

UN chief says guns should be silenced in Gaza to honor holy Ramadan

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A Palestinian boy stands outside his home next to a damaged UN car in Rafah in the southern

Gaza Strip on March 4, 2024. (AFP)

United Nations, March 12 (RHC)-- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says Israel has to stop "the killing, bombing and bloodshed" in the Gaza Strip to honor the spirit of the holy month of Ramadan. Guterres told reporters on Monday that by the start of Ramadan, "Muslims around the world celebrate and spread the values of peace, reconciliation and solidarity."

Yet in Gaza, he said, "the killing, bombing and bloodshed continue" with civilian killings and destruction "at a level that is unprecedented." "This is heartbreaking and utterly unacceptable," Guterres said.

"My strongest appeal today is to honor the spirit of Ramadan by silencing the guns and removing all obstacles to ensure the delivery of lifesaving aid at the speed and massive scale required."

Guterres also warned that Israel's threatened assault on the southern city of Rafah "could plummet the people of Gaza into an even deeper circle of hell." Rafah, the town along the Egyptian border, which was once deemed a "safe zone" by the Israeli military forces, has now become the last refuge for over half of Gaza's entire population of more than 2.3 million, who have fled their homes in other parts of the territory to shelter from incessant Israeli attacks.

The Muslim fasting month of Ramadan starts in Gaza as Israel continues its genocidal war on the besieged Palestinian territory exacerbating a humanitarian crisis there.

Guterres said: "The eyes of the world are watching. The eyes of history are watching. We cannot look away." "We must act to avoid more preventable deaths... Desperate civilians need action — immediate action."

It has been almost six weeks since the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) finally managed to deliver aid to northern Gaza. UNRWA spokesperson Juliette Touma wrote on X, formerly Twitter, that people of Gaza "are very, very anxious."

Israel war on Gaza, which began in early October, has driven around 80 percent of the territory's population from their homes and pushed hundreds of thousands to the brink of famine.

The war has directly resulted in the death of more than 31,000 Palestinians. Thousands more have also died from starvation, malnourishment, and inadequate medical care. Those people are considered indirect victims as they were not registered in hospitals.

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