

UN secretary-general shocked at fresh Israeli massacre in Gaza



United Nations, March 19 (RHC)-- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed shock over the massacre of hundreds in indiscriminate Israeli airstrikes on Gaza on Tuesday, which have drawn widespread denunciation from the global community.

"The secretary-general is shocked by the Israeli airstrikes in Gaza," UN spokesman Rolando Gomez said during a press briefing in Geneva.

The surprise airstrikes, which killed at least 413 people, shattered a ceasefire that had been in place since January, raising fears of fully reigniting the 17-month-long genocidal onslaught on Gaza.

Gomez added that the UN chief "appeals for the ceasefire to be respected, for unimpeded humanitarian assistance to be re-established, and for the remaining hostages to be released unconditionally."

Other UN agencies and international humanitarian organizations also condemned the strikes.

Nightmare must end

UN rights chief Volker Turk expressed horror at the attacks, saying they will "add tragedy onto tragedy." "This nightmare must end immediately," Turk emphasized, adding that "the last 18 months of violence have made abundantly clear that there is no military path out of this crisis."

"The only way forward is a political settlement, in line with international law. Israel's resort to yet more military force will only heap further misery upon a Palestinian population already suffering catastrophic conditions," he concluded.

Fueling hell on earth

Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, warned that resuming hostilities would fuel "hell on Earth." "Awful scenes of civilians killed, among them children, followed waves of heavy bombardment from Israeli forces overnight," the UNRWA chief posted on X.

"Fuelling 'hell on Earth' by resuming the war will only bring more despair and suffering. A return to the ceasefire is a must."

Nightmare scenario materializing

Rosalia Bollen, a UNICEF spokeswoman based in Gaza, described the harrowing impact of the strikes. "People were woken up very abruptly by very loud explosions in the middle of the night as Israel launched airstrikes across the Gaza Strip early Tuesday," she said.

"The ground was trembling," Bollen noted, adding, "This nightmare scenario has been on everyone's mind. It's just heartbreaking that it is materializing right now, shattering the last piece of hope that people had."

She called for the immediate reinstatement of the ceasefire and the lifting of the blockade on aid supplies without delay.

Horrified by strikes

UN Human Rights spokesperson Thameen Al Kheetan said he was "horrified" by Israel's airstrikes. Speaking at the daily UN press briefing in Geneva, Al Kheetan asked "all states with influence to do all in their power to achieve peace and avoid further suffering of civilians."

"Israel's resort to yet more military force will only heap further misery upon a Palestinian population already suffering catastrophic conditions. This nightmare must end immediately," he said.

Death sentence for Gaza's children

Save the Children strongly condemned the renewed violence, stating the international community "cannot turn a blind eye as children in Gaza once again are at risk of being killed, maimed, displaced, starved, and

left even more vulnerable to disease and the elements."

Rachael Cummings, the organization's humanitarian director in central Gaza's Deir el-Balah, described the collapse of the ceasefire as "nothing short of a death sentence for Gaza's children."

The denial of aid during the holy month of Ramadan, she said, constitutes "a grave violation against children." "We demand an immediate and definitive ceasefire and restrictions on humanitarian aid to be immediately lifted," Cummings added.

"Anything less is a catastrophic failure to uphold international humanitarian law and protect the most vulnerable." Dozens of children were among the over 400 victims killed in the airstrikes.

Hamas said that Essam al-Dalis, the head of its government in Gaza, was among several officials killed. The Red Cross reported that many medical facilities in Gaza were "overwhelmed" by the influx of casualties, while the World Health Organization warned of critical shortages of medicines.

Israel killed 360,000 Palestinians in Gaza; real toll 'severely under-reported': Renowned American attorney

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A renowned American attorney says the Israeli military has killed at least 360,000 people in its 15-month-long genocidal war on Gaza.

Medical charity Doctors Without Borders also highlighted the dire situation, stating that its teams had received large numbers of wounded patients at their field hospital, clinic, and at the Nasser Hospital. Israeli officials stated that their attacks were open-ended and expected to escalate further.

The Gaza truce largely halted more than 15 months of Israeli genocide in Gaza but its future is in limbo after Israel refused to enter talks on the second phase of the ceasefire after the first one ended in early March.

Hamas said Israel was "deciding to overturn the ceasefire agreement," describing it as "a decision to sacrifice the occupation's prisoners and impose a death sentence on them."

Sami Abu Zuhri, a senior leader, said the strikes aimed to "undermine the ceasefire agreement and attempt to impose a surrender agreement, written in the blood of Gaza."

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