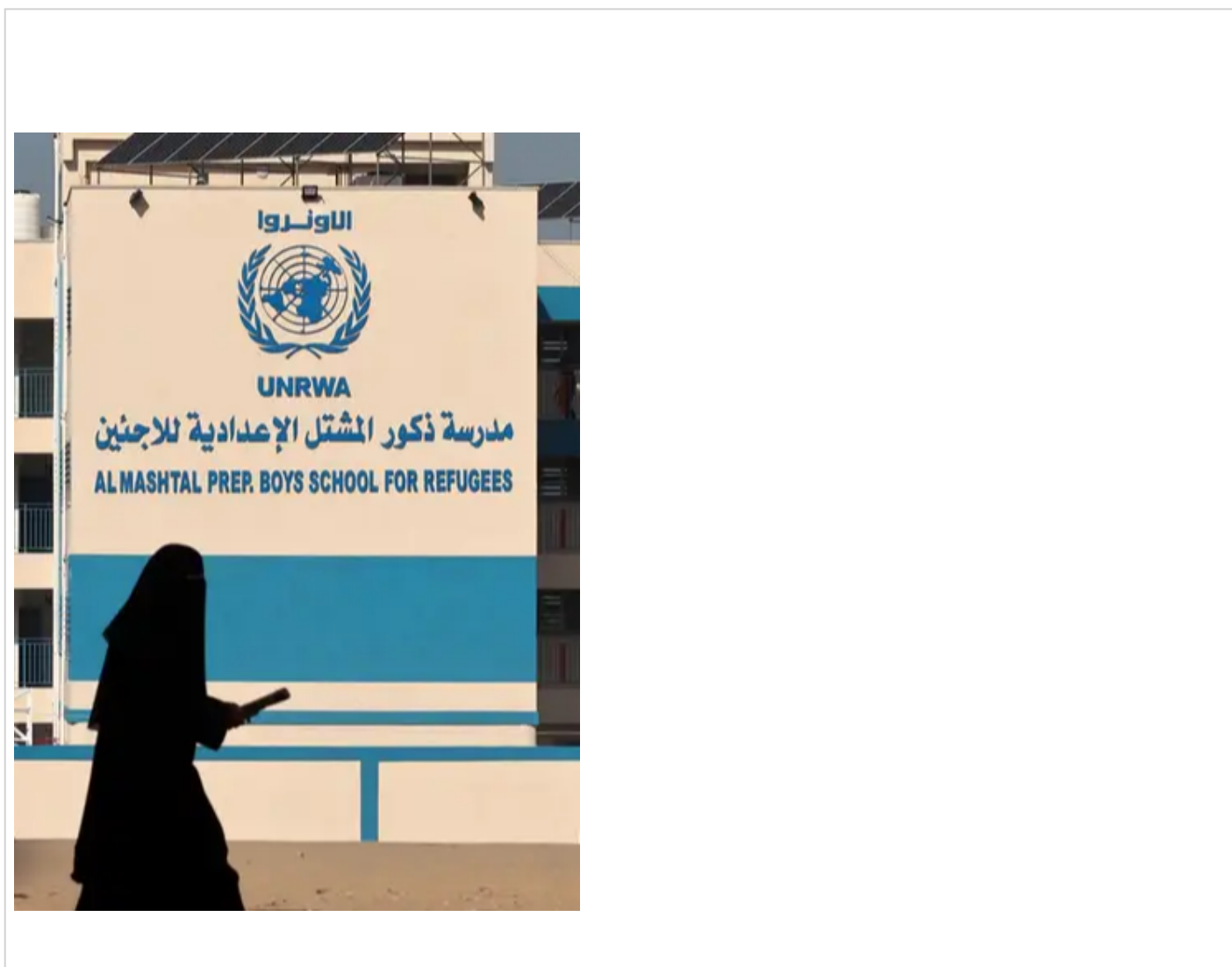


UN agency for Palestinian refugees at breaking point in Gaza



Geneva, February 23 (RHC)-- The head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees says the current situation in Gaza has limited UNRWA's ability to implement its mandate and pushed it to "breaking point."

"It is with profound regret that I must now inform you that UNRWA has reached a breaking point," Philippe Lazzarini said on Thursday in a letter to the president of the General Assembly. "The Agency's ability to fulfill the mandate given through General Assembly resolution 302 is now seriously threatened," he added.

He said due to Israel's repeated calls to dismantle UNRWA and the freezing of funding by donors, the agency's ability to continue its operations has been seriously threatened. Lazzarini noted that in just over four months in Gaza, there have been more children, more journalists, more medical personnel, and more UN staff killed than anywhere in the world during a conflict.

"I have cautioned donors and host countries that without new funding, UNRWA operations across the region will be severely compromised from March," he said. "I fear we are on the edge of a monumental disaster with grave implications for regional peace, security and human rights." He said over 150 UNRWA premises have been hit by Israeli bombardment or shelling, killing and injuring hundreds of people.

During the past months, Israel has been pushing to have UNRWA dismantled. The regime claims that some of the agency's staff were involved in the operation carried out early last October in the occupied territories by the Gaza-based resistance groups. The UN agency has emphatically rejected Israel's allegations.

Israeli forces have killed over 12,400 children in Gaza since October 7, leaving a staggering number of 600,000 children trapped in the border city of Rafah as Israeli forces are preparing to invade.

Officials with Save the Children NGO have announced that nearly 10 Palestinian children in Gaza per day have lost one or both of their legs since October. Since the start of Israel's latest brutal aggression, more than 29,300 Palestinians, most of them women and children, have been killed and about 70,000 others have been injured.

The regime has also intensified the siege of Gaza, leaving the city, home to more than 2.3 million Palestinians, without water, electricity, fuel, and internet.

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