38,300 people in Gaza, according to the territory's [Health Ministry](#) . It does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count.

The top United Nations court has ordered Israel to take steps to protect Palestinians as it examines genocide allegations against Israeli leaders. Israel denies the charge.

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