

*Fears mount over Rafah invasion
as Israel vows to go ahead with
military attack*

The Israeli army is preparing a ground attack on Rafah, a designated "safe zone" in the southernmost part of Gaza. More than 1.4 million Palestinians are sheltering in the 64sq km (25sq miles) area near the border with Egypt under dire conditions.



Geneva, May 2 (RHC)-- UNICEF is warning an Israeli ground attack on Rafah would bring "catastrophe on top of catastrophe." The United Nations agency estimates there are 600,000 Palestinian children crammed into the southern city and that many would be killed or wounded in an invasion of Rafah.

On Tuesday, Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich called for the "total annihilation" of Rafah and other Gaza cities. While negotiations continue over a temporary ceasefire, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken Wednesday that Israel will refuse to end its assault on Gaza as part of any deal with Hamas to free the hostages.

This comes as aid deliveries for Gaza continue to come under attack. Jordan's Foreign Ministry has accused Israeli settlers of attacking two Jordanian aid convoys carrying food, flour and other aid.

Meanwhile, humanitarian aid has passed through the Erez crossing for the first time since October 7th, but aid groups say Israel must allow in far more aid as Gaza faces famine.

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