

UN Secretary-General Calls for International Investigation into Mass Graves Reports in Gaza

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New York, May 01 (QNA) – UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed grave deep alarm over reports of the discovery of mass graves at several locations in Gaza, including Al-Shifa and Nasser hospitals, affirming that “it is imperative that independent international forensic investigators are allowed immediate access.” Guterres said in a statement that the war has “decimated” the health system in the enclave, where two-thirds of hospitals and health centers are out of commission, while many of those remaining are seriously damaged, stressing the need to protect hospitals, health workers and all civilians, and to respect the human rights owed to all. He affirmed that “a military assault on Rafah would “be an unbearable escalation, killing thousands more civilians and forcing hundreds of thousands to flee.” Furthermore, it would have

a devastating impact on Palestinians in Gaza, with serious repercussions in the occupied West Bank and across the wider region, Guterres added.

He urged the international community to “do everything possible to avert an entirely preventable human-made famine.” Guterres explained that one of the main obstacles to the distribution of aid across Gaza is the lack of security for humanitarian workers and for the people who benefit from the services.

He stressed that humanitarian convoys, facilities and personnel as well as people in need “must not be targets.” He called on the Israeli occupation authorities to allow and facilitate safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access for humanitarian aid and humanitarian workers, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), throughout Gaza.

Regarding the settlements and the escalation of settler violence in the West Bank, Guterres reiterated that the settlements are illegal and an obstacle to peace and the two-state solution.

The UN Secretary-General affirmed UN’s full commitment to support the path to peace, on the basis of ending the occupation and establishing a fully independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state that enjoys territorial integrity and sovereignty, of which Gaza is an integral part.

(QNA)