

UN rights chief calls for immediate halt to Gaza takeover



Published on August 8, 2025

Document Date: Sat, Jun 20 2026 05:20:15 am

Category: ,English,International - ,Snippets

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GENEVA, Aug. 8 — UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk has urged Israel to abandon its plan for a full military takeover of the occupied Gaza Strip, warning it would lead to more displacement, deaths, and destruction.

In a statement on Friday, Turk said the move “must be immediately halted” as it violates the

International Court of Justice's ruling that Israel must end its occupation as soon as possible. He stressed that such action undermines the agreed two-state solution and the Palestinian right to self-determination.

“This escalation will result in massive forced displacement, more killing, unbearable suffering, senseless destruction, and atrocity crimes,” Turk cautioned.

He called on Israel to focus instead on protecting civilian lives in Gaza by ensuring the unrestricted flow of humanitarian aid. “All efforts should be directed towards saving lives, not intensifying war,” he said.

Turk also demanded the immediate and unconditional release of hostages held by Palestinian armed groups, as well as the release of Palestinians arbitrarily detained by Israel.

His remarks came after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced that the Security Cabinet had approved a plan to take control of Gaza City.

The UN rights chief's warning adds to growing international concern that continued military escalation will push the already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza beyond breaking point, derailing any prospects for peace.