

UNRWA affirms Gaza humanitarian crisis is man-made and Israel must obey ICJ order

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A man reacts as he watches rescuers and civilians remove the rubble of a home destroyed

following an Israeli attack on the town of Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip, on October 15, 2023. (Photo by AFP)

Geneva, March 30 (RHC)-- The UNRWA says the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza is man-made, criticizing the Israeli regime's lack of cooperation with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding the facilitation of aid delivery into the besieged Palestinian territory.

The head of the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, Philippe Lazzarini, made the statement in a post on X on Friday after the ICJ issued a legally binding order calling on Israel to "ensure, without delay" that humanitarian aid is provided to the Gaza Strip to halt famine.

"The renewed binding order from the ICJ yesterday is a stark reminder that the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is man-made and worsening. It can however still be reversed," Lazzarini said. He said the order calls on Israel "to cooperate with the United Nations to facilitate the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian aid to Gaza."

"Cooperation means that Israel must reverse its decision and allow UNRWA to reach northern Gaza with food and nutrition convoys on a daily basis and to open additional land crossings."

Reiterating that the humanitarian situation in Gaza is deteriorating, UNRWA's chief called for more pressure on Israel to stop its months-long aggression. "The conditions of over 2 million people are worsening. Gaza is becoming an impossible place for a dignified life. In under six months, where people did not know hunger and were largely healthy, famine thresholds are unprecedented in time and speed."

"Member states should exert more pressure to implement the ICJ order. Those who stopped funding UNRWA should reconsider their decision to allow the Agency to fulfill its mandate including help averting famine."

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has ordered Israel to "ensure, without delay" that humanitarian aid is provided to the Gaza Strip. The UN and other aid agencies have warned of imminent famine due to Israel's prevention of the land-based delivery of life-saving aid to Gaza.

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