

International outrage grows over Israel's deadly attack on Gaza humanitarian aid convoy

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A Palestinian inspects a vehicle in which World Central Kitchen employees were killed in an Israeli attack [Ahmed Zakot/Reuters]

Ramallah, April 3 (RHC)-- There is growing outrage around the world after Israeli air strikes killed seven aid workers from the World Central Kitchen (WCK) charity, as the country faces increased scrutiny over its conduct in the war on Gaza.

WCK, one of two NGOs spearheading efforts to distribute aid brought by boat, said a “targeted Israeli strike” on Monday killed Australian, British, Palestinian, Polish and US-Canadian staff.

Several of Israel’s key allies have expressed outrage at the deaths and called for an independent investigation into the attack.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he had spoken to Netanyahu and conveyed that his country was “outraged” by the “completely unacceptable” death of the Australian worker, Zomi Frankcom. Albanese said he raised the importance of full accountability and transparency, and that Netanyahu had committed to a comprehensive inquiry.

Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk said the attack and Netanyahu’s subsequent reaction have caused “understandable anger.” “Mr. Prime Minister Netanyahu, Mr. Ambassador Livne the vast majority of Poles showed full solidarity with Israel after the Hamas attack,” Tusk said in a post on social media platform X. “Today you are putting this solidarity to a really hard test. The tragic attack on volunteers and your reaction arouse understandable anger.”

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the strike “unconscionable”, adding it was “an inevitable result of the way the war is being conducted”. “It demonstrates yet again the urgent need for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages, and the expansion of humanitarian aid into Gaza,” he said in a speech to the UN General Assembly.

The UN says the war has killed almost 200 aid workers, including more than 175 members of the UN staff.

Earlier, U.S. President Joe Biden said he was “outraged” and demanded that Israel’s investigation into the strikes “must be swift, it must bring accountability, and its findings must be made public”. He said Israel had not “done enough to protect civilians”.

The United States, which gives \$3.8 billion in annual military assistance to its longtime ally Israel, has so far resisted calls to condition any arms transfers amid the war in Gaza. Asked on Tuesday whether incidents like the killing of WCK staff gave the US pause in light of its recent approval of a new weapons package worth \$2.5 billion, Secretary of State Blinken said Washington had “a longstanding commitment to Israel’s security and to help it ensure its ability to defend itself.”

Canada and the United Kingdom have also condemned the attack and called for a thorough investigation.

The attack on the aid workers comes amid a growing hunger crisis in the coastal enclave, with a recent UN-backed report saying famine in northern Gaza was imminent.

Last week, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Israel to increase the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza without delay. Nevertheless, Israel continues to hinder the work of the NGOs attempting to distribute food aid, including the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, from accessing northern Gaza, where hunger is at its extreme.

Israel has accused UNRWA employees of participating in Hamas’s October 7 attacks, leading to a host of countries suspending funding to the agency. However, Israel has yet to provide evidence to support its claim, and several donors, including the European Union, Canada and Australia, have resumed funding.

An investigation by Al Jazeera’s Sanad Verification Agency found that the Israeli army attacks on the convoy were intentional, based on research using open-source information, witness testimonies, and

images from the site.

At least 32,916 people have been killed, mostly women and children, in the Israeli assault on Gaza since October 7, according to Palestinian authorities.

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