

Cold, rainy weather making war-racked Gaza completely uninhabitable

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Children spend their time in front of makeshift tents during the cold weather as Palestinians who fled their homes take shelter in the city of Rafah. [Abed Zagout/Anadolu Agency]

Geneva, January 27 (RHC)-- Relentless Israeli attacks against infrastructure in Gaza and cold weather are making the Palestinian enclave "completely uninhabitable", the United Nations human rights office (OHCHR) has warned. "I fear that many more civilians will die," Ajith Sunghay, the head of the OHCHR for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, said on Friday.

“The continued attacks on specially protected facilities, such as hospitals, will kill civilians, and there will be a further, massive impact on access to health care, safety and security in general of Palestinians.”

Sunghay said his office was also “very worried about the impact of the rainy, cold weather” which was “entirely predictable” at this time of the year. He said the weather “risks making an already unsanitary situation completely uninhabitable for the people. Most have no warm clothes or blankets.”

Most Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have been internally displaced by Israeli attacks, and many are crammed into overcrowded shelters where they are threatened by the worsening weather, diseases and an acute shortages of food, water and medicine.

Sunghay said it would be “disastrous” if the bombardment or the street-to-street fight taking place in Khan Younis moved further south to Rafah, where some 1.3 million people are now massed in the town bordering Egypt in an attempt to evade the Israeli assault.

Meanwhile, Georgios Petropoulos, the director of the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs in Gaza, told Al Jazeera the months-long war has left 2.2 million people at risk of starvation in the Strip. “Everyone in Gaza needs aid now and the war must stop,” he said.

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