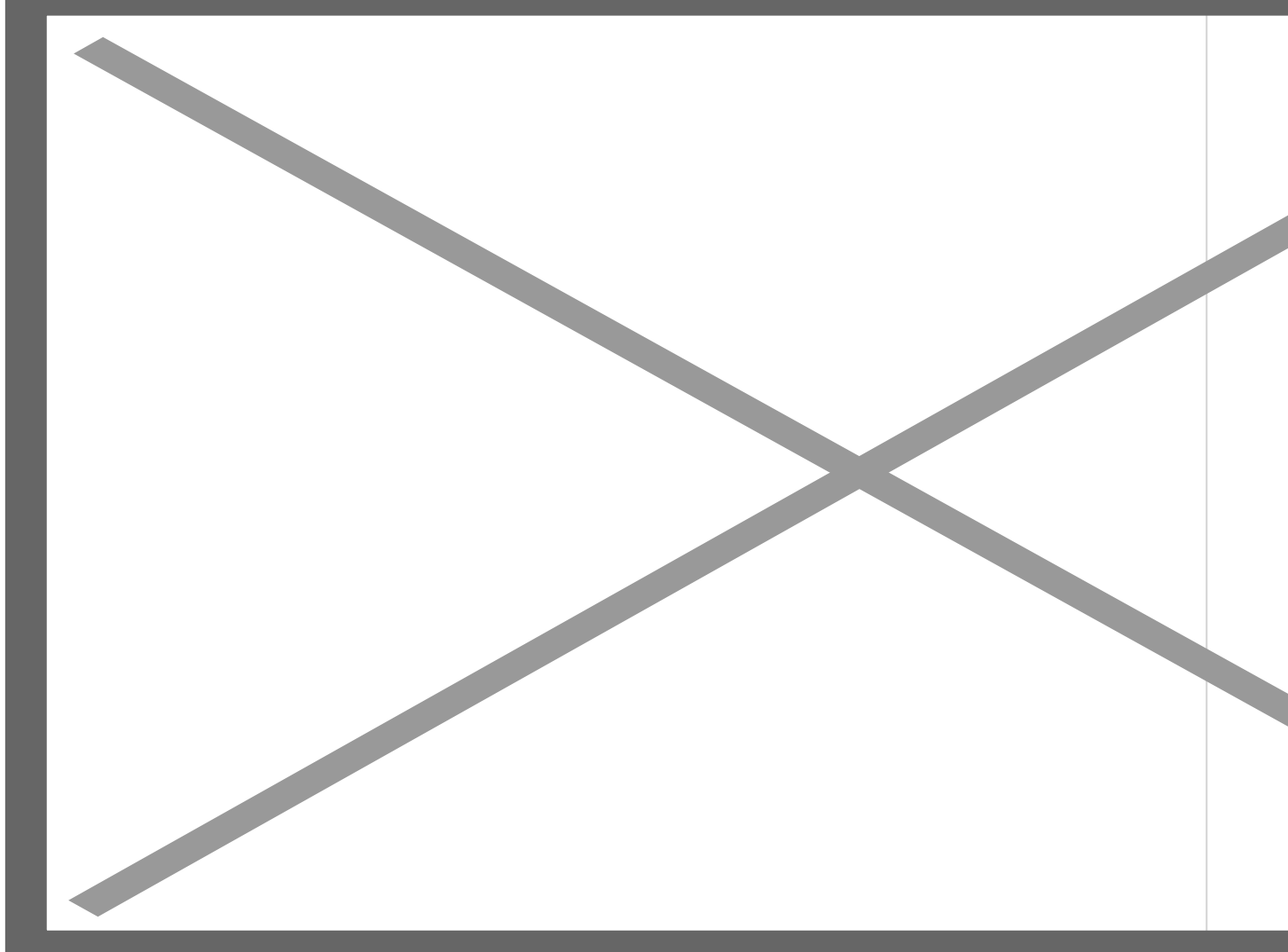


Concerns grow over new Gaza carnage amid planned Israeli assault on Rafah

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A Palestinian man hugs a little girl after identifying the bodies of relatives killed in overnight

Israeli bombardment on the southern Gaza Strip, at al-Najjar hospital in Rafah on February 8, 2024. (Photo by AFP)

Rafah, February 8 (RHC)-- Fears have mounted over a new carnage against Palestinians as the Israeli military prepares to conduct an offensive in the overcrowded Gaza city of Rafah.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday that he had ordered troops to “prepare to operate” in Rafah, home to about 1.4 million Palestinians who have been displaced due to the occupying regime’s genocidal war on the besieged Gaza Strip.

UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths said an Israeli assault on Rafah, situated in Gaza’s closed southern border with Egypt, risks “claiming the lives of even more people” and “hampering a humanitarian operation” there.

“As the war encroaches further into Rafah, I am extremely concerned about the safety and well-being of families that have endured the unthinkable in search of safety,” he added. “Their living conditions are abysmal -- they lack the basic necessities to survive, stalked by hunger, disease and death.”

Similarly, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that if Israel pushed on into Rafah, it would “exponentially increase what is already a humanitarian nightmare with untold regional consequences.” “I am especially alarmed by reports that the Israeli military intends to focus next on Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been squeezed in a desperate search for safety,” he said.

Meanwhile, Raed al-Nims of the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said, “Everyone is afraid of the expanding of the ground operation in Rafah.”

On Tuesday, the UN’s humanitarian agency OCHA warned of a “large-scale loss of civilian lives” in the case of an Israeli attack on Rafah. “Under international humanitarian law, indiscriminate bombing of densely populated areas may amount to war crimes,” OCHA spokesperson Jens Laerke told a UN briefing in the Swiss city of Geneva.

Israel waged the genocidal war on Gaza on October 7 after the Palestinian Hamas resistance group carried out a historic operation against the occupying entity in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

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