

Famine officially declared in Gaza

Andre Damon
22 August 2025

The UN-affiliated body that monitors mass hunger has for the first time officially declared a famine in Gaza City and warned that other areas of Gaza will soon face famine.

The announcement by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is the first time that the organization has declared a famine outside of Africa.

The declaration of a famine in Gaza stands as yet another piece of evidence that Israel, with the support of the imperialist powers, is deliberately seeking to exterminate the Palestinian people through mass starvation.

The IPC noted that recent months have seen the “most severe deterioration” since the Israeli onslaught on Gaza began in October 2023.

The report warned that “this famine is entirely man-made.” It added that “after 22 months of relentless conflict, over half a million people in the Gaza Strip are facing catastrophic conditions characterized by starvation, destitution, and death.”

It warned that “through June 2026, at least 132,000 children under five are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition—double the IPC estimates from May 2025.”

The IPC blamed the famine on the complete cutoff of humanitarian aid deliveries by Israel earlier this year. It noted that “the complete halt of humanitarian and commercial food deliveries in March and April, followed by critically low volumes through July, coupled with the collapse of local food production, has led to extreme food shortages.”

After Israel halted food deliveries into the country, it largely forced the shutdown of the operation of legitimate humanitarian organizations within the country and replaced them with a US-Israeli outfit known as the “Gaza Humanitarian Foundation” (GHF).

The GHF turned the distribution of meager food rations in southern Gaza into the occasion for

massacring desperate and hungry civilians, opening fire on dozens of occasions and killing hundreds of people. The food distributed at these death trap facilities are mere starvation rations, aimed at luring the population to the south in order to trap them in concentration camps.

Responding to the report, UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher said that “it is a famine that we could have prevented had we been allowed. ... Yet food stacks up at borders because of systematic obstruction by Israel.”

The IPC has only declared famines four times in the past: in Somalia in 2011, South Sudan in 2017 and 2020, and Sudan in 2024. The organization defines famine as two people out of every 10,000 dying daily from starvation or malnutrition, and one in three children actively malnourished.

Responding to the report, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the famine in Gaza as a “man-made disaster, a moral indictment, and a failure of humanity itself.”

He added, “As the occupying power, Israel has unequivocal obligations under international law—including the duty of ensuring food and medical supplies for the population. We cannot allow this situation to continue with impunity.”

UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher added, “It is a famine that we repeatedly warned of. But that the international media has not been allowed in to cover. ... A 21st-century famine watched over by drones and the most advanced military technology in history. It is a famine openly promoted by some Israeli leaders as a weapon of war. It is a famine on all of our watch. Everyone owns this. The Gaza Famine is the world’s famine. It is a famine that asks ‘but what did you do?’”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded to the report in Hitlerian fashion, not only denying the famine but claiming that the occupying

force imposing it on the Palestinian population is seeking to save them from hunger. “Israel does not have a policy of starvation. Israel has a policy of preventing starvation,” he said. “Israel will continue to act responsibly, ensuring aid reaches Gaza’s civilians while destroying Hamas’s terror machine.”

Several imperialist backers of the Gaza genocide responded to the findings of the IPC with hypocritical criticism of Israel. In a statement, UK Foreign Secretary David Lamy said that “the confirmation of famine in Gaza City is utterly horrifying and wholly preventable. The Israeli government’s refusal to allow sufficient aid into Gaza has caused this man-made catastrophe. This is a moral outrage.”

But the UK, along with the other imperialist powers, has repeatedly stated that Israel has the “right to defend itself” against the people it illegally occupies and whose land it is attempting to annex. The British government has repeatedly prosecuted and jailed critics of the Gaza genocide.

According to figures from Gaza’s Health Ministry, 89 people in Gaza were killed by malnutrition or starvation in the first seven months of the year. But this month so far 138 people have died from starvation.

“We are seeing the worst possible humanitarian catastrophe that we can even measure,” said Jeanette Bailey, a spokesperson for the International Rescue Committee, in a statement.

“Without consistent entry and distribution of items like specialized supplementary feeding items—high-energy biscuits and fortified foods—we are watching a preventable crisis turn into a widespread nutrition emergency,” Antoine Renard, a spokesperson for the World Food Programme, told Reuters. “At first, it affects the most vulnerable groups, but of course, that will broaden,” he added.

From June to August, the number of children suffering wasting from food shortages nearly doubled, hitting more than 12,000, the World Health Organization said.

The declaration of famine came just days after the Israeli military announced the launch of its long-planned attack on Gaza City, which is aimed at the total military conquest of Gaza in preparation for the roundup of its population to concentration camps and their forcible displacement from their ancestral land.

Last week, the UN Office of the High Commissioner

for Human Rights warned that the attack on Gaza City “risks triggering an unprecedented, life-threatening humanitarian crisis.”

The proclamation of famine by the IPC comes just one day after a joint investigation by the *Guardian*, *+972 Magazine*, and *Local Call* revealed that, according to Israel’s own figures, civilians accounted for about 83 percent of the total death toll in Gaza.

The publications obtained military intelligence estimates that listed 8,900 fighters from Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad as “probably” or confirmed dead. Over the same period, a total of 53,000 people in Gaza were reported killed, meaning that alleged fighters amounted to just 17 percent of the death toll. This massive level of civilian death is almost totally unprecedented in modern warfare.

Erika Guevara Rosas, a spokesperson for Amnesty International, said “this famine is the direct consequence of Israel’s deliberate campaign of starvation in Gaza. ... The deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid, the destruction of life-sustaining infrastructure, and the direct killings of civilians are a clear manifestation of how Israel is inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Palestinians in Gaza as part of its ongoing genocide.”



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact