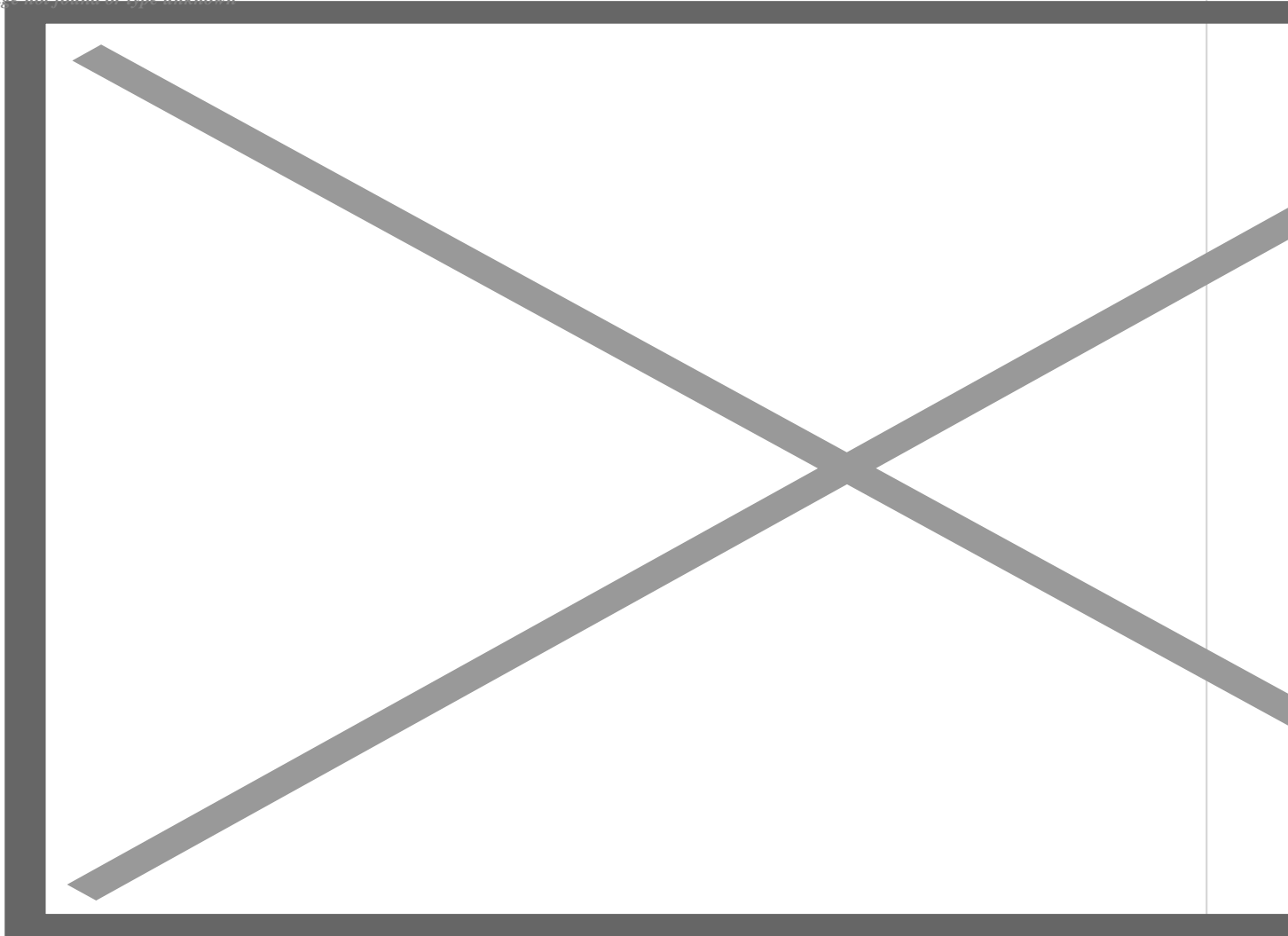


UN says Israel closure of Gaza crossings impedes reconstruction

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A Palestinian girl with a national flag painted on her face, plays amidst the rubble of buildings destroyed by last month's Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip, in Beit Lahia, in the northern part of the Palestinian enclave, on June 19, 2021. (Photo by AFP)

United Nations, August 2 (RHC)-- The United Nations says lack of raw materials in the besieged Gaza Strip due to Israel's closure of crossings with the impoverished enclave has hampered reconstruction process, which is in need of funds.

In a statement on Sunday, Sam Rose, director of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), made the remarks, affirming that a special appeal has been made by the refugee agency in late June aimed at obtaining funds necessary to reconstruct the war-ravaged coastal sliver.

The Israeli regime started a 12-day war against the already Tel Aviv-blockaded Gaza Strip on May 10. As a result of the brutal aggression, at least 260 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, including 66 children, with several thousand people wounded. The aggression also destroyed or heavily damaged hundreds of residential and industrial buildings in Gaza.

Gaza-based resistance groups, including Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, responded to the aggression on the same day that the blockaded enclave was targeted. Rose further said that UNRWA commenced its own damage assessments in Gaza following the international “rapid damage and needs assessment” that was launched during a donor meeting at the time. He also stressed that the agency is in need of \$160 million to reconstruct homes for Gaza refugee families.

In recent years, the Gaza Strip has been receiving its bare essentials through the Kerem Shalom crossing as well as two others, including one with Egypt, which is being strictly controlled by the government in Cairo.

The Gaza Strip, home to some two million people, has been under an Israeli all-out siege since June 2007. The crippling blockade has caused a decline in the standards of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

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