

# UNICEF head warns everyone in Northern Gaza ‘is at imminent risk of dying’

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Every man, woman and child who remains in northern Gaza “is at imminent risk of dying,” warned Catherine Russell, the director of the United Nations Children’s Fund, in a statement Saturday.

Nearly one month ago, Israel began an assault on Northern Gaza to implement the so-called “generals’ plan” to ethnically cleanse the entirety of Northern Gaza. Virtually no food, water, or medical supplies have been allowed into the northern section of the Gaza Strip, forcing hundreds of thousands of people to flee.

Those who remain, estimated at approximately 100,000 people, are cut off from all necessities of life and are being systematically starved or killed by Israeli bombardment.

Israel’s “generals’ plan” is being carried out with the endorsement and support of the United States, which continues to fund and arm the Israeli genocide in Gaza. The US is also sending troops to the Middle East to aid Israel’s escalating war against the populations of Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Iran.

As a result of this starvation and killing campaign, “the entire Palestinian population in North Gaza, especially children, is at imminent risk of dying from disease, famine, and the ongoing bombardments,” Russell said.

“This has already been a deadly weekend of attacks in North Gaza,” Russell added, noting that “In the past 48 hours alone, over 50 children have reportedly been killed in Jabalia, where strikes leveled two residential buildings sheltering hundreds of people.”

She continued, “Taken alongside the horrific level of child deaths in North Gaza from other attacks, these most recent events combine to write yet another dark chapter in one of the darkest periods of this terrible war.”

Russell said international law prohibits the targeting

of civilians and humanitarian workers. “Yet these principles are being flouted over and over again, leaving tens of thousands of children killed, injured, and deprived of essential services needed for survival.”

These statements were echoed by Rachel Cummings, a spokesperson for Save the Children, who told *Al Jazeera*:

We are seeing the apocalypse now unfolding in the north of Gaza. People are being constantly bombarded with aerial attacks, and, of course, we know that the food and water are not sufficient. The convoys of food and water are being denied into the north... It is absolutely catastrophic.

She added that 20,000 children are either missing or unaccompanied, and another 14,000 children have been confirmed killed. “[Children are] having to take on roles within family settings that are not for children. They take on caregiver roles. They have to take on fetching water, trying to find food,” she said. “They have seen things that no child should ever see.”

The mass killing continued Sunday, with Israeli strikes killing 31 people in the Gaza Strip that day, Reuters reported. The killings took place in separate attacks on houses in Beit Lahiya town and Jabalia. Israeli forces attacked Kamal Adwan Hospital near Beit Lahiya, severely wounding a child and damaging the facility’s nursery.

Dr. Hussam Abu Safia, director of the Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza, described to *Al Jazeera* the horrifying conditions that medical staff are working under. “As Israeli forces stormed the hospital and

detained the entire medical staff, I, together with my assistant physician, we were left alone between a rock and a hard place, either to give up or start doing what we can to save lives,” Abu Safiya told *Al Jazeera*. “We’ve been flooded with victims suffering all kinds of injuries.” He concluded, “We have been abandoned by the whole world and left to work under unimaginably harsh and horrifying conditions.”

In a statement, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor wrote:

Since the beginning of August 2024, the Israeli army has targeted schools, hospitals, clinics, and shelter halls 65 times, including 39 times in the current month of October, killing 672 Palestinians and injuring over 1,000 more, according to the Euro-Med Monitor field team.

At least 43,341 people have been killed and 102,105 injured by the Israeli attacks on Gaza since October 7, 2023, Gaza’s health ministry said over the weekend. The majority of Gaza has been leveled, with 87 percent of housing destroyed or damaged, and 87 percent of school buildings destroyed or damaged, according to UN figures.

Israeli airstrikes continued throughout Lebanon this weekend, wounding 10 people and damaging two hospitals. Israeli attacks between September 17 and October 31 have killed 85 health workers, *Al Jazeera* reported.

According to the Lebanese health ministry, the death toll from the ongoing Israeli bombardment of Lebanon has reached 2,986 people, including at least 772 women and children.

Against the backdrop of this unfolding disaster, the United States is only deepening its involvement in Israel’s rampage throughout the Middle East. Over the weekend, US Central Command (CENTCOM) head Michael Kurilla arrived in Israel to tour the deployment of US combat troops in the country, manning a US air defense battery. The Israel Defense Forces said in a statement that the visit focused on “threats in the Middle East, with a focus on Iran” and that the Israeli military will “deepen its relationship with the US armed forces.”

On Saturday, US Central Command announced that B-52 bombers, capable of both delivering nuclear weapons and carrying out massive saturation bombings, have arrived in the Middle East. “B-52 Stratofortress strategic bombers from Minot Air Force Base’s 5th Bomb Wing arrived in the US Central Command area of responsibility,” Central Command said.

In a statement cited by the *Jerusalem Post*, the US Air Force said the B-52 bombers are capable of delivering “nuclear or precision-guided conventional ordnance with worldwide precision navigation capability.” It added, “In a conventional conflict, the B-52 can perform strategic attack, close-air support, air interdiction, offensive counter-air, and maritime operations.” The strategic bombers are part of a deployment of US destroyers, fighter squadrons and tankers in support of Israel’s war throughout the region.



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