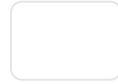


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OHCHR – UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Author)

Gaza: UN experts decry bombing of hospitals and schools as crimes against humanity, call for prevention of genocide

GENEVA (19 October 2023) – UN experts* today expressed outrage against the deadly strike at Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City, which killed more than 470 civilians on Tuesday (17) and trapped hundreds under the rubble. The strike reportedly followed two warnings issued by Israel that an attack on the hospital was imminent if people inside were not evacuated.

“The strike against Al Ahli Arab Hospital is an atrocity. We are equally outraged by the deadly strike on the same day on an UNRWA school located in Al Maghazi refugee camp that sheltered some 4000 displaced people, as well as two densely populated refugee camps,” the experts said.

The experts raised serious humanitarian and legal concerns over Israel tightening its 16-year siege of the enclave and its population and long-standing occupation, depriving 2.2 million people of essential food, fuel, water, electricity and medicine. An estimated 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza, are in desperate need of prenatal and postnatal care. The number of internally displaced people across the Gaza Strip is estimated at around one million.

They recalled that the UN Security Council has repeatedly condemned the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, which is prohibited under international humanitarian and criminal law. The unlawful denial of humanitarian access and depriving civilians of objects indispensable to

their survival are also a violation of international humanitarian law, the experts warned.

The UN experts called for the protection of all humanitarian workers, after the World Health Organization (WHO) documented more than 136 attacks on health care services in the occupied Palestinian territory, including 59 attacks on the Gaza Strip, which resulted in the death of at least 16 health workers since the beginning of hostilities on 7 October. Israeli bombardment on Gaza has also killed 15 staff of the United Nations Refugee Works Agency (UNRWA) and four Palestine Red Crescent paramedics in an ambulance. An ambulance driver of Magen David Adom in Israel lost his life while driving to treat injured people.

“The complete siege of Gaza coupled with unfeasible evacuation orders and forcible population transfers, is a violation of international humanitarian and criminal law. It is also unspeakably cruel,” the experts said.

They recalled that the wilful and systematic destruction of civilian homes and infrastructure, known as ‘domicide’, and cutting off drinking water, medicine, and essential food is clearly prohibited under international criminal law.

“We are sounding the alarm: There is an ongoing campaign by Israel resulting in crimes against humanity in Gaza. Considering statements made by Israeli political leaders and their allies, accompanied by military action in Gaza and escalation of arrests and killing in the West Bank, there is also a risk of genocide against the Palestinian People,” the experts said.

“There are no justifications or exceptions for such crimes. We are appalled by the inaction of the international community in the face of belligerent war-mongering,” the experts said.

“The Gazan population, half of whom are children, have already suffered many decades of unlawful brutal occupation and lived under the blockade for 16 years,” the experts said.

“It is time to immediately cease fire and ensure urgent and unimpeded access to essential humanitarian supplies, including food, water, shelter, medicine, fuel and electricity. The physical safety of the civilian population must be guaranteed,” the experts said.

“The occupation needs to end and there must be reparation, restitution and reconstruction, towards full justice for Palestinians,” they said.

The experts: Pedro Arrojo Agudo, [Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation](#); Francesca Albanese, [Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967](#); Reem Alsalem, [Special](#)

Rapporteur on Violence against women and girls; Ms. Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; .Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Tlaleng Mofokeng, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing; Ms. Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Ms Ashwini K.P. Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

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Gaza Strip: UN experts outraged by bombing of Al Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza City, in which more than 470 have been killed

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