

Gazans in the north trapped with nowhere to go, as fighting intensifies



Middle East: Beirut and Tehran attacks 'represent a dangerous escalation', Guterres warns

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has urged the international community to prevent escalation in the Middle East, following an Israeli strike on Lebanon's capital and the reported killing of a top Hamas leader in Iran.

"The Secretary-General believes that the attacks we have seen in South Beirut and Tehran represent a dangerous escalation at a moment in which all efforts should instead be leading to a ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all Israeli hostages, a massive increase of humanitarian aid for Palestinians in Gaza and a return to calm in Lebanon and across the Blue Line," UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said in a statement issued on Wednesday.



Residential areas are under attack, hospitals have been ordered to evacuate, and electricity remains cut off, UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said on Monday, citing reports from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Southern Gaza completely overwhelmed

People fleeing northern Gaza have limited options, as southern Gaza is already overcrowded, polluted, and totally lacking in basic services.

"Southern Gaza is completely overwhelmed and cannot accommodate more people," Mr. Dujarric said.

As of Monday morning, more than 50,000 Palestinians, including women and children, have been displaced within northern Gaza, with some patients evacuating hospitals in the affected areas.

"Many others in the north, especially in the Jabalya camp, are trapped in their homes, unable to leave safely. So far, few families have crossed Wadi Gaza heading South," he added.

Mr. Dujarric noted that UN agencies, alongside humanitarian partners, are closely monitoring the movement of people and providing displaced families with essential assistance where possible.

However, OCHA emphasizes that evacuation orders do nothing for civilians if they have no safe place to go or lack access to shelter, food, medicine, or water, he said.

Aid workers are also forced to rely on a single, unsafe road allocated by Israeli authorities for bringing in supplies from the Kerem Shalom crossing, while facing hostilities and violent, armed looting, fuelled by the collapse of public order and safety, he

added.

Situation in Lebanon

Meanwhile, in Lebanon, health services have been severely impacted since tensions escalated following the 7 October attacks last year by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on communities in southern Israel.

Between 8 October 2023 and 4 October 2024, at least 96 primary health care centres and three hospitals have been forced to close due to hostilities, with at least 77 health workers reported killed while on duty.

"Our health partners are supporting the Lebanese health authorities and delivering additional trauma and emergency kits to hospitals. They are also providing medicines," Mr. Dujarric told journalists at the same briefing.

Water infrastructure has also been affected, with at least 25 water facilities damaged, impacting 300,000 people.

"We and our partners are providing hundreds of thousands of litres of drinking water to people in collective shelters," he added.

Displacement continues

He also noted that displacement orders continue, particularly from the south of Lebanon and the southern suburbs of Beirut, the capital.

According to the UN International



Camps in southern Gaza are overcrowded, polluted, and severely lacking in basic services.

Organization for Migration, more than 540,000 people have been displaced since 8 October last year.

In response, UN agencies and partners continue to assist people in need, having delivered over 500,000 hot meals since 23 September, as well as other critical supplies.

"We and our partners, in close collaboration with the Government of Lebanon, continue to lead and coordinate relief efforts for

displaced and affected people," Mr. Dujarric said.

He also highlighted the Flash Appeal launched last week, aiming to provide one million people with lifesaving supplies and protection. However, as of Monday, the appeal is only 12 per cent funded, having received just \$53 million.

"We urge donors to give. Give in cash and give quickly."



Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge receives over 20 million passengers this year

GUANGZHOU -- More than 20 million inbound and outbound passengers have traveled through the Zhuhai port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge so far in 2024, an increase of 86 percent year on year, and exceeding the total volume of the whole of last year, official data released on Friday shows.

This also marks the first time since the official opening of the bridge that the annual passenger flow has exceeded the milestone of 20 million people.