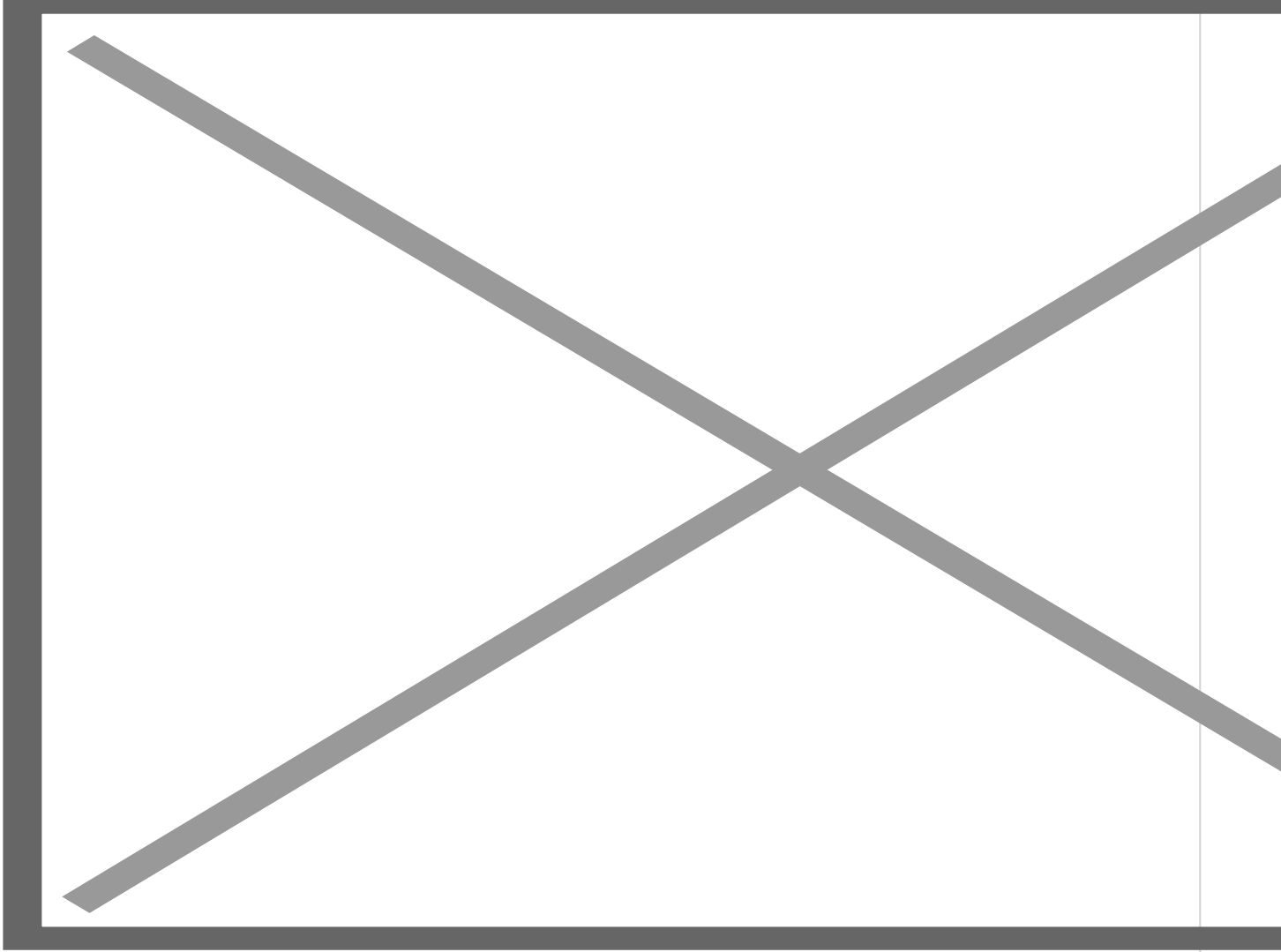


*UN secretary-general says
Palestinians going through one of
the darkest chapters of their
history*

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United Nations, November 30 (RHC)-- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has warned that the October 7th attacks cannot be an excuse for Israel's collective punishment of Palestinian civilians in the war-torn Gaza Strip. In a statement issued for the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Guterres said the October 7th attack "cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people."

The UN chief added that Palestinians were going through "one of the darkest chapters" of their history. He reiterated his call for a "long-term" ceasefire and the release of captives held by the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas and Palestinian prisoners languishing in Israeli prisons.

He called for "unrestricted access to lifesaving aid, the release of all hostages, the protection of civilians, and an end to violations of international humanitarian law."

The temporary ceasefire has given Palestinians in the besieged territory a brief respite from Israel's 7-week brutal war.

Mediator Qatar said on Monday that the initial four-day truce had been extended by two days, continuing a pause in seven weeks of warfare that has killed thousands and laid waste to the besieged Palestinian enclave. So far, under the truce deal, Hamas has released a total of 69 captives while Israel has freed 150 Palestinian detainees.

Guterres described an extended truce between Israel and the Hamas movement on Monday as "a glimpse of hope and humanity," but warned it was not enough time to meet the aid needs of the Gaza Strip. The United Nations has been delivering some humanitarian aid to Gaza via the Rafah border crossing from Egypt. The world body also wants to be able to use the Kerem Shalom border crossing, controlled by Israel.

An EU commissioner said that Israeli restrictions on fuel supplies to Gaza are affecting aid deliveries and humanitarian access. "We are calling for the increase of fuel supplies to the strip," Janez Lenarcic said in Brussels. "The humanitarian access should be based on the needs and not on some restrictions."

Lenarcic said aid deliveries to Gaza were encountering two issues: the screening process for trucks at the Rafah crossing and the restrictions on fuel. "The quantities that are entering daily are not enough," he said.

As the ceasefire enters its fifth day, the UN has reported that civilians in the Gaza Strip are finally receiving humanitarian aid after Israel has besieged the Strip, cutting off access to essential supplies including electricity, and fuel. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that the aid comprises pre-packaged meals, water for consumption, shelter items like tents and blankets, and medicinal supplies.

Meanwhile, the Israeli regime's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to resume the Israeli offensive against Gaza as soon as the truce ends. Netanyahu's cabinet announced that the army is already preparing to resume hostilities in the Gaza Strip once the ceasefire is over.

The Israeli cabinet was expected to vote on a plan that would halt Israel's offensive in Gaza for several days. Israel has also launched artillery attacks on the besieged Gaza Strip in violation of an extended truce deal with the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas.

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Israeli tanks fired at Sheikh Radwan, a district northwest of Gaza City. The regime also launched artillery attacks on the besieged territory. Footage also showed smoke billowing into the sky over the Palestinian

territory. The Gaza health ministry meanwhile says the regime keeps denying hospitals fuel for their generators in violation of the truce.

Israeli onslaught on Gaza has brought almost all vital infrastructure in the besieged strip to a standstill.

The four-day ceasefire came into effect on Friday after nearly seven weeks of Israel's constant bombardment of Gaza. The relentless airstrikes took the lives of more than 15,500 Palestinians, mostly women and children. Gaza officials say 7,000 people remain unaccounted for.

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