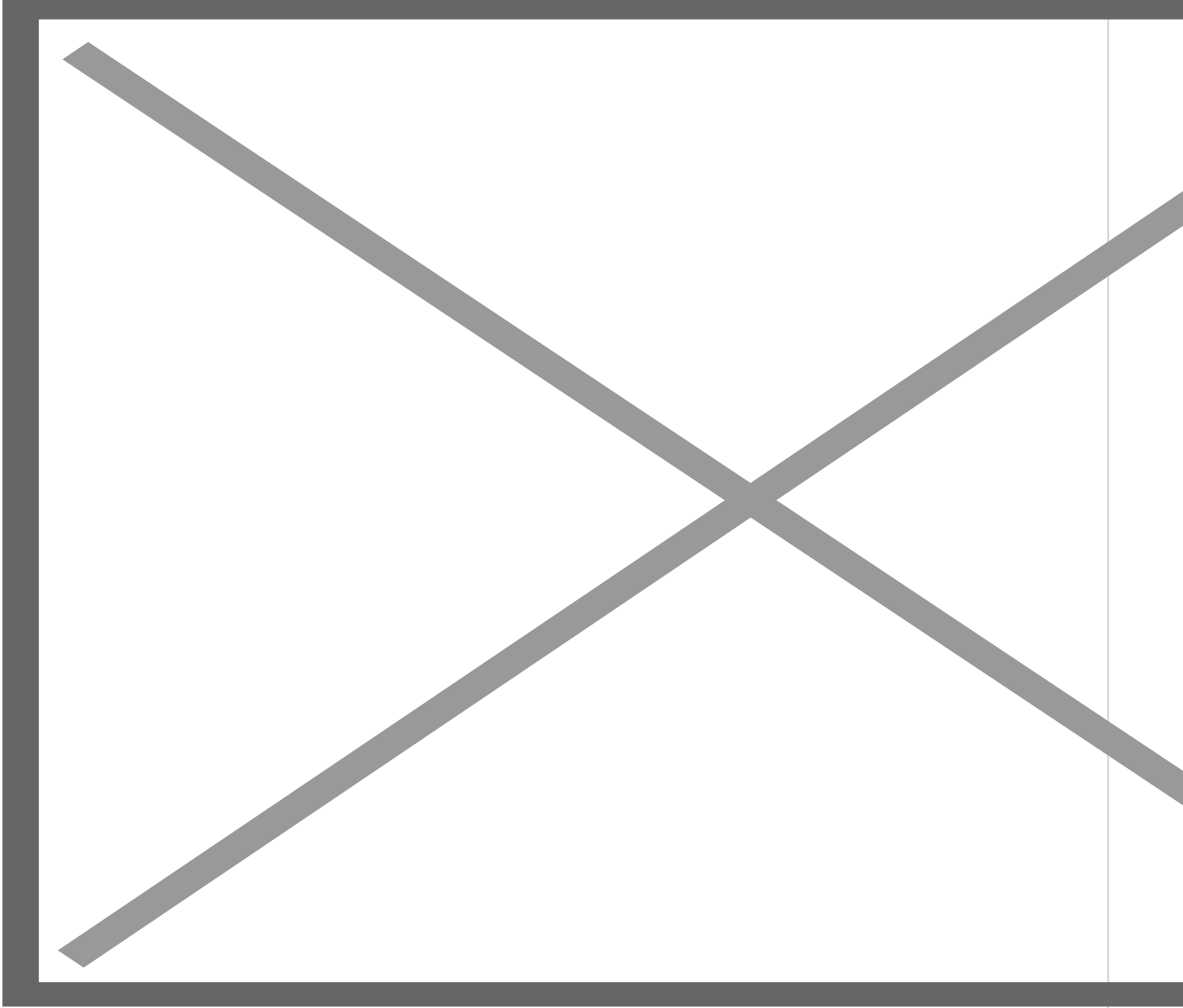


UN expert condemns Israel's dehumanization of displaced Palestinians

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Geneva, March 7 (RHC)-- Five months into Israel's war on Gaza, the Israeli government has lost all all credibility on its claims to protect civilians in the besieged strip, a UN human rights expert has said, appealing for an urgent end to the "dehumanization of displaced Palestinians."

Paula Gaviria Betancur, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), said Israel has used its evacuation orders to forcibly transfer and confine civilians in "unliveable conditions" and that any assault on Gaza's Rafah city, where some 1.4 million Palestinians are sheltering, would force people to flee to "conditions of certain death."

"Although Rafah has already come under periodic attack by Israeli forces, a full-scale ground assault would lead to unimaginable suffering," Gaviria Betancur said.

"Any evacuation order imposed on Rafah under the current conditions, with the rest of Gaza lying in ruins, would be in flagrant violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, forcing people to flee to conditions of certain death -- deprived of food, water, healthcare, and shelter," the expert said.

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