



# As part of its escalating policy of forced displacement, Israel intensifies killing of hungry civilians west of Gaza City



📅 29 Feb 2024

📍 Israel-Palestinian Territory

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**Geneva** - Israeli army forces opened fire at thousands of Palestinian civilians awaiting aid supplies west and south of Gaza City, killing at least 100 of them and wounding 600 others, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor said in a statement issued Thursday.

The Euro-Med Monitor field team documented the brutal Israeli massacre of Palestinians earlier today. The rights group confirmed that Israeli tanks opened fire and shells at around 4:30 a.m. on Thursday 29 February directly into a crowd of thousands of hungry civilians who had been waiting hours for aid trucks to arrive near the Nabulsi roundabout on Al-Rashid Street in southwest Gaza.

After the aid trucks arrived, Palestinian civilians were targeted by Israeli shelling and shooting. Numerous people fell from the trucks while attempting to take a bag of flour, and many others were targeted while carrying a carton of canned goods or a bag of flour to feed their starving family members.

Al-Shifa Hospital's Euro-Med Monitor researcher reported that hundreds of injured and dead people had arrived at the facility, which is only partially operational. She emphasised that there was a significant stampede and a current shortage of medical personnel, and that citizens have been left to deal with the injured and attempt to administer first aid themselves in the midst of an agonising situation. Carts full of the dead and injured arrived at the hospital, some of them with bags of flour drenched in blood.

“We went to get aid and flour near the sea, but they opened fire on us at around 4:30 in the morning today,” Saeed Thabet Salem Al-Rifi told the Euro-Med Monitor team. As soon as the trucks pulled up and people began to approach them, Al-Rifi said, “Gunfire broke out from all directions...turning the situation into a slaughterhouse. I got a bag of flour to feed my 11-member family, but my companion was killed.”

“We reached the Nabulsi roundabout and as soon as the trucks arrived, the tanks started shooting and shelling from all directions,” Anas Sobhi Abdel-Al told Euro-Med Monitor. Only one out of 10 individuals managed to get any aid, according to Abdel-Al: “Many people were killed or seriously hurt while transporting canned food or flour bags. The shooting was focused on the trucks and the surrounding area. The trucks were filled with the dead and wounded.”

The Israeli army is actively executing the remaining civilians in Gaza City and the Gaza Strip’s northern region, claiming that aid is limited to the region of Al-Mawasi in the southern section of the Strip. Israel’s starvation campaign, stated Euro-Med Monitor, is part of its genocidal war against Palestinians in the Strip, ongoing since 7 October 2023.

The rights organisation warned that Israel is deliberately deepening the catastrophic starvation crisis for all Gazans by depriving them of basic necessities and obstructing the entry and distribution of humanitarian supplies, especially in

Gaza City and the northern Strip, with the aim of forcibly displacing the Palestinian people there.

Residents of Gaza City and the Gaza Strip's northern areas testified to the Euro-Med Monitor team that they have received phone calls from the Israeli army in recent days ordering them to evacuate to the central and southern parts of the Strip in order to receive food and water and avoid starvation.

Residents testified that they received recorded messages from the Israeli army informing them that humanitarian aid is only permitted in the area of Al-Mawasi, as they are still "operating forcefully" in other areas.

Despite the enormous, growing needs of the over 2.3 million people living in appalling conditions, humanitarian supplies that entered the Gaza Strip in February fell by 50% compared to January, said Euro-Med Monitor. In spite of increasing international pressure on Israel and its allies, as well as the International Court of Justice's decision to increase the entry of commercial supplies and life-saving aid—and to ensure their entry and distribution in a rapid, effective, and unhindered manner—February saw an average of just 98 trucks enter the Gaza Strip each day, which is roughly half the number of trucks that entered in January.

