

UN agency says 40 percent of Gaza's population at risk of famine

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Geneva, December 30 (RHC)-- The United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees has warned that not enough aid is entering besieged Gaza, leaving 40 percent of its population "at risk of famine" amid Israeli curbs on entry of much-needed aid trucks to enter the enclave.

The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) on Thursday renewed its warning that the besieged enclave is “grappling with catastrophic hunger”, as it reiterated calls for a “humanitarian ceasefire” as non-stop Israeli bombs rained from the north to the southern part of the enclave.

“Every day is a struggle for survival, finding food and finding water,” Thomas White, director of UNRWA affairs in Gaza was quoted as saying on X, formerly known as Twitter. “The reality is, we need more aid. The only remaining hope is a humanitarian ceasefire,” the agency said on X.

A “total siege” imposed by Israel since the war began on October 7, and following years of crippling blockade, has deprived Palestinians in Gaza of food, water, fuel and medicine. The severe shortages have only been sporadically eased by humanitarian aid convoys entering primarily via Egypt.

Last week, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution on more aid for Gaza after days of delays, but aid groups and rights advocates described the resolution as “woefully insufficient” and “nearly meaningless”.

The latest stark warning by the UN agency on the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza came as Israeli troops on Thursday continued to heavily bombard the territory, with the centre of fierce combat with Hamas fighters steadily moving south – where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians are sheltering.

Air and artillery attacks and house-to-house fighting have become heaviest in the southern city of Khan Younis. Ashraf al-Qudra, spokesman for the Health Ministry in Gaza, reported more than 200 deaths “including entire families” over the past 24 hours in attacks across the territory.

More than 80 percent’s of Gaza’s 2.4 million people have been driven from their homes, the UN says, and many now live in cramped shelters or makeshift tents in the far south, in and around the city of Rafah near the Egyptian border.

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