

United Nations condemns killing of international staff member in Gaza

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United Nations, May 14 (RHC)-- A United Nations staff member has been killed and another wounded when their vehicle was struck in the southern city of Rafah in the besieged Gaza Strip.

In a statement released on Monday, Farhan Haq, spokesperson for Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, confirmed there were two individuals in Rafah in a UN-marked vehicle on their way to the European Hospital as part of their duties.

"The Secretary-General was deeply saddened to learn of the death of a United Nations Department of Safety and Security (DSS) staff member and injury to another DSS staffer when their UN vehicle was struck as they traveled to the European Hospital in Rafah this morning," Haq said.

"The secretary-general condemns all attacks on UN personnel and calls for a full investigation."

"With the conflict in Gaza continuing to take a heavy toll – not only on civilians, but also on humanitarian workers – the Secretary-General reiterates his urgent appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire," the statement said. Media reports, quoting local sources, earlier said a UN vehicle was hit by Israeli shelling in Rafah.

Last month, Israeli strikes on an aid convoy run by the charity group World Central Kitchen killed seven of its workers in Gaza. The killing set off international outrage and underscored the risks to humanitarian workers trying to alleviate a looming famine in Gaza.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) recently said 182 of its staff there had been killed and more than 160 of its shelters hit, resulting in the death of hundreds of people fleeing Israeli bombardment.

UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini recently called for countries to back an independent investigation into killings and detentions of its staff and damage to its premises in Gaza.

More than seven months into the savage Israeli campaign, the regime continues to kill civilians across the besieged territory. Over 35,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since October, when the US-Israeli genocide began. Most of those killed are women and children. Thousands of bodies also remain under the rubble.

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