

# Food used as weapon of war in US-Israeli militarization of aid in Gaza

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Gaza is now described by the United Nations as the “hungriest place on Earth,” with its entire population of 2.2 million at risk of famine due to Israel’s ongoing military campaign and systematic use of starvation tactics.

The UN’s humanitarian mission to Gaza is considered “the most obstructed in recent history,” with aid convoys blocked or restricted at crossings. Jens Laerke of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) stated,

The aid operation we have prepared is constrained by an operational straitjacket, rendering it one of the most obstructed relief efforts, not just globally today, but in recent times.

On the ground, Palestinians describe a life of relentless hunger and deprivation. One resident told Al Jazeera, “I [have] no flour, no oil, no sugar, [no] food. [I] collect moldy bread... I want flour for my children. I want to eat. I’m hungry.”

Hani Mahmoud, reporting from Gaza City, noted that the north, including Gaza City itself, has received no aid in recent days, while those in central and southern areas like Khan Younis and Rafah struggle daily to secure even basic staples such as flour.

Aid distribution has become one more means for the slaughter of Palestinians by Israel. Save the Children reports that dozens have been killed and injured by Israel Defense Forces (IDF) at militarized aid sites, where desperate civilians are directed to collect insufficient food parcels, only to be fired upon.

Ahmad Alhendawi, Save the Children’s regional director, condemned the situation:

This is aid to which people are legally entitled—aid that has been systematically denied. This is a blatant

and shocking disregard of international humanitarian law.

The US- and Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) is now the main channel for aid into Gaza. The US State Department is considering a \$500 million contribution, which would make it the largest donor and thereby effectively “own” the operation. The GHF claims to deliver food and medicine to hundreds of thousands, but its model is widely recognized as deepening the crisis.

Humanitarian groups and UN agencies say that the GHF’s approach violates basic humanitarian principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality, and that it is designed to serve Israeli and US interests in the displacement of Gaza’s civilian population. The World Food Program (WFP) stated,

The GHF operation is a violation of humanitarian principles... WFP and its partners must also be allowed to distribute food parcels directly to families—the most effective way to prevent widespread starvation.

Instead, the GHF has replaced hundreds of local distribution points with a handful of “secure sites,” forcing Palestinians to cross dangerous terrain and pass through biometric checkpoints just to receive basic rations. These hubs provide only dry goods, with little regard for the lack of clean water or fuel for cooking. The result is a crude dumping of commodities, not a genuine relief effort.

A June 6 analysis by the International Crisis Group called, “The Gaza Starvation Experiment,” describes the GHF as an integral part of Israel’s military strategy, turning food into a weapon of war. Since the war began, Israel has tightly controlled aid, easing restrictions only under intense international scrutiny and tightening them as attention

wanes.

The Crisis Group writes:

The world, it seems, is witnessing an experiment: an attempt to indefinitely maintain Gaza's population below the famine threshold while turning food into a weapon of war. With Gaza's local food production capacity nearly destroyed, controlling the crossings now means controlling survival itself.

According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), all 2.2 million Palestinians in Gaza face life-threatening food insecurity: over half are in "Emergency" (Phase 4), surviving on scraps, and nearly a quarter are in "Catastrophe" (Phase 5), where food vanishes and communities collapse. The GHF promises 1,750 calories per day for those who reach its hubs—well below the 2,279 calories per day that Israel itself once deemed the minimum to avoid malnutrition.

The Crisis Group concludes:

The result is calibrated starvation as policy, not side effect. The bottleneck has never been logistics but decision-making: how much deprivation serves Israel's purposes versus how much risk it poses to the country's international standing.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Situation Report #174, released on June 7, 2025, paints a dire picture of the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and the West Bank. According to the report, between October 7, 2023, and June 4, 2025, at least 54,607 Palestinians have been killed, with the majority in Gaza, and tens of thousands more injured.

The report highlights that the population faces "unprecedented levels of hunger, displacement, and trauma," with over 1.7 million people—about 75 percent of Gaza's population—displaced, many of them multiple times.

UNRWA warns that its ability to deliver life-saving aid is "on the verge of collapse." The agency's health, education, and food distribution systems are crippled by ongoing hostilities, lack of fuel, and repeated attacks on its facilities. The report states, "UNRWA's capacity to provide even the most basic assistance is rapidly diminishing as stocks run out and staff are killed or injured in the line of duty."

The blockade and restrictions on humanitarian access continue to prevent the entry of essential supplies, including

food, water and medicine. UNRWA emphasizes that "the risk of famine remains acute," with malnutrition and waterborne diseases spreading rapidly, especially among children. The agency calls for "unimpeded humanitarian access, protection of civilians, and an immediate ceasefire" to prevent further loss of life and irreversible harm to the population.

The latest report underscores the systematic deprivation and escalating emergency faced by Palestinians, reinforcing warnings from humanitarian groups that Gaza is on the brink of a complete social collapse.

As the humanitarian crisis deepens, international activists have sought to break the blockade. The Freedom Flotilla, which includes climate activist Greta Thunberg, is preparing to deliver aid directly to Gaza. Israel has threatened to intercept the flotilla, warning that any attempt to breach the blockade will be stopped, including the use of force if necessary.

Israeli officials have stated they will "not allow the flotilla to reach Gaza's shores," citing security concerns.

US officials have echoed Israel's hard line against the Freedom Flotilla. The White House, when asked about the flotilla's mission, stated that "no unauthorized vessels will be allowed to approach Gaza" and that the US would support "all necessary measures" to enforce the blockade.

Republican Senator from South Carolina Lindsey Graham went even further, issuing a chilling warning specifically referencing Swedish climate activist Thunberg. Graham stated, "If Greta Thunberg and her friends try to break the blockade, they'd better know how to swim."

This statement illustrates the willingness of the US government to threaten violence against peaceful humanitarian efforts. Graham's words are part of the escalating threats facing those who attempt to break through the blockade and bring desperately needed relief to Gaza's starving population.

Gaza faces a man-made famine, enforced not just by bombs and bullets but by the deliberate manipulation of aid and food as tools of imperialist war and genocide. The world is witnessing, in real time, the use of starvation as a weapon of ethnic cleansing against Palestinians, a crime against humanity of historic proportions.



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