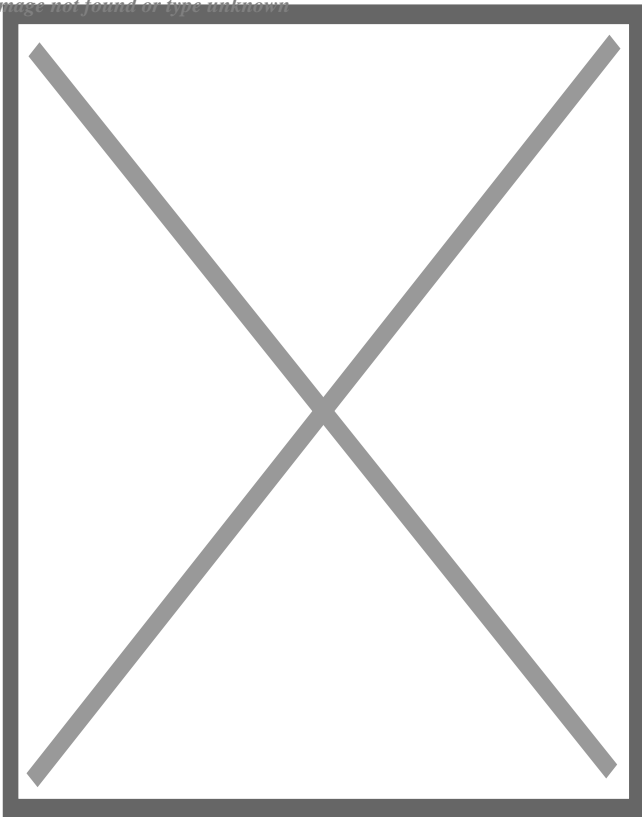


UNICEF warns situation in besieged northern Gaza is catastrophic

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A bloodied Palestinian child standing in the ruins in the aftermath of an Israeli bombardment, Gaza, Palestine.

Geneva, December 7 (RHC)-- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has voiced concern about the "catastrophic and horrible situation" of Palestinian children in the northern part of the besieged Gaza Strip.

UNICEF spokesperson for Gaza, Tess Ingram, said the ongoing brutal Israeli offensive and siege there were not only exposing children to violence but also pushing them towards increasingly dire conditions.

She warned that because of the collapse of the medical system; children were unable to get the essential medical care and treatment. Ingram deplored that at Kamal Adwan Hospital, one of the last functioning health centers in the northern area, had run out of service amid ongoing Israeli attacks.

"The injured children were brought to Kamal Adwan Hospital following back-to-back explosions, but with little to no aid reaching to the health facility."

Gaza civil defense says nearly 30 Palestinians, including many women and children, were killed after Israeli warplanes hit areas near Kamal Adwan hospital in the north on Friday. At least four doctors were among those killed at the hospital after Israeli forces struck and stormed the compound.

The World Health Organization says the attack came with no prior warning.

The Palestinian movement Hamas has called for an international committee to investigate Israel's deliberate targeting of hospitals and medical facilities across the strip.

Elsewhere in her remarks, the UNICEF spokeswoman continued that children's lives were in danger not only as a result of bullets and rockets, but also as a result of dire living conditions.

With the onset of winter conditions in the besieged enclave, families turn to burning waste and plastics to warm up in desperation, she noted. "Our colleagues witnessed children scavenging for food and collecting plastic materials to warm themselves."

The remarks come as Children in the Gaza Strip face the deadly effects of disease and malnutrition as ongoing Israeli campaign of death and destruction cuts them off from safe water, food and medicine.

About 3,000 people have been killed and over 10,000 injured in northern Gaza since the Israeli military launched its new ground offensive there on October 6, ordering the forced displacement of residents.

Since then, virtually no aid has entered the area, leaving tens of thousands of people without food, water, fuel, transport and electricity. Starvation and malnutrition are rapidly increasing.

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