

UN official slams Israel's four-hour humanitarian pause in Gaza as highly cynical

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Francesca Albanese delivers a speech during the UN Forum on the Question of Palestine at the United Nations Trusteeship Council Chamber in New York [Atilgan Ozdil/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images]

United Nations, November 11 (RHC)-- Francesca Albanese, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, has strongly criticised Israel's proposal to implement a daily four-hour "humanitarian pause" in military operations in northern Gaza, allowing civilians to move to the south, describing it as "highly cynical and inhumane."

“There have been continuous bombings, 6,000 bombs every week on the Gaza Strip, on this tiny piece of land where people are trapped and the destruction is massive. There won't be any way back after what Israel is doing to the Gaza Strip,” Albanese said on Friday.

“So four hours ceasefire, yes, to let people breathe and to remember what is the sound of life without bombing before starting bombing them again. It's very cynical and cruel.”

It comes after the Israeli military and the White House announced yesterday that Israel has agreed to allow daily four-hour-long pauses in the northern Gaza Strip in order for Palestinians to flee.

According to the United States' National Security Council spokesman, John Kirby, said: “We've been told by the Israelis that there will be no military operations in these areas over the duration of the pause, and that this process is starting today.” He called the pauses a positive “first step” in easing Gaza's humanitarian crisis, marking “steps in the right direction.”

The agreement to implement the pauses, the timings of which would reportedly be announced by Israel three hours prior, came after “an awful lot of engagement by the [President Joe Biden] administration to try to make sure that humanitarian assistance could get in and people could get out safely”, Kirby said.

Israel has bombarded Gaza repeatedly in response to a cross-border Hamas raid on southern Israel on 7 October, in which gunmen killed 1,400 people and took about 240 hostages. Palestinian officials said 10,812 Gaza residents had been killed as of Thursday, about 40 per cent of them children. Critics say calls should insist on a ceasefire, not a “pause” in the killing.

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