

Unicef's urgent call for ceasefire as children's lives hang in the balance

By  Katja Hamilton

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Unicef has issued a stark warning that the conditions in Gaza are rapidly deteriorating, and the tragic consequence of the recent escalation will be reflected in the precious lives of children.



Source: Unicef/Mohammad Ajjour. Amal, 7 years old, contemplates her neighbourhood in the wake of the houses being levelled to the ground.

It is calling for all access crossings into Gaza to be opened for safe, sustained and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid, including water, food, medical supplies, and fuel.

Last night, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asserted that his country would not entertain a ceasefire, as it would be seen as a surrender to Hamas.

Almost every child in the Gaza Strip has been exposed to widespread destruction, relentless attacks, displacement, and severe shortages of essentials such as food, water, and medicine.

More than half of Gaza's population have fled their home since Israel started bombing the area after an attack by the Palestinian armed group Hamas.

Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini says an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the Middle East is a matter of life and death for millions of people.

He noted one million people, half the population of Gaza, were pushed from the north of the Gaza Strip towards the south in three weeks.

"The south, however, has not been spared from bombardment, with significant numbers killed. Now, civilians remaining in the north are receiving evacuation notices from the Israeli forces, urging them south to receive scarce humanitarian assistance. But many, including pregnant women, people with disabilities, the sick and the wounded, are unable to move. What happened and continues to happen is forced displacement."

Over 670,000 displaced people are now in overcrowded UNRWA schools and buildings.

"They live in appalling, unsanitary conditions, with limited food and water, sleeping on the floor without mattresses, or outside, in the open, Lazzarini said.

"Hunger and despair are turning into anger against the international community."

ABOUT KATJA HAMILTON

Katja is the Finance, Property and Healthcare Editor at Bizcommunity.

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