

*United Nations expert affirms
massive destruction of Gaza by
Israel amounts to crime against
humanity*

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United Nations, November 9 (RHC)-- An independent United Nations expert has said that the systematic bombing of civilian infrastructure and widespread destruction of the besieged Gaza Strip by Israel amounts to a war crime and a crime against humanity.

The Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Balakrishnan Rajagopal, said on Wednesday that the Israeli attacks on targets in the Gaza Strip caused the destruction or damage of 45% of all housing units in the besieged Palestinian enclave. He also warned that the destruction comes at a "huge cost in human lives."

“Carrying out hostilities with the knowledge that they will systematically destroy and damage civilian housing and infrastructure, rendering an entire city – such as Gaza City – uninhabitable for civilians is a war crime,” he added

Rajagopal, the Human Rights Council commissioner, noted that when these actions are “directed against the civilian population, they also amount to crimes against humanity.” The UN rapporteur stressed that the systematic or widespread bombing of housing, civilian objects and infrastructure is strictly prohibited by international law.

According to Rajagopal, the Israeli order to evacuate the northern Gaza Strip, which was issued despite the lack of adequate shelter or aid for the displaced, while cutting off water, food, fuel and medicine and repeatedly attacking evacuation routes and “safe” areas, constituted a “cruel and flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.”

Also last week, a group of United Nations experts warned time was running out to “prevent genocide and humanitarian catastrophe” in Gaza, expressing their deep frustration with Israel’s refusal to halt plans to decimate the besieged Gaza Strip.

They expressed grave concern about the safety of UN and humanitarian workers and hospitals and schools that are providing refuge and life-saving medical services to the people of Gaza.

Antonio Guterres said on Wednesday that the number of civilians killed in Gaza indicates there is something “clearly wrong” with Israel’s military operation. “There are violations by Hamas when they have human shields. But when one looks at the number of civilians that were killed with the military operations, there is something that is clearly wrong,” Guterres said.

“Every year the highest number of killing of children by any of the actors in all the conflicts that we witness is the maximum in the hundreds,” Guterres added. “We have in a few days in Gaza seen thousands of children killed.”

Israel continues targeting residential areas across Gaza with 214 people killed in the last 24 hours. The Health Ministry in Gaza said that at least 10,569 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli strikes on Gaza – including 4,324 children – since October 7.

Meanwhile, human rights groups say Israel has dramatically increased its use of administrative detention since the start of the aggression, while also turning a blind eye to cases of torture and degrading treatment in prisons.

Administrative detention is a procedure under which prisoners are held without charges. Citing local NGOs, they said Israel has detained more than 2,200 Palestinians since October 7th.

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