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Statement by Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, on Rafah

(14 February 2024) – The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, echoes concerns expressed by other senior UN officials about the reported plans for a full military incursion in Rafah, which would almost certainly have disastrous consequences for the civilians in the area, both those who live there and the more than a million internally displaced persons who have taken refuge in Rafah fleeing the violence that has afflicted them in the rest of the Gaza Strip.

“It is imperative that the protection of civilians is prioritized, and that international humanitarian law is respected at all times. Enough of violence and enough of suffering of those who are most vulnerable, in Rafah and in the entire Gaza Strip. The risk of commission of atrocity crimes should a full military incursion into Rafah take place, is serious, real and high,” said the Special Adviser.

The Special Adviser also emphasized the imperative of releasing all hostages unconditionally, of ensuring that humanitarian aid can reach those who need it most, and of accelerating all possible venues for dialogue so that further violence can be prevented, and a sustainable ceasefire be put in place.

“Since 7 October, civilians in the region have experienced and continue to experience an insurmountable level of suffering. This must end and must end now.”

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For media queries please contact:
Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect
<http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention>
Email: osapg@un.org