NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

100 days of hell in Gaza

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Israel Palestine

Statement from Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council:

“Over the past 100 days the people of Gaza have been subjected to one of the worst humanitarian crises faced by any civilian population this century. Nowhere else in the world have so many people been trapped under such an intensive bombardment for so long.

“In the fourteen weeks since the heinous attacks by Hamas on Israeli civilians, followed by the indiscriminate Israeli bombardment of Gaza, a devastating toll has been exacted: 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals, and over 23,000 Palestinians, have reportedly lost their lives. More than 10,000 Palestinian children have already died, surpassing the child casualties in all other recent global wars. A grim testament to the unparalleled tragedy unfolding in Gaza.

“The Israeli bombardment has pulverised civilian areas, causing the displacement of nearly the entire population of Gaza, some 2.1 million Palestinians. Civilians were given an ultimatum to relocate from the north to the south, but then those southern areas too have been subjected to heavy bombardment. Nowhere is safe in Gaza.

“Winter weather and the spread of infectious diseases are exacerbating the impact of Gaza’s shattered healthcare system, which is now incapable of preventing further massive loss of life.

“Many of my own NRC staff and their families are now homeless, transformed from providers of hope and life-saving assistance to being entirely dependent on it themselves. They have joined the thousands living on the streets in southern Gaza, forced to improvise shelters from whatever they can get hold of.

“NRC has condemned Hamas’ appalling assault from the start, and continues to call for immediate release of all hostages. The same moral clarity must also mean a unanimous global demand to halt the brutal Israeli offensive, which renders Gaza unliveable and risks tipping the entire region into wider conflict.

“Israel continues to severely restrict the delivery of life-saving aid. Today, a mere trickle of supplies will make it into Gaza, and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians will continue to lack access to medical care, food, and clean water.

“For over three months, the agony of innocent Palestinians in Gaza has been broadcast around the globe, and world leaders have continually failed to prevent the immense civilian suffering, despite all the promises from the very countries that provide arms and support for the Israeli assault.

“100 days since the warfare in, on, and from Gaza started, we must conclude:

- the bombardment is still indiscriminate;
- there is still no escape for the civilian population;
- there is still no real access – nor operational space – for humanitarian work;
- hospitals have virtually collapsed;
- supplies of water, food, electricity, and other necessities for human life are totally insufficient;
- civilians are being starved.

“The fate of the besieged population of Gaza, which may soon be engulfed in famine, is a stain on Israel and on those countries who continue to provide arms and political support.

“An immediate and sustained ceasefire is the only hope for an end to this haemorrhaging of human life, and for a resumption of lifesaving relief across Gaza.

"Neither the lives of innocent civilians on both sides, nor the delivery of and urgent humanitarian aid, can be used as bargaining chips.

"This madness must stop."

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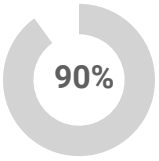
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