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UN humanitarian chief warns “entire population of North Gaza is at risk of dying”

As the Israeli onslaught on northern Gaza, aimed at completely emptying the region of its people, entered its fourth week, a United Nations official warned Sunday that “the entire population of north Gaza is at risk of dying.”



A Palestinian kisses a relative murdered in Israeli airstrikes, in a morgue in the city of Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, Friday, October 25, 2024. [AP Photo/File]

In a statement Sunday, Joyce Msuya, acting under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, accused Israeli forces of “disregard for basic humanity and for the laws of war.”

She said:

Hospitals have been hit and health workers have been detained. Shelters have been emptied and burned down. First responders have been prevented from rescuing people from under the rubble. Families have been separated and men and boys are being taken away by the truckload. Hundreds of Palestinians have reportedly been killed. Tens of thousands have been forced to flee yet again.

What Msuya described is the implementation of the so-called “generals’ plan,” adopted by the Netanyahu government to completely empty northern Gaza of its people, whether through bombing, starvation, or mass executions. Over the past three weeks, nearly 1,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces, according to official figures, while an untold number have succumbed to starvation and rampant disease.

“For 22 days, not a drop of water or bread has entered the northern Gaza Strip,” stated Mahmoud Basal, the official spokesman for the General Directorate of Civil Defense in Gaza.

He said that more than 100,000 Palestinians in the areas of Jabalya, Beit Hanoun, and Beit Lahia are being subjected to Israeli siege and bombardment, and that the Israeli occupation kills anyone who tries to provide services to the people of the northern Gaza Strip.

In a separate statement, UN Secretary-General António Guterres expressed shock at the “harrowing levels of death, injury, and destruction” in north Gaza.

Guterres warned:

Just in the past few weeks, hundreds of people have been killed... and more than 60,000 others have been forced to flee yet again, many fearing not being able to return.”

He explained that

the widespread devastation and deprivation resulting from Israel’s military operations in north Gaza—especially around Jabalya, Beit Lahiya, and Beit Hanoun—are making the conditions of life untenable for the Palestinian population there.

On Sunday, Israeli forces killed at least 53 people in Gaza. A residential square in the town of Beit Lahiya was bombed, killing more than 45 refugees who were seeking shelter there.



People observe a mosque destroyed by Israeli airstrikes in the city of Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, Friday, October 25, 2024. [AP Photo/File]

An *Al Jazeera* report described the scene:

There are more than 30 displaced Palestinians trapped under this rubble, but there are no Civil Defense forces to rescue them as the Israeli army has forced them to evacuate to Gaza City.

Among those killed on Sunday were two journalists, bringing the total number of journalists killed since the start of the genocide to 182. “Deliberate killing of a journalist is a war crime,” commented Irene Khan, UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Opinion and Expression, in an X post on Sunday.

Amid chronic shortages of food and basic necessities, over two million displaced Palestinians face another winter of misery.

Palestine’s Wafa news agency reported that the refugees’ “makeshift shelters are now worn out, vulnerable, and at risk of collapse under the weight of impending rainfall.”

“Since our house was destroyed, we haven’t found a place to call home,” refugee Mohammad Al-Jarousha told Wafa. “We fled to Rafah in southern Gaza, hoping this tent would shelter us. However, it has been worn out from constant use. Still, there are no alternatives.”

He continued, “The tents can’t withstand much more; every night, the winds threaten our fragile shelter, and the blockade stops any aid that might ease our suffering.”

He added, “Last winter was brutal; heavy rains completely flooded our tents, and we endured some of the hardest days of our lives. The cold was severe, leaving us shivering. We had no electricity, no heat, and no hope.”

Volunteer doctor Samar Mahmoud told Wafa, “Rainwater has flooded the tents, making them uninhabitable, and most residents have lost their belongings.”

According to a recent UN report, over 1.8 million people in Gaza are experiencing acute food insecurity, and 133,000 are facing chronic food insecurity. “Acute malnutrition is 10 times higher than it was before the war,” the UN said in a statement.

The escalating genocide in Gaza takes place against the backdrop of a widening Israeli offensive throughout the region. In Lebanon, nonstop Israeli bombardments killed over 21 people, including three paramedics.

On Friday night, Israel carried out its largest strikes against Iran to date, involving approximately 100 fighter aircraft, including advanced F-35 fighter jets provided by the United States.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the attack targeted air defense batteries in Syria and Iraq, as well as military targets throughout Iran. The attack was fully coordinated with the United States, with US officials briefed in detail and signing off on the strikes beforehand.

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