

UN secretary-general expresses alarm at Israeli strikes on Yemen's airport and power plants

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An image grab from a handout video provided by Yemen's al-Masirah TV shows burning

buildings following Israeli strikes on the Ras Kutaib power station in Hudaydah. (Via AFP)

United Nations, December 28 (RHC)-- The UN secretary-general has condemned the deadly Israeli airstrikes on Yemen that targeted critical civilian infrastructure, including Sana'a International Airport and power stations.

At least six people were killed and 40 others injured when Israel launched air raids on the airport in the capital, Sana'a, Red Sea ports, and power stations on Thursday.

"Israeli airstrikes today on Sanaa International Airport, the Red Sea ports and power stations in Yemen are especially alarming," the UN chief's spokesperson Stéphanie Tremblay said in a press briefing, expressing concerns about the risk of further regional escalation.

Tremblay said Secretary-General António Guterres "warns that airstrikes on Red Sea ports and Sana'a airport pose grave risks to humanitarian operations at a time when millions of people are in need of life-saving assistance."

The Israeli military said that in addition to striking the airport, it also hit "military infrastructure" at the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ras Kanatib on Yemen's west coast. It also attacked the country's Hezyaz and Ras Kanatib power stations.

A member of the UN Humanitarian Air Crew was injured in the attacks at the airport which occurred when a high-level UN delegation, led by World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, was there.

"As we were about to board our flight from Sana'a...the airport came under aerial bombardment," WHO head wrote.

Noting that the Israeli attacks damaged the air traffic control tower and the departure lounge, "just meters" from where Tedros and his team stood, the WHO chief said "We will need to wait for the damage to the airport to be repaired before we can leave."

"My UN and WHO colleagues and I are safe," he added, offering condolences to families who lost loved ones in the strikes. According to Yemen's civil aviation authority, the airport is planned to reopen on Friday.

Guterres emphasized that international law, including humanitarian law as applicable, must be respected at all times, and called for respecting and protecting civilian infrastructure. "Humanitarian relief personnel must not be targeted and must be respected and protected at all times," the statement read.

Mohammed Abdul-Salam, the spokesman for Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement, described the Israeli strikes as "a Zionist crime against all the Yemeni people." He stressed that such attacks won't stop Yemen from conducting operations in support of the Palestinian people.

"If the Zionist enemy thinks that its crimes will stop Yemen from supporting Gaza, it is delusional, and Yemen will not abandon its religious and humanitarian principles, God willing."

Since the onset of Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip in October 2023, Yemeni forces have carried out scores of operations in support of the war-hit Gazans, striking targets throughout the occupied Palestinian territories, in addition to targeting Israeli ships or vessels heading towards ports in the occupied territories.

[SOURCE: AL JAZEERA and NEWS AGENCIES]

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