

United Nations experts warn of annihilation as Gaza deaths mount

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United Nations, May 9 (RHC)-- United Nations experts have demanded action to avert the “annihilation” of Palestinians in Gaza, after rescuers said Israeli strikes across the territory killed dozens of people.

A planned expanded offensive revealed by the Israeli military has drawn international condemnation, after UN agencies previously warned of a humanitarian catastrophe in the Palestinian territory, already devastated by 19 months of war.

More than 20 independent experts mandated by the UN’s Human Rights Council said on Wednesday that the world faced a “stark decision” to “remain passive and witness the slaughter of innocents or take part in crafting a just resolution”.

The experts implored the international community to avert the “moral abyss we are descending into”.

Israel’s broader offensive, approved by its government amid a two-month aid blockade on Gaza, would include displacing “most” of its residents, the military has said. The plan proposes seizing Gaza, holding on to captured territories, forcibly displacing Palestinians to southern Gaza and taking control of aid distribution along with private security companies.

France’s President Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday called the situation in Gaza “the most critical we have ever seen.”

Spain’s Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Madrid would present a draft resolution at the UN General Assembly aimed at “proposing urgent measures to stop the killing of innocent civilians and ensure humanitarian aid” in Gaza.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer told parliament the situation in Gaza and the occupied West Bank was “increasingly intolerable”.

European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said that Brussels had made an offer to Israel “to distribute the humanitarian aid if they don’t trust the other actors there”.

More than a dozen Palestinians were killed by Israeli attacks in Gaza on Thursday, after 100 people were killed on Wednesday. A significant number of those killed and injured in Gaza City on Wednesday were children, rescuers said.

Meanwhile, the World Central Kitchen (WCK), which ran one of the last bakeries still operating in Gaza, has announced it no longer has the supplies to cook meals or make bread in Gaza.

“Additional food and equipment are ready to be shipped to the border from Jordan and Egypt. Our vital work cannot continue without permission from Israel for this aid to enter,” the charity said in a statement.

[SOURCE: AFP and NEWS AGENCIES]

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