

UNRWA says at least 288 people killed in Israeli attacks on its shelters in Gaza

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United Nations, December 15 (RHC)-- The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) says at least 288 displaced people in its shelters in Gaza have been killed amid the ongoing Israeli war on the besieged strip.

The UNRWA in a post on X platform (formerly Twitter) on Wednesday estimated that in total at least 288 internally displaced persons (IDPs) sheltering in UNRWA installations in Gaza have been killed and at least a further 998 injured since October 7.

Moreover, 271 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces, including 69 children, in the occupied West Bank, the report said, marking it as “the deadliest year for Palestinians killed in the West Bank since the UN began recording casualties.”

On Wednesday, UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said at the Global Refugee Forum that the people of Gaza are “running out of time and options,” as they face Israeli bombardment, deprivation, and disease in an ever-ever-shrinking space.

Lazzarini, who has described the situation in Gaza as “hell on earth,” warned that people in the Palestinian territory are “facing the darkest chapter of their history since 1948, and it has been a painful history.” He said the people of Gaza are now crammed into less than one-third of the original territory, near the Egyptian border, and “it is unrealistic to think that people will remain resilient in the face of unlivable conditions of such magnitude.”

The city of Rafah, according to Lazzarini, is now hosting well over a million people while it used to be home to 280,000 people. He also pointed out that the UN agency is very far from an “adequate humanitarian response,” adding that when aid is delivered, it is often not more than a can of tuna or beans and one bottle of water for a large family to share.

While most aid delivery in Gaza depends on the UNRWA, the agency’s capacities are “now on the verge of collapse,” he said.

“We need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza and an end to the siege to let in sufficient aid. I welcome here the overwhelming support of 153 UN member states at the General Assembly calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire,” Lazzari added.

The UNRWA has said that it is still operating 8 health centers, out of 22 in Palestinian territories, and more than a million people are sheltering in its schools and other facilities. This is while 130 UNRWA staff are confirmed to have been killed since the beginning of Israel’s onslaught on Gaza.

The UN estimates that 1.9 million of Gaza’s 2.4 million people have been displaced and are receiving goods from only around 100 aid trucks per day.

According to Gaza’s Ministry of Health, 18,608 Palestinians have been killed and more than 50,594 injured in Israel’s ongoing aggression in Gaza starting on October 7. Palestinian and international estimates say that the majority of those killed and wounded are women and children.

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