

Tens of thousands flee on foot as UN says north of Gaza is hell on earth

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Gaza City, November 13 (RHC)-- Tens of thousands of Palestinians have fled northern Gaza on foot as Israeli forces push deeper into dense urban neighborhoods and attack hospitals where residents have been sheltering.

Gaza City has been the focus of Israel's ground offensive, with fierce battles and air raids reported on Friday in densely populated areas.

A spokesperson for the Israeli army said on Friday more than 100,000 Palestinians have moved from the north to the south of Gaza in the last two days.

A never-ending stream of people including many children, the wounded, and the elderly were seen moving south, mostly on foot, carrying only small backpacks and essential belongings.

Israel has repeatedly targeted and attacked civilians who are making their way to the south. "The fighting in the urban areas of the Gaza Strip has reached critical levels, as the Israeli occupation forces are pushing forward and deeper," Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum reported from Khan Younis.

"Now the Israeli troops are stationed in Tel Al-Hawa neighbourhood, in Al-Shati refugee camp and even in the eastern areas of Gaza as they are trying to infiltrate more into the central and to main centres of Gaza City. They are only one kilometre [0.6 miles] away from Al-Shifa Hospital."

The UN's humanitarian office said on Friday it is unable to deliver aid trucks to the north of Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of people still reside. "If there is a hell on earth, it is the north of Gaza," Jens Laerke, spokesman for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), told reporters in Geneva.

Also on Friday, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk, called for an investigation into what he called Israel's use of "high-impact explosive weapons" in Gaza. He said the use of such weapons was causing indiscriminate destruction in the besieged Palestinian enclave.

The UN said earlier this week that at least 1.5 million of Gaza's 2.3 million residents have fled their homes since the war began. More than 11,000 Palestinians, including 4,506 children, have been killed in Gaza since Israel started pounding the enclave in the wake of the October 7 Hamas attack that Israel says left more than 1,400 dead, mostly civilians.

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