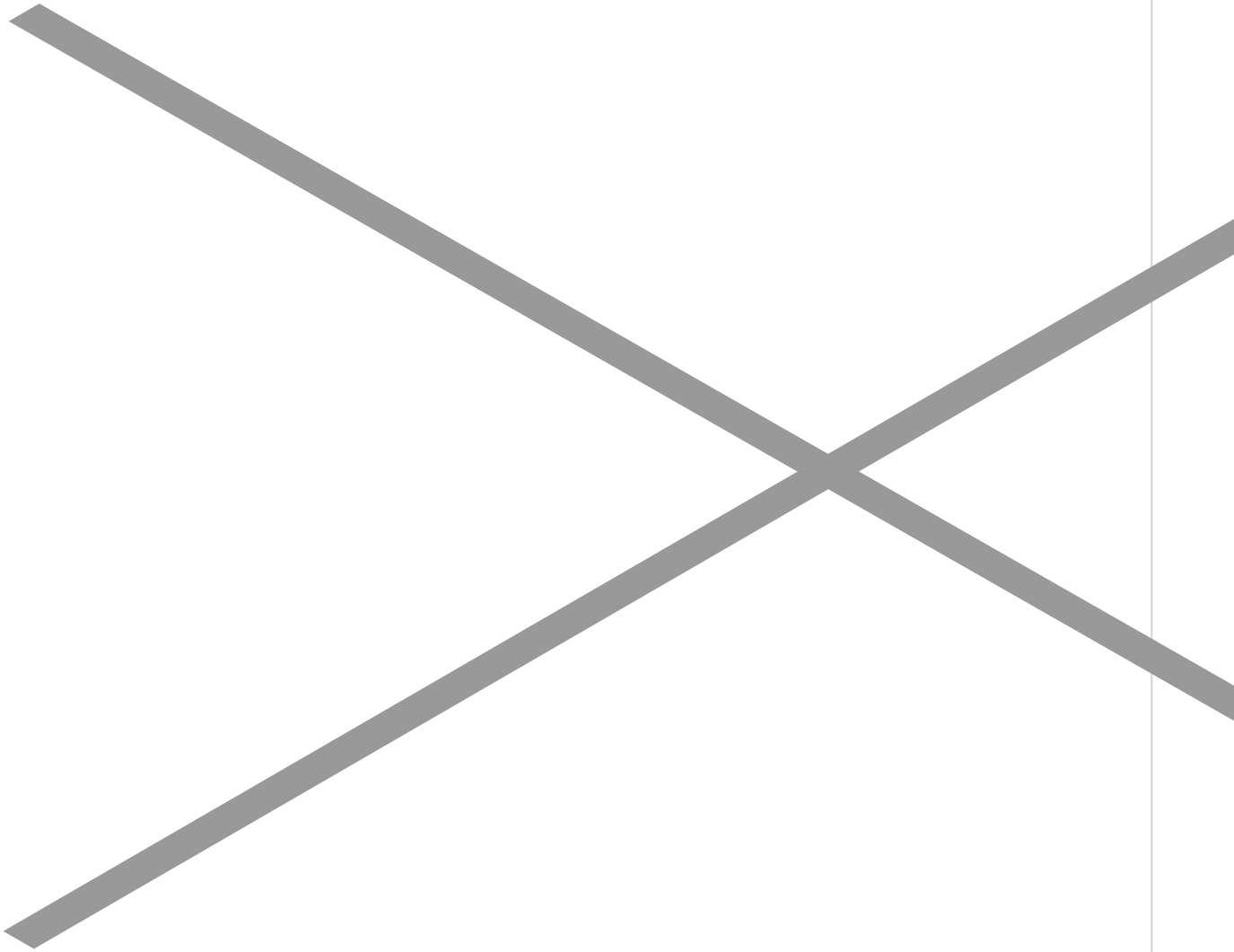


UN agency reports 900 Palestinian homes damaged in Israeli aggression on Jenin

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United Nations, July 12 (RHC)-- The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) says some 900 Palestinian houses have been damaged and many of them have become uninhabitable in the wake of the Israeli military's two-day raid on the Jenin refugee camp that killed at least 12 Palestinians and wounded dozens more.

Adnan Abu Hasna, the spokesman for the UN agency, said on Tuesday that his fellow colleagues are still documenting the damage caused inside the camp during the Israeli onslaught. The UNRWA's priority is to help restore some sense of normality by resuming its services like education, healthcare and sanitation, he added. "The other urgent priority is to provide cash assistance to families who were displaced from their homes, and help them pay for rent and rehabilitate their residences," Abu Hasna noted.

Last week, a group of UN experts said Israel's military raids targeting the Jenin refugee camp in the northern part of the occupied West Bank "may prima facie constitute a war crime." "Israeli forces' operations in the occupied West Bank, killing and seriously injuring the occupied population, destroying their homes and infrastructure, and arbitrarily displacing thousands, amount to egregious violations of international law and standards on the use of force and may constitute a war crime," the experts said in a statement.

A UN delegation expressed shock at the level of destruction by Israel's largest operation in Jenin in two decades. UN chief Antonio Guterres also said that "there was an excessive force used by Israeli forces" during the Jenin raid. Guterres also said Israeli forces had prevented the injured from receiving medical care and stopped humanitarian workers from reaching those in need.

Meanwhile, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the State of Palestine (OHCHR) has denounced the expulsion of a Palestinian family from their home in the occupied Old City of al-Quds.

It said that the development sheds light on discriminatory forced evictions and the threat of forcible transfer that hangs over more than a thousand Palestinians living in the area. "The Ghaith-Sub Laban family was forcibly evicted from their home by Israeli police in the Old City of Jerusalem (al-Quds) early this morning. Twelve Israeli activists, seven women and five men, protesting the eviction were arrested. Concerted efforts to evict Palestinians from their homes in the Occupied East Jerusalem may amount to forcible transfer. Forcible transfer is a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions and a war crime," Ajith Sunghay, the head of the office of OHCHR in the occupied Palestinian territories, said on Tuesday.

He added that the eviction follows an Israeli court order suggesting that the regime's courts apply discriminatory laws in violation of international human rights and humanitarian principles. "Israel must repeal these laws that have facilitated and allowed settler organizations to target Palestinians such as Nora Ghaith and Mustafa Sub Laban, and end the practice of forced evictions directed at Palestinians in East Jerusalem," Sunghay emphasized.

Late last month, Palestinian civil society and rights groups released a statement, blasting Israel's efforts to displace the Ghaith-Sub Laban family, who had lived in their home for 70 years. They termed the eviction as "forcible transfer, which constitutes both a war crime and a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute."

The statement said the ongoing expulsions of Palestinians are a "result of the international community's deliberate failure and unwillingness to take effective and meaningful measures to end Israel's illegal occupation, and settler-colonial apartheid regime."

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