

UN agencies express alarm at scale of Israeli assault on Jenin

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Palestinians inspect shops burned and destroyed by Israeli forces in the middle of the Jenin refugee camp on July 4, 2023. (Photo by Getty Images)

United Nations, July 6 (RHC)-- UN aid agencies have voiced alarm at the scale of the ongoing deadly Israeli military ground and aerial attacks on the occupied West Bank town of Jenin, where a dozen

Palestinians have been killed over the past two days.

"We are alarmed at the scale of air and ground operations that are taking place in Jenin in the occupied West Bank, and air strikes hitting a densely populated refugee camp," Vanessa Huguenin, a spokesperson for the UN humanitarian office, told a briefing on Tuesday.

At least 12 Palestinians have been killed in Jenin and one in Ramallah as the regime's largest assault in decades in the occupied West Bank continued for a second day on Tuesday. Huguenin said at least three minors were among those killed by Israeli attacks. She added that damage to infrastructure caused by air strikes has cut off most of the water and electricity at the camp.

The assault that involved drone strikes and hundreds of troops prompted the evacuation of thousands of people from a refugee camp. The Red Cross, which has evacuated around 3,000 people from the area, said it was "extremely concerned by the alarming intensification of armed violence" in Jenin.

The World Health Organization and the international medical charity, Doctors Without Borders, known as MSF, raised concerns about restrictions on medical access.

"Attacks against healthcare including prevention of access to persons injured are extremely concerning," said WHO spokesperson Christian Lindmeier, adding that restrictions put in place by Israeli forces meant first responders could not reach those critically injured within the camp. MSF said that military bulldozers had destroyed roads leading to the camp, making it nearly impossible for ambulances to reach patients.

"Palestinian paramedics have been forced to proceed on foot, in an area with active gunfire and drone strikes," its diplomatic mission in Geneva said in a statement. "Israel ensures that humanitarian assistance is provided and does not apply any limitation on access for medical staff, except in places where the lives of medical staff is at risk due to exchanges of fire," the MSF added.

The Arab League permanent members have held an emergency meeting in the Egyptian capital Cairo to discuss the deadly large-scale Israeli army attacks in Jenin.

The permanent representative of Egypt in the Arab League, Mohamed Moustafa, said on Tuesday, "Once again, (we're witnessing) another crime in which valuable Palestinian blood has been shed."

Additionally, the Palestinian representative in the league, Mohannad Aklouk, said, "If we, or anyone in this world, think that condemnation and calls alone will be enough to end the Israeli colonial occupational project, then they're either delusional or incapable (of doing anything about the matter)."

The Palestinian ambassador to the league earlier said the meeting would "discuss ways of effective action at the Arab and international levels to stop this Israeli aggression, hold its perpetrators accountable and request protection."

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has called on the international community to "take serious action" as Gaza factions organize rallies to express solidarity with the people of Jenin. Palestinian leaders have called Israel's largest military raids in Jenin in 20 years a "new war crime."

A PA spokesman President Mahmoud Abbas on Monday called on the international community to "break its shameful silence and take serious action." "What the Israeli occupation regime is doing in the city of Jenin and its camp is a new war crime against our defenceless people," Nabil Abu Rudeineh said in a statement.

"The Palestinian people will not surrender or raise the white flag but will remain steadfast on their land in the face of this brutal aggression until the occupation is defeated and freedom is achieved," he added.

The Israeli military has for a second day in a row been carrying out a major attack in the northern West Bank city of Jenin and its refugee camp. According to Israeli military sources, more than 1,000 troops were involved in the Jenin attack, in which air fire was used by the occupation forces in the occupied West Bank for the first time since the Second Intifada.

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