

UNRWA warns of soaring rates of anxiety and depression in Gaza amid Israel's genocidal war



Palestinians try to put out a fire at the site of an Israeli strike on a college sheltering displaced

people in the northern Gaza Strip on September 3, 2024. (Photo by Reuters)

Gaza City, September 7 (RHC)-- The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) says eleven months of intense Israeli ground and airstrikes against Palestinians in Gaza have aggravated mental health and psychosocial support needs in the besieged territory.

“Since October 2023, 2.1 million Palestinians living in Gaza have witnessed or experienced an unprecedented number of violent and traumatic events, including direct violence, repeated displacement, and the loss of loved ones, homes, and belongings,” the world body said in a statement issued over the weekend.

“Such experiences have increased anxiety, depression, and other mental health and psychosocial problems. Extensive destruction of the healthcare system prevents even basic treatment of these conditions in the immediate and long term,” it added.

The UN agency noted that “both food security and nutrition clusters continue to experience access challenges; in August more than one million people did not receive any food rations in southern and central Gaza.”

It further elaborated that “continuous displacement is disrupting access to nutrition sites and distribution cycles, hindering the humanitarian partners’ ability to maintain consistent service delivery.”

Meanwhile, UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini has reiterated his demand for a complete ceasefire in Gaza. “No one can take this any longer,” he wrote in a post published on the social media platform X on Saturday. “Humanity must prevail.”

Israel has repeatedly equated UNRWA staff with members of the Palestinian Hamas resistance group in efforts to discredit them, providing no proof of the claims, while lobbying hard to have UNRWA closed as it is the only UN agency to have a specific mandate to look after the basic needs of Palestinian refugees.

The Tel Aviv regime authorities argue that if the agency no longer exists, then the refugee issue must no longer exist, and the legitimate right for Palestinian refugees to return to their land will be unnecessary.

Israel launched its atrocious onslaught against the Gaza Strip, targeting hospitals, residences, and houses of worship since Palestinian resistance movements launched a surprise attack, dubbed Operation al-Aqsa Storm, against the usurping regime on October 7th last year.

At least 40,939 Palestinians have been killed, most of them women and children. Another 94,616 individuals have sustained injuries as well.

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