The number of trucks entering Gaza prior to 7 October was 500 per day, stressed Euro-Med Monitor, but the actual needs of the Gaza Strip's residents now exceed even this amount of foreign

aid. This is because Israel has broadly targeted the population's basic needs, plus the Strip's capabilities of internal domestic production, either by bombing and destroying or by cutting off all sources of production including fuel, electricity, and raw materials, amid a total, brutal Israeli siege over the past five months.

Additionally, the population of the Gaza Strip has more medical needs than ever before, particularly for the sick and injured, women, children, and the elderly. These needs are brought on by the massive number of daily casualties and injuries due to the Israeli military's attacks, the rapid spread of infectious diseases and epidemics, and absence of health staff due to the Israeli destruction, siege, and supply disruption.

Euro-Med Monitor contended that Israel has not only decreased the number of humanitarian aid trucks allowed into the Gaza Strip, but has undermined the distribution of aid and protection mechanisms as part of its plan to fully depopulate Gaza City and the northern Strip. Israel's aim, said the rights group, is to force the Palestinians to evacuate to the south under military violence, intimidation, and the use of starvation as a weapon.

Although there is some hope that the air-dropped food and other supplies that have been permitted to enter the Strip in recent days will partially make up for the reduction in aid arriving via land, there is still a risk of widespread famine and a sharp increase in

malnutrition among the entire population of Gaza City and its north, especially the elderly, children, and pregnant and lactating women.

Euro-Med Monitor stated that it holds the United Nations and the international community responsible for the failure, to date, to establish suitable channels for delivering humanitarian aid to feed the hungry, and called them complicit in the killing and starvation operations that have targeted hundreds of thousands of Gazan civilians.

The human rights organisation urged all countries to establish a direct air bridge to the Gaza Strip, conduct frequent and heavy airdrops over the entire Strip, particularly Gaza City and the northern Strip, and take part in confronting and foiling the Israeli plan to forcefully displace Palestinians from the Strip—a plan that has repeatedly been forewarned against by multiple nations since the start of Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip.

Euro-Med Monitor emphasised that the intentional and illegal killings and extrajudicial executions committed by the Israeli army against Palestinians in their civilian capacity—i.e. against Palestinians who were not involved in any hostilities—amount to grave violations of international humanitarian law and are apparent war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes that fall under the purview of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. These crimes also constitute acts of genocide against the Gaza Strip's population, which the rights group

reiterated that Israel has been committing since 7 October. The crimes violate the right of Palestinians to life, in accordance with international human rights law.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor renewed calls for the formation of an independent international investigation committee specialising in the ongoing military attack on the Gaza Strip, and for the enabling of the independent international investigation committee concerned with the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which was formed back in 2021, to carry out its work. The committee formed in 2021 must be ensured access to the Gaza Strip and be allowed to open necessary investigations into all crimes and violations committed against Palestinians there.

Euro-Med Monitor urged the international community to apply pressure to Israel from all sides, using all available tools, in order to stop it from carrying out its illegal policies, particularly the forced displacement and eviction of Palestinian citizens and the use of starvation as a weapon of mass destruction against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

Rather than expanding aid operations and making it easier for humanitarian supplies to enter the Gaza Strip, Israel has purposefully increased its restrictions on aid trucks attempting to access the enclave, asserted Euro-Med Monitor. Israel has also continued to carry out military operations, leading to the

breakdown of civil order and deepening of the widespread humanitarian crisis in the Strip. Not only that, but Israeli security measures make it extremely difficult to allow supplies through Rafah and Kerem Shalom, the two border crossings designated for humanitarian aid entry.



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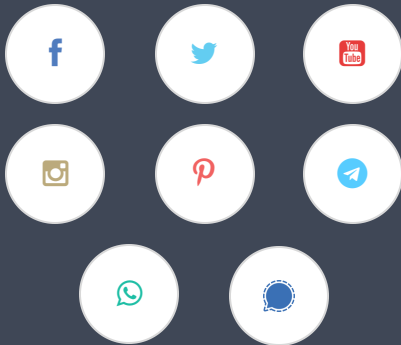
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