

United Nations says Israel's total Gaza blockade amounts to war crime



Geneva, October 12 (RHC)-- The United Nations human rights chief has warned that Israel's imposition of a total blockade on the Gaza Strip amounts to a war crime and violates international law. Volker Turk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said in a statement that the blockade "seriously" risks the already dire humanitarian situation in the Palestinian enclave.

Turk underscored the limited capacity of medical facilities to operate, especially in light of the growing number of injured. He said Israel's "imposition of sieges that endanger the lives of civilians by depriving them of goods essential for their survival is prohibited under international humanitarian law."

"This risks seriously compounding the already dire human rights and humanitarian situation in Gaza, including the capacity of medical facilities to operate, especially in light of increasing numbers of injured," Turk said, adding that a siege may amount to "collective punishment."

Separately on Tuesday, UN Human Rights spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani clarified that such acts may amount to a war crime. Findings of the UN rights chief are based on a review of available material, including from its own monitors on the ground, she added.

The Israeli regime has had a total blockade of Gaza in place since October 7. Furthermore, UN children's agency spokesman James Elder sounded alarm over the siege on Gaza. "UNICEF is extremely alarmed about measures to cut electricity, to cut food, to cut water, to cut fuel from entering Gaza. This will add another layer of suffering to the existing catastrophe faced by families in Gaza."

Israel launched deadly strikes on the densely-populated Gaza Strip on October 7, after the resistance movement Hamas waged the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the usurping entity. Hamas said its operation came in response to Israel's violations at al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East al-Quds and growing settler violence.

According to the Gaza Health Ministry, at least 830 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli bombardment.

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