

WHO chief warns Gaza residents face toxic combination of disease, hunger and lack of hygiene



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus attends a press briefing at the World Health Organization

Geneva, December 27 (RHC)-- The head of the United Nations' health agency has warned of the "toxic mix of disease, hunger and lack of hygiene and sanitation" faced by people in Gaza as he called for an immediate ceasefire in Israel's war of aggression.

"Hunger weakens the body's defenses and opens the door to disease," World Health Organization director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a post on X, formerly Twitter. "Gaza is already experiencing soaring rates of infectious disease outbreaks. Diarrhoea cases among children aged under 5 are 25 times what they were before the conflict," he said. "Such illnesses can be lethal for malnourished children, more so in the absence of functioning health services. We need a ceasefire now."

Tedros' comments come amid multiple calls from UN agencies for a pause in fighting to help relief efforts in Gaza.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned that intense fighting is impeding efforts to assist people in Gaza. He called for "conditions to allow for large-scale humanitarian operations" to be "reestablished immediately."

Earlier, the World Food Program said half of Gaza's population is starving and residents are often going entire days without eating. Meanwhile, UNICEF warned Tuesday that children and families "are not safe in hospitals" in Gaza as the enclave's wider health care system teeters on the edge of collapse.

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