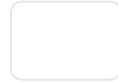


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Israel/OPT: Appalling Gaza “evacuation order” must be rescinded by Israel immediately

The Israeli army's order to people in northern Gaza and Gaza city to “evacuate” to the south of the Gaza Strip, cannot be considered an effective warning and may amount to forced displacement of the civilian population, a violation of international humanitarian law, said Amnesty International.

The initial announcement gave people 24 hours to leave northern Gaza “for their safety and protection” – an impossible demand that even the Israeli army spokesperson has admitted cannot be implemented in one day. Regardless of timeframe, Israel cannot treat northern Gaza as an open-fire zone based on having issued this order. Their forces have an obligation to take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians wherever they are in Gaza.

“With this order, Israeli forces are setting in motion the mass forced displacement of more than 1.1 million people from Gaza city and the entire northern part of the Gaza Strip. It has sowed panic among the population and left thousands of internally displaced Palestinians now sleeping on the streets, not knowing where to flee to or where they can find safety amid a relentless bombing campaign by Israel and merciless collective punishment measures. This order must be rescinded immediately,” said Agnès Callamard, Amnesty International's Secretary General.

Since 7 October, over 1,500 people have been killed and more than 6,600 injured in Israeli attacks in Gaza according to the ministry of health in Gaza. The real number of fatalities is expected to be much higher, with families struggling to recover the bodies of their loved one from under the rubble. The attacks were launched in retaliation for a horrifying attack

that saw Hamas and other armed groups firing indiscriminate rockets, abducting civilians and taking hostages and carrying out mass summary killings of civilians in southern Israel, killing at least 1,200 people and injuring 3,436, according to Israel's ministry of health.

Since the start of the fighting, out of Gaza's 2.2 million residents, more than 532,000 Palestinians in Gaza have already been internally displaced, according to the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – some of them twice.

"Israel's allies and donor states must urgently call for international humanitarian law to be respected and civilians to be protected. Civilians in Gaza must not be used as political pawns and their lives cannot be devalued. The international community must also refrain from further legitimizing Israel's 16-year long illegal blockade and immediately halt the transfer of arms that could be used to commit unlawful attacks," said Agnès Callamard.

The roads in northern Gaza have been severely damaged by Israeli air strikes, there is no public transportation available, and fuel is scarce due to the tightening of the existing blockade.

One resident described scenes of chaos and panic as people attempted to flee through destroyed streets in northern Gaza: "A drive of an hour felt like 30 years. We had to change route many times...Everyone is running for their life, it's beyond horror. Children crying and in terror."

A humanitarian worker in Gaza told Amnesty International: "They [Israeli army] must tell me how we can evacuate hospitals with ICU patients and all the wounded in the recent attacks, it is nonsense, it's impossible."

Due to the destruction of roads and lack of fuel, rescue teams are unable to reach areas of northern Gaza to dig out hundreds of bodies still trapped under the rubble due to recent air strikes.

"We're trying to remove the bodies, what remained of the bodies, of children with our own hands. Bulldozers cannot reach the area to remove the rubble. I've been here for three days since the bombing, 19 members of my family have been killed and I have only been able to recover my daughter-in-law's body, and my son's shoulder," Fawzi Naffar, a survivor of an Israeli air strike on Gaza City's Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood, which killed at least 40 civilians, told Amnesty International.

The organization has already documented how a number of families fled their homes to areas that they thought would be safer but ended up being bombed. The organization spoke to one man who fled Beit Hanoun with his family on foot at dawn on 8 October to seek shelter at a UNRWA-

run school in Jabalia. His 19-year-old son was then killed in an attack on a market street in Jabalia as he went to buy bread for his family.

Among those already displaced are people with disabilities and chronic illnesses. The organization spoke to women and girls with disabilities who fled their homes on foot. They walked for hours under constant fear of bombardment to seek refuge at UNRWA -run schools in northern Gaza. They are not able to make the long trip on foot to southern Gaza where many shelters have already reached capacity. The protection of these civilians must be a priority.

Fear of a “second Nakba”

The majority of Gaza’s population are descendants of refugees who were displaced or forced to flee their homes during the 1947-49 conflict in which more than 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their towns and villages – a conflict referred to by Palestinians as the Nakba.

While many Palestinians in northern Gaza are trying to flee, others have told Amnesty International that they are choosing to stay for fear this could become a “second Nakba” as the generational trauma of displacement is etched in the collective memories of many Gazans.

“Our parents were expelled from their homes in 1948 during the Nakba. We lost our house which was destroyed in the August 2022 offensive; our rebuilt house was destroyed again...all our lives we have known nothing but a series of displacements,” Munir Radwan a university professor told Amnesty.

Another Gaza resident said: “We went to sleep in 2023 and woke up in 1948”.

“The international community cannot stand by in silence as Israeli forces unlawfully drive more than a million Palestinians from their homes. Israel’s forced displacement of Gazan civilians must be halted immediately,” said Agnes Callamard.

Amnesty International is calling on Israel and all Palestinian armed groups to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians. Palestinian armed groups must immediately release all civilian hostages and refrain from firing indiscriminate rockets into Israel. Israel must abide by the principles of international law including the principles of proportionality and distinction and refrain from collective punishment, retaliation, and displacement.

Amnesty International is an impartial human rights organization and seeks to ensure that all parties to an armed conflict comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Amnesty International will continue to investigate whether Palestinian armed groups and Israeli

forces are complying with the rules of international humanitarian law, including by taking necessary precautions to minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects and refraining from unlawful attacks or the collective punishment of civilians.

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Associated documents

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13 October 2023 | [AI – Amnesty International](#) (Author)

State of Palestine

Gaza Strip: Israeli armed forces call on civilian population to move to the south of the territory; the order subjects more than 1.1 million people to forced displacement

[Alarmierender "Evakuierungsbefehl" für Gaza muss von Israel zurückgenommen werden](#) (Appeal or News Release, German)

de

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ecoi.net description:

Gaza Strip: Israeli armed forces call on civilian population to move to the south of the territory; the order subjects more than 1.1 million people to forced displacement

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