
Gaza: Deadly shelling of another UN school draws condemnation, calls for ceasefire

30 July 2014 – As another United Nations school serving as a shelter for Palestinians in Gaza was hit by shells this morning, killing children, senior UN officials strongly condemned the attacks and warned against the targeting of civilians.

"This is an affront to all of us, a source of universal shame. Today the world stands disgraced," [said](#) the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([UNRWA](#)) Commissioner General, Pierre Krähenbühl.

According to an initial assessment, Israeli artillery on at least three occasions hit an UNRWA school where 3,300 people were seeking refuge. While the agency says it is too early to provide a death toll, there are multiple civilian deaths and injuries, including to women and children, and to UNRWA guards trying to protect the site.

"The precise location of the Jabalia Elementary Girls School and the fact that it was housing thousands of internally displaced people was communicated to the Israeli army seventeen times, to ensure its protection," Mr. Krähenbühl said, "the last being at ten to nine last night, just hours before the fatal shelling."

"I call on the international community to take deliberate international political action to put an immediate end to the continuing carnage," he underscored.

On Tuesday, a compound housing the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process ([UNSCO](#)) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) was hit five times over a period of one hour, according to UN sources.

A preliminary investigation shows that there were also two projectiles that hit the ground just outside the compound. One of which is believed to have hit Gaza's sole power plant. Pending a more formal investigation to ascertain the responsibilities for the shelling of its compound, UNSCO reminded the relevant parties to the conflict of their responsibility to protect UN operations.

The Special Coordinator, Roberterry, "is deeply concerned about this incident and other violations of United Nations premises during the conflict and condemns the loss of civilian lives, including United Nations personnel."

Of the quarter million people displaced in Gaza, an estimated 200,000 are in 82 schools serving as UNRWA shelters, according to OCHA, the equivalent of 10 per cent of Gaza's population.

"Our capacity is stretched to the limit," said Valeria Amos, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is providing emergency food assistance to 204,000 people, in addition to the regular food programmes, and shortages in the markets are reported.

"Given the deteriorating humanitarian situation, peoples' needs will continue to grow," Ms. Amos said, echoing calls for a ceasefire that would end the conflict. "Let's put people first."

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