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PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release



RAFAH EVACUATION ORDER WILL COST LIVES, ISLAMIC RELIEF WARNS

Islamic Relief is appalled at news that Israel has told over 100,000 Palestinians to evacuate Rafah, which will put many lives at even greater risk. People must not be forced to move yet again.

People sheltering in eastern parts of Rafah this morning received messages saying the Israel military “is about to operate with great force” in the area, and telling people to evacuate to the so-called humanitarian zone of Al Mawasi “for your own safety”. Heavy bombing in Rafah overnight has reportedly killed many civilians, including several children.

As we have seen over the past seven months, forcing so many people to move is impossible without serious humanitarian cost and people will inevitably die as a result of the evacuation. The sick and wounded, elderly people, newborn infants and people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and often cannot evacuate without support.

The area where people have been ordered to move – al Mawasi – has been designated a so-called ‘safe humanitarian zone’ but it is not safe. Civilians sheltering there say they continue to face attacks and severe shortages of food, water and other vital aid. Forcing more people there will make the humanitarian crisis even worse.

Islamic Relief reiterates that civilians must be protected regardless of whether they stay or leave Rafah. Ordering people to leave does not absolve Israel of its obligations under international humanitarian law to refrain from harming civilians who cannot, or choose not to, leave.

For many weeks, Islamic Relief and other humanitarian agencies have been warning that an invasion of Rafah must not be allowed to go ahead and will have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. More than 1.2 million people are now sheltering in dire conditions in Rafah, and many of them have been forced to move several times over the past seven months.

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About Islamic Relief

Islamic Relief is an independent international humanitarian aid and development organization. Islamic Relief is headquartered in the United Kingdom and was founded in 1984. Islamic Relief serves in more than 45 countries, assisting more than 120 million people. The scope of Islamic Relief assistance covers emergency assistance, integrated sustainable development, disaster risk reduction, and advocacy.

Islamic Relief has been operating in Syria since 2011 and in Turkey since 2012 by implementing various humanitarian aid projects involving the emergency sector, health, food, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, shelter, and sustainable livelihood.

About Islamic Relief Malaysia

Islamic Relief Malaysia was established in 2005, which aspires to continue Islamic Relief humanitarian assistance in the Asia-Pacific region. Islamic Relief Malaysia serves as a fundraising and project implementer for international and local projects.

Kindly visit the Islamic Relief Malaysia website, www.islamic-relief.org.my for more information.

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