

World Health Organization to Israel: Drop Rafah invasion plan in name of humanity

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Geneva, March 17 (RHC)-- The World Health Organization (WHO) strongly urges the Israeli regime to decide against its planned ground invasion of the city of Rafah in the Gaza Strip, which is enduring a

genocidal Israeli war.

The southern Gaza city has come to host the majority of the Palestinian territory's nearly 2.4-million-strong population, which has fled there from the scourge of the war. "I'm gravely concerned about reports of an Israeli plan to proceed with a ground assault on Rafah," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus wrote on X, formerly Twitter, on Saturday.

"Further escalation of violence in this densely populated area would lead to many more deaths and suffering," he added. "In the name of humanity, we appeal to Israel not to proceed and instead to work towards peace."

The regime launched the war on October 7 in response to a retaliatory operation staged by Gaza's resistance movements, during which hundreds were taken captive. At least 31,553 Palestinians, mostly women, children, and adolescents, have died in the military onslaught so far.

Ghebreyesus dismissed a so-called evacuation plan devised by the Israeli regime ahead of Rafah's invasion. "The 1.2 million people in Rafah do not have anywhere safe to move to," the WHO chief said.

"There are no fully functional, safe health facilities that they can reach elsewhere in Gaza," he said, adding, "Many people are too fragile, hungry, and sick to be moved again..." "This humanitarian catastrophe must not be allowed to worsen."

A day earlier, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced in a statement that he "approved plans for a military operation in Rafah, and the army is operationally preparing for it..."

The statement provided no details on the exact time and date of the assault, and rejected the latest ceasefire proposal put forward by the Gaza-based Palestinian resistance movement Hamas as "unrealistic."

Provision of humanitarian aid to the Palestinians in the besieged territory and release of Israeli captives were among the terms of the truce deal, which has been discussed several times in the Egyptian capital of Cairo.

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