

UN Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territory

Ramallah

10 September 2024

The UN Human Rights Office deplores the deadly Israeli military strikes in southern Gaza

The UN Human Rights Office deplores the deadly Israeli military strikes overnight on an area that it has unilaterally designated a humanitarian zone, and which is crammed with tents full of internally displaced people in southern Gaza. At least 19 civilians were killed and 60 wounded in the attack involving weapons with wide area effects in the Al Mawasi area of Khan Younis.

Over the past 11 months, the Israeli military has forced most Palestinians in Gaza into an ever diminishing, unilaterally declared, humanitarian zone, where they have made little to no effort to ensure the safety of Palestinian civilians or to provide shelter, food and other necessities of life.

Instead, the Israeli Defense Force continues to choose to use weapons with wide area effects in these increasingly densely populated areas despite the overwhelming evidence that these means and methods have led to disproportionate harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure, suggesting a complete disregard for the lives of Palestinian civilians.

Even if members of Palestinian armed groups were using the presence of civilians in these areas in an attempt to shield themselves from attack, which would violate international humanitarian law, this would not remove the Israeli Defense Force's obligations to comply with the fundamental international humanitarian law principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack.

This latest attack occurred in the same part of the "humanitarian zone", where at least 71 were killed in a similar circumstance on 13 July. This is despite the Israeli military continuing to order Palestinian civilians to evacuate there, including most recently on 24 August. UN Human Rights calls for a prompt, independent and thorough investigation into this latest strike and for those responsible to be held to account.

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