

Israeli forces kill over 100 United Nations staff in Gaza

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United Nations, November 11 (RHC)-- The United Nations Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA) says more than 100 employees have been killed since the Israeli regime launched its relentless war on the Gaza Strip more than a month ago.

The UN agency said in a statement on Friday that “over 100 UNRWA colleagues confirmed killed in 1 month.”

The agency said some of them were killed while queuing for bread and others died with their families in their homes as Israel's aerial and ground assault on the densely populated Gaza continued after a surprise offensive by Hamas on October 7th.

“Parents, teachers, nurses, doctors, support staff. UNRWA is mourning,” said UNRWA's head Philippe Lazzarini.

Israel has killed more than 11,000 civilians in Gaza since then, mostly women, children and the elderly.

Speaking at a Friday press conference in Amman, Jordan, UN's human rights chief Volker Turk said the killing of UN staff was "unprecedented, outrageous and deeply heartbreaking." UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths said he was "heartbroken by this deeply tragic news."

"These colleagues were flames of hope and humanity," he said. "Our thoughts remain with their families and all our brave UNRWA colleagues."

Juliette Touma, Director of Communications at UNRWA said those who were killed "represent what is happening to the people of Gaza. They happen to work for the UN." "They and every other civilian in the Gaza Strip...should never have been killed."

Aid workers enjoy protection under international humanitarian law but experts cite few precedents for such cases going to trial, with concerns about ensuring future access for aid groups and difficulty proving intent cited as impediments.

UNRWA, which stands for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, was established in 1949 following the mass displacement of Palestinians from their land by Israel during the Nakba, or the catastrophe. UNRWA provides public services such as schools, health care and aid to Palestinian refugees.

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