

*Tens of thousands of Gaza residents take refuge in UN schools from Israel air raids*

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Gaza City, October 10 (RHC)-- Since the Israeli raids on the Gaza Strip began on Saturday, more than 73,000 Palestinian residents living along the eastern regions near the Israeli frontier have left their homes to take shelter in United Nations refugee agency schools.

According to Adnan Abu Hasna, a media spokesman for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), people are arriving from all parts of the Gaza Strip, as the area faces intense aerial bombardment.

"Residents have taken refuge in 64 schools, with more coming, as they believe that they are the safest places in the Gaza Strip because they are affiliated with the United Nations," Abu Hasna said. At the

schools and other UN institutions in Gaza, Abu Hasna explained, Palestinians can receive healthcare, nutritional and psychological services.

“Some of the elderly are medical cases that need follow-up in light of the current tension, and children need psychological and social counsellors in order to overcome this difficult stage they have lived through,” he said.

Families in Gaza are fleeing to the UNRWA schools after an unprecedented attack by Hamas fighters caught the Israeli military establishment by surprise. Members of Hamas’s armed wing flew into Israeli military sites and towns using motorised paragliders, while others broke through the Israeli fence.

The Israeli government subsequently declared war on Gaza on Sunday. About 800 Israelis have been killed, with more than 2,000 others wounded.

On Monday, Israel’s Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said a total siege will be imposed on Gaza, with no food, electricity, water or fuel allowed in. “We are fighting against human animals, and we are acting accordingly,” Gallant said in his remarks.

According to the Israeli army, 100,000 reserve troops have amassed near Gaza, where Palestinian fighters say they are holding 130 people captive.

Israeli attacks on Gaza have killed more than 500 Palestinians, including 91 children.

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