

UNRWA chief says Gaza aid distribution sites have become Israeli death traps



Geneva, June 2 (RHC)-- The Commissioner General of the UN's Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) says the newly established aid distribution sites run by the U.S.-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) in the Gaza Strip have become "death traps" for starving civilians in the blockaded territory.

Philippe Lazzarini made the remarks in a post on his X account on Sunday, after the Israeli regime carried out two deadly attacks on the aid distribution centers in Gaza earlier in the day, killing dozens of Palestinians.

Lazzarini further condemned the aid delivery and distribution model introduced by the Israeli regime and the United States, saying: "This humiliating system has forced thousands of hungry and desperate people to walk for dozens of miles to an area that's all but pulverized due to heavy bombardment" by the Israeli military.

He also noted that aid deliveries and distribution must be at scale and safe, emphasizing that this can only be done through the United Nations, including UNRWA.

The UNRWA chief further called on Israel to lift the siege on Gaza and allow safe and unhindered access for humanitarian aid in the besieged enclave, stressing that this is the only way to avert mass starvation, including among 1 million children.

"With competing narratives and disinformation campaigns in full gear, international media must be allowed into Gaza to independently report on the ongoing atrocities, including this morning's heinous crime," Lazzarini said.

Early on Sunday morning, Israeli forces opened fire on a GHF site in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, killing at least 40 people and injuring 150 others. Soon after, a Palestinian was reported killed in a shooting at the GHF's distribution point, in Gaza City, south of the so-called Netzarim Corridor.

The U.S.-backed aid sites began operations in the Gaza Strip last Monday. Early the next morning, as thousands of Palestinians lined up at the aid site, Israeli forces opened fire, killing three Palestinians and injuring dozens.

The GHF said it opened a second site on Wednesday, the same day that Israeli forces again opened fire on aid seekers at one of its sites west of Rafah, this time killing at least six Palestinians.

Gaza's Government Media Office said in a statement on Sunday that in less than a week, the Israeli regime has killed 50 people and wounded hundreds at GHF sites.

Separately on Sunday, the Gaza Ministry of Health said the GHF aid distribution centers have become "Israeli death traps," adding that they are a new mechanism for the forced displacement of Palestinians in Gaza.

In a statement published on Telegram, the ministry stated that everyone who arrived at hospitals following Sunday's attack on Palestinians at an aid distribution site in Rafah sustained one gunshot wound to the head or chest, stressing that this confirms the Israeli "insistence on brutally killing civilians".

Munir al-Barsh, Director General of the Health Ministry in Gaza, condemned "the international silence regarding the massacres being committed against the starving residents of the Gaza Strip," adding that severe shortages of medical supplies in the territory are producing "dire conditions" at hospitals.

He went on to say that 3000 trucks carrying badly needed medical supplies are currently stalled at the border, accusing Israel of "deliberately spreading infectious diseases and epidemics" by the blockade.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has escalated dramatically since March 18, when the Israeli regime violated its ceasefire agreement with the resistance group Hamas.

According to the UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), Gaza suffers from phase 5 famine, and nearly 71,000 children under the age of five are at risk of acute malnutrition.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and NEWS AGENCIES]

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