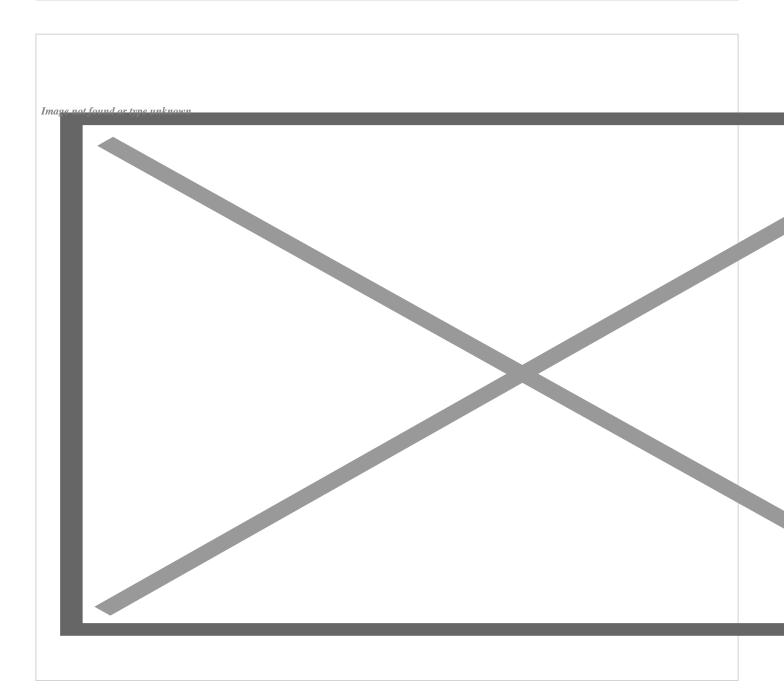# Saudi Arabia warns of catastrophe if Israel invades Rafah

Riyadh, February 12 (RHC)-- Saudi Arabia has urged the UN Security Council to urgently convene a meeting to prevent the Israeli regime from causing "an imminent humanitarian catastrophe" in Gaza's overcrowded border town of Rafah.

Four months into Israel's onslaught on Gaza, the regime's military forces have now ramped up airstrikes on Gaza's far south, where more than half of the territory's population of 2.4 million has been forcibly displaced. On Saturday, the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas warned of an imminent "massacre" by the Israeli forces in Rafah.

Later in the day, Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry warned the Israeli regime "of the extremely dangerous repercussions of storming and targeting" Rafah. "This continued violation of international law and international humanitarian law confirms the necessity of convening the Security Council urgently to prevent Israel from causing an imminent humanitarian catastrophe."

The regime's leader Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the Israeli military on Friday to prepare to evacuate civilians from Rafah ahead of a planned ground operation in the city. Aid organizations, however, say such a move will be nearly impossible to fulfill, given the scale of devastation elsewhere in Gaza, and the huge numbers of people trapped in the besieged area.

Qatar's foreign ministry also joined the chorus of condemnations, saying in a statement that the UN Security Council needs "to take urgent action to prevent the Israeli occupation forces from storming Rafah and committing genocide in the city."   It also urged the council to "provide full protection for civilians in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law."

In Germany, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, also warned against any Israeli military invasion of Rafah, saying, "The people of Gaza cannot disappear into thin air." "The need in Rafah is already unbelievable – 1.3 million people are seeking protection from the fighting in a very small space," she said, warning that an offensive by the regime's military forces on the city "would be a humanitarian catastrophe."

Egypt also warned the regime against causing further mass displacement of Palestinians by attacking the southern town of Rafah. "There is limited space and great risk in putting Rafah under further military escalation due to the growing number of Palestinians there," Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said on Saturday.

He warned that an escalation would have "dire consequences." In a report on Friday, The Wall Street Journal said Egyptian officials warned the decades-long peace treaty between Egypt and Israel could be suspended if Israel's forces enter Rafah.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) warned on Friday that Israel's bombardment of Rafah would be a "recipe for disaster." Since Israel started its war on Gaza in early October, 1.9 million people – 85 percent of Gaza's population – have been internally displaced.

The Israeli attacks have killed more than 28,000 people so far, according to the Gaza health ministry.

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