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Israeli Shelling of UN Compound Utterly Inexcusable, as Death Toll Exceeds 1,000

Brussels, 16 January 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC condemns yesterday's shelling by the Israeli military, apparently using white phosphorus, of the UN compound in Gaza as utterly inexcusable, as Israel pushes further into Gaza city with the loss of yet more civilian lives. Three UN workers were injured and vital aid supplies were destroyed in the attack, which according to UN officials in Gaza included the use of white phosphorus munitions in close proximity to civilians, a serious violation of international humanitarian law. Reports from Gaza reveal that the death toll is now above 1,100 including more than 350 children, with over 5,000 injured.

"People are terrified for their lives, and innocent people across Gaza, trapped in overcrowded and horrendous conditions with no chance of escape, are facing constant danger of death. The violence in has to stop, and the refusal to heed global calls for an immediate cease-fire is appalling", said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

Repeated allegations of illegal use of white phosphorus have added to the international criticism of Israel's conduct of the war, with Ban Ki-moon describing the attack on the UN compound as outrageous.

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 311 affiliated national organisations from 155 countries. <http://www.ituc-csi.org>
<http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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