

*Palestinian ambassador urges
UN to stop the killing as Israel
pounds Gaza*

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United Nations, October 27 (RHC)-- The Palestinian envoy to the United Nations has implored member states to vote to end the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip and to increase aid deliveries to the 2.3 million Palestinians living in the besieged territory.

"I appeal to all of you to vote to stop the killing. Vote for humanitarian aid to reach those whose very survival depends on it. Vote to stop this madness," Palestinian Ambassador Riyad Mansour said in an emotional speech to the UN General Assembly on Thursday.

Arguing for a ceasefire, Mansour said certain nations that he did not name were applying a double standard on the conflict. "How can representatives of states explain how horrible it is that 1,000 Israelis were killed and not feel the same outrage when 1,000 Palestinians are now killed every single day?" Mansour asked the assembly. "Why not feel a sense of urgency to end their killing?"

The 193-nation General Assembly met for an emergency session as aid agencies and rights groups warned that humanitarian conditions in Gaza are at a critical point more than two weeks into a relentless Israeli assault.

Israel has bombarded the Palestinian territory since Hamas, which governs Gaza, killed at least 1,400 people in attacks on southern Israel, according to Israeli officials.

More than 7,000 people have been killed in the Israeli bombardment, according to Gaza authorities, and Israel has also cut off supplies of food, water, electricity and fuel to the territory.

Speaking on behalf of Arab states, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi accused Israel of "making Gaza a perpetual hell on earth. The trauma will haunt generations to come." He said the impact on Palestinian civilians is immense.

The Israeli siege and assault on Gaza has prompted a growing outcry as the death toll continues to rise and aid officials warn of an imminent humanitarian catastrophe.

Medical services in Gaza have been near breaking point for days with fuel supplies strained by Israel's siege of the strip. On Thursday, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) warned that its fuel stocks were almost out, and the agency had been forced to suspend "life-saving services".

International leaders have also expressed concern that an anticipated Israeli ground invasion of Gaza could spark a wider escalation across the region. In a speech at the UN on Thursday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian warned that his country did not want to see fighting escalate but "if the genocide in Gaza continues, they will not be spared from this fire."

In a joint statement on Thursday, the Arab states of Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates condemned what they called Israel's collective punishment and mass displacement of Palestinians.

Human rights groups such as Amnesty International have stressed the need for a ceasefire to bring the bloodshed to an end and avoid the chance of fighting spilling over into neighbouring countries.

Meanwhile, a delegation of Hamas leaders arrived on Thursday in Russia, where officials said Iran's deputy foreign minister was also visiting.

Israel condemned Russia, which has ties to all parties involved in the current round of fighting, for hosting members of Hamas, describing the group as "worse than ISIS".

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