

*France, Germany, UK appalled
by civilian casualties in Gaza,
urge ceasefire return*

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Paris, March 23 (RHC)-- France, Germany and the United Kingdom have expressed deep concern over the renewed Israeli attacks on Gaza, calling for an immediate return to a ceasefire in the besieged territory.

“The resumption of Israeli strikes in Gaza marks a dramatic step backward for the people of Gaza, the captives, their families and the entire region,” the three European countries said in a joint statement on Saturday. “We are appalled by the civilian casualties and urgently call for an immediate return to a ceasefire,” it added.

The three nations urged all parties involved to return to negotiations to ensure the full implementation of the ceasefire.

The statement emphasized that ordinary people have the right to peace and security, highlighting that the conflict cannot be resolved through military means. “A return to fighting will only result in the deaths of more Palestinian civilians and Israeli captives,” it said.

“We call on Israel to restore humanitarian access, including water and electricity, and ensure access to medical care and temporary medical evacuations in accordance with international humanitarian law,” the statement pointed out.

The three European countries said they were “deeply shocked” by the Israeli attack on the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) guesthouse in central Gaza, where one employee was killed and several others sustained injuries, noting that there were European citizens among the victims.

“UN personnel and its premises should be protected and never be a target. There must be a full investigation into what happened. A long-lasting ceasefire is the only credible pathway towards a sustainable peace, a [so-called] two-state solution and the reconstruction of Gaza,” the statement read.

Meanwhile, Jordan's King Abdullah II has underlined the urgent need for “immediate international action” to stop the ongoing genocidal war on Gaza and ensure a permanent ceasefire.

During a phone call with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Saturday, the Jordanian monarch also stressed the importance of resuming humanitarian aid to Gaza to alleviate the worsening humanitarian crisis. He reaffirmed Jordan's firm stance against the displacement of Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank.

More than 700 Palestinians have been killed and over 1,000 others injured ever since Israel renewed its attacks on Gaza, shattering a ceasefire and an agreement on the exchange of Israeli captives for Palestinian prisoners.

Even though Hamas has reiterated its “full commitment to implementing all terms of the agreement in all its stages and details,” Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has refused to move forward with the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire agreement, yielding to pressure from hardliners within his administration.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and REUTERS]

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