

*UN High Commissioner for Human Rights condemns  
inconceivable toll of human  
suffering in Gaza due to Israel's  
genocidal war of aggression*

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United Nations, September 21 (RHC)-- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk addressed the United Nations Security Council on the “tragic situation” unfolding in the Middle East, noting the “catastrophic” humanitarian situation in Gaza.

The UN rights chief also emphasized that Israel's attacks on Hezbollah devices violated international law and could be a war crime.

Turk said it was "difficult to conceive" how the attacks on Hezbollah's communications devices "could possibly conform with the key principles of distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack, under international humanitarian law."

He added that he was "appalled" by the attacks using communication devices.

"This has unleashed widespread fear, panic and horror among people in Lebanon, already suffering in an increasingly volatile situation since October 2023 and crumbling under a severe and longstanding economic crisis. This cannot be the new normal," he said.

In other testimony before the Security Council, a senior United Nations official told the Council that further violence between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon risked igniting a far more damaging conflict.

"We risk seeing a conflagration that could dwarf even the devastation and suffering witnessed so far," UN political affairs chief Rosemary DiCarlo told the 15-member council on Friday, which met about attacks this week on Hezbollah.

"It is not too late to avoid such folly. There is still room for diplomacy," she said. "I also strongly urge member states with influence over the parties to leverage it now."

As its war in Gaza nears one year old, Israel killed at least 14 people and wounded 66 in an air raid on the Lebanese capital Beirut on Friday.

The Israeli military claimed that a top Hezbollah commander and other senior figures in the Lebanese movement were among the dead, and pledged to conduct a new military campaign until it secures the area around the Lebanese border.

Israel's air raid followed two days of attacks in which Hezbollah pagers and walkie-talkies exploded, killing 37 people and wounding thousands. Those attacks were widely believed to have been carried out by Israel, which has neither confirmed nor denied its involvement.

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