



UN officers pay their last respects to Col. Waibhav Anil Kale at the Indian Embassy in Tel Aviv on May 17, 2024. Indian MEA

L A I D T O R E S T A T H O M E

# Indian UN peacekeeper killed by Israeli forces in Gaza repatriated for burial

Col. Waibhav Anil Kale was hit by Israeli fire while in UN-marked vehicle

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi

**Indian veterans joined in condemning Israel's killing of a former army officer and UN staffer Col. Waibhav Anil Kale, whose body was returned to India for burial on Friday.**

Kale was on duty with the UN Department of Safety and Security when he was targeted in his UN-marked vehicle in southern Gaza on Monday.

A former peacekeeper, he was hit by what the UN said it had no doubt was Israeli tank fire.

The Indian Embassy in Tel Aviv shared a photo on Friday morning showing UN officials paying their

last respects to Kale, before his remains were flown to Delhi.

While the Indian Ministry of External Affairs issued a statement saying it was "deeply saddened by the death," civil society has urged the government to hold Israel accountable. Former servicemen also joined the call.

"Israel must be held accountable. Killing a veteran officer engaged in the UN is a serious issue," said Indian Army Maj. Gen. (retd.) Yashpal Mor.

A former UN staffer himself, Mor told Arab News that Kale had a "brilliant career" and was known in the army circles.

"When you work with the UN, you are in an international environment, but you have the ethos and

ethics of the Indian army. It was very sad and very shocking. He actually died in the line of duty," he said.

"Israelis have been doing this since the beginning. They are not worried about anyone. They are going berserk." Israel's deadly siege and bombardment of Gaza has since October killed over 35,300 people, wounded 70,000, and left most of the enclave's population starving and with no access to food, water, and medical supplies.

"Israelis will lose sympathy by doing this indiscriminate firing," Col. Anil Bhat (retd.), former spokesperson of the Ministry of Defense, said. "In the Indian army, we are so attentive to civilian casualties that we lose more men

by not doing indiscriminate firing ... Indiscriminate killing is not good. Israelis will lose sympathy?"

The UN estimates that more than 190 of its staff members have also been killed in the ongoing onslaught. Kale was the first international UN employee to be killed.

New Delhi had always been sensitive to assaults on UN personnel given that it is one of the largest contributors of the organization's peacekeepers.

But the government's statement did not contain condemnation of Kale's killing, unlike in July 2022, when two Indian peacekeepers were killed in an attack on a UN Organization Stabilization Mission base in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.