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United Nations, May 21 (RHC)-- Israel's 11-day bombardment has devastated Gaza's civilian infrastructure, with strikes hitting electricity, water, sewage and telecommunications lines.

On Friday, with the announcement of a ceasefire, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres welcomed the news and urged Israel to allow rapid and unhindered aid access to the Palestinian territories.

António Guterres said: "The fighting has left thousands of Palestinians homeless and forced over 50,000 people to leave their homes and seek shelter in UNRWA schools, mosques and other places with little access to water, food, hygiene or health services. I was horrified by reports that nine members of one family were killed in al-Shati refugee camp. If there is a hell on Earth, it is the lives of children in Gaza today."

President Biden, whose administration has repeatedly blocked U.N. Security Council statements and resolutions calling for a ceasefire, spoke on Thursday night and actually praised Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is expected to visit the region soon.

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