

UN chief refuses to retract condemnation of Israel's Jenin raid



United Nations, July 10 (RHC)-- Israel's United Nations ambassador has called on UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to retract his condemnation of Israeli forces for using excessive force and harming civilians during their devastating raid on the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank.

UN deputy spokesperson Farhan Haq responded over the weekend, saying that Guterres had conveyed his views on Israel's operation in the Jenin refugee camp "and he stands by those views." Guterres, angered by Israeli air attacks on Jenin and the danger posed to the civilian population, issued a statement on Thursday in which he said the assault had left over 100 civilians injured, uprooted thousands of residents, damaged schools and hospitals, and disrupted water and electricity networks.

"Israel's air strikes and ground operations in a crowded refugee camp were the worst violence in the West Bank in many years, with a significant impact on civilians," Guterres said. The UN chief also criticised Israel for preventing the injured from receiving medical care and humanitarian workers from reaching those in need during the military raid, which left 12 Palestinians dead and approximately 100 wounded.

Israel's UN Ambassador Gilad Erdan called the UN chief's criticism of the Israeli military assault "shameful, far-fetched and completely detached from reality."

The UN Security Council discussed Israel's Jenin operation behind closed doors on Friday at the request of the United Arab Emirates and received a briefing from UN Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari.

Erdan sent a letter to the 15 council members and Guterres before the council meeting in which he said the "international community and the Security Council must unconditionally condemn the latest Palestinian terror attacks and hold Palestinian leadership accountable."

Israeli forces in Jenin "focused solely" on those perpetrating "terror targeting innocent Israeli civilians", he claimed. In a statement on Wednesday, three independent human rights experts said the Israeli air attacks and ground actions in Jenin "amount to egregious violations of international law and standards on the use of force and may constitute a war crime".

The Security Council took no action on Friday.

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