

OIC denounces deliberate Israeli targeting of displaced Gazans in UNRWA schools

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Palestinians stand in the courtyard of al-Jaouni school in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip on September 11, 2024 following an Israeli attack. (Photo by DPA)

Cairo, September 15 (RHC)-- The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has strongly condemned Israel for deliberate targeting of displaced Palestinians sheltering in schools affiliated with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Gaza.

In a statement on Saturday, the organization described the latest Israeli attack on the al-Jaouni school in the Nuseirat refugee camp as an extension of the occupying regime's crimes of destruction, displacement, starvation and genocide in the Gaza Strip.

The OIC noted that the atrocities are being committed in flagrant violation of the provisions of international humanitarian law, the Geneva Convention, relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) orders.

It renewed its appeal to international bodies to assume their responsibilities and work to implement UN Security Council Resolution No. 2735, which calls for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, withdrawal of Israeli military forces, and an end to the unprecedented human suffering in the besieged coastal territory.

The OIC also underlined the need to provide international protection for Palestinians and to ensure that Israel is held accountable for all the crimes and violations it commits in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, including the holy city of Jerusalem (al-Quds).

At least 18 people, including six UNRWA staff members, were killed on Wednesday when Israeli forces bombed al-Jaouni school in central Gaza.

Witnesses said the attack on the school-turned-shelter tore women and children to pieces, while UNRWA said the casualties among its staff amounted to the "highest death toll" in a single incident in the 11-month war.

The al-Jaouni school is home to some 12,000 displaced Palestinians, most of them women and children, according to the UN. It has been hit five times since the start of the war in Gaza.

The UN secretary general, António Guterres, called the attack "totally unacceptable" and said it broke international laws that protect civilians during war. "These dramatic violations of international humanitarian law need to stop now."

The EU's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, said he was "outraged" by the bombing. "The disregard of the basic principles of international humanitarian law, especially the protection of civilians, cannot and should not be accepted by the international community."

Israel has repeatedly equated UNRWA staff with members of the Palestinian Hamas resistance group in efforts to discredit them, providing no proof of the claims, while lobbying hard to have UNRWA closed as it is the only UN agency to have a specific mandate to look after the basic needs of Palestinian refugees.

The Tel Aviv regime authorities argue that if the agency no longer exists, then the refugee issue must no longer exist, and the legitimate right for Palestinian refugees to return to their land will be unnecessary.

Israel launched its atrocious onslaught against the Gaza Strip, targeting hospitals, residences, and houses of worship, since Palestinian resistance movements launched a surprise attack, dubbed Operation al-Aqsa Storm, against the usurping regime on October 7.

At least 41,182 Palestinians have been killed, most of them women and children. Another 95,280 individuals have sustained injuries as well.



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