

*Tens of thousands of displaced
Palestinians arrive in Rafah,
mostly settling in streets and tents*

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Rafah, December 6 (RHC)-- Displaced Palestinians who fled from Khan Yunis, sit outside makeshift shelters at a camp in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on December 4th.

Tens of thousands of internally displaced Palestinians have arrived in Gaza's southernmost governorate of Rafah over the past two days, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a statement early Tuesday (local time).

"Given that shelters in Rafah city have exceeded their capacity by far, most newly arriving IDPs [internally displaced persons] have settled in the streets and in empty spaces across the city, where they erected tents and makeshift shelters," the statement read.

The movement comes after the Israeli military said on Sunday it was expanding its ground operations to the whole of the Gaza Strip.

Out of about 1.8 million displaced people across Gaza, almost one million are sheltering in the 99 facilities run by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the south, including in Khan Younis and Rafah, OCHA said as it warned of the spread of diseases in shelters.

"Due to the overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions at UNRWA shelters in the south, there have been significant increases in some communicable diseases and conditions such as diarrhea, acute respiratory infections, skin infections and hygiene-related conditions like lice," the statement added. Earlier on Monday, OCHA also said it had received reports of hepatitis outbreaks in refugee shelters in the strip.

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