

PEOPLE IN NORTHERN GAZA FORCED TO SURVIVE ON 245 CALORIES A DAY, LESS THAN A CAN OF BEANS

Press Releases

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Miniscule amount is less than 12% of average daily calorie needs

People in northern Gaza have been forced to survive on an average of 245 calories a day - less than a can of fava beans - since January, as Israeli forces continue their military onslaught. Over 300,000 people are believed to still be trapped there, unable to leave.

The miniscule amount of food represents less than 12 per cent of the recommended daily 2,100 calorie intake needed per person, calculated using demographic data considering variations by age and gender. Last week, the Israeli government told UNRWA, by far the largest aid provider in Gaza, that its convoys would no longer be allowed into the north.

Oxfam's analysis is based on the latest available data used in the recent Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis for the Gaza Strip. Oxfam also found that the total food deliveries allowed into Gaza for the entire 2.2 million population - since last October - amounted to an average of just 41 per cent of the daily calories needed per person.

The Israeli government has known for nearly two decades exactly how many daily calories are needed to prevent malnutrition in Gaza, calculating this according to both age and gender within its *Food Consumption in the Gaza Strip - Red Line* document. Not only did it use a

higher calculation of 2,279 calories per person, it also took into account domestic food production in Gaza, which the Israeli military has now virtually obliterated.

A mother trapped in northern Gaza said “Before the war, we were in good health and had strong bodies. Now, looking at my children and myself, we have lost so much weight since we do not eat any proper food, we are trying to eat whatever we find - edible wild plants or herbs daily just to survive.”

Oxfam also found that less than half the number of food trucks needed to reach the daily 2,100 calories intake for everyone are currently entering Gaza. Using IPC and UNRWA data, Oxfam’s analysis found that an absolute minimum of 221 trucks of food alone are needed every day, not accounting for wastage or unequal distribution. Currently just 105 trucks of food are entering Gaza daily on average.

The IPC report found that famine is imminent in northern Gaza and that almost all the population is now experiencing extreme hunger; with 1.1 million people experiencing catastrophic food insecurity. Horrifyingly, children are already dying from starvation and malnutrition, often worsened by disease.

Hunger and its impacts are exacerbated by the near-complete destruction of civilian infrastructure including hospitals, water and sanitation services and community health support by Israel, leaving people even more vulnerable to disease. In addition to the limited availability of food, the ability to find or buy a nutritious, varied diet is not feasible across Gaza. For the little fruit and vegetables still available, extreme price rises due to scarcity have put them out of reach for most people. Specialised nutrition products and centres to treat malnourished children are also difficult or impossible to find.

Amitabh Behar, Oxfam International Executive Director said “Israel is making deliberate choices to starve civilians. Imagine what it is like, not only to be trying to survive on 245 calories day in, day out, but also having to watch your children or elderly relatives do the same. All whilst displaced, with little to no access to clean water or a toilet, knowing most medical support has gone and under the constant threat of drones and bombs.

“Israel is ignoring both the International Court of Justice order to prevent genocide and UN Security Council resolutions. Only last week the ICJ ordered new provisional measures, stating famine is no longer looming, but ‘setting in’ in Gaza. All countries need to immediately stop supplying arms to Israel and do all they can to secure an immediate and permanent ceasefire; only then can we stop this horrifying carnage for the 2.2 million people who have endured six months of suffering. Israel cannot weaponize starvation any longer.”

Oxfam is calling for a permanent ceasefire, the return of all hostages and the release of unlawfully detained Palestinian prisoners, for countries to immediately stop supplying arms to Israel and for full humanitarian aid access. The global response for Gaza must include

both adequate and nutritious food for everyone, the full restoration of hospitals and health services, water, and sanitation infrastructure and for all reconstruction materials to be allowed across the border.

Ends

Notes to editor

Oxfam's calculations are available upon request

2,100 kilocalories per person is the averaged daily energy requirement used in the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) [report](#) (18 March). It was calculated using demographic data considering variations by age and gender. The population of Gaza stated is 2.23 million people.

The average daily calories per person in northern Gaza was calculated using IPC data from 7 January to 20 February inclusive. The average daily calories per person for the entire population of Gaza, is from IPC data between 26 October to 20 February inclusive. IPC used an in-depth analysis of all food truck manifests allowed into Gaza from 26 October to 20 February, to generate approximate kilocalorie values per truck and per unit of analysis then distributed per area.

Oxfam calculated the average kilocalories per food truck using the IPC data of all food truck manifests allowed into Gaza from 26 October to 20 February.

[UNRWA](#) data shows that 3,781 food trucks were allowed to enter Gaza from 21 February to 27 March inclusive – an average of 105 food trucks per day. This excludes the 301 mixed items trucks over this period - 8 trucks a day – which may have included food as part of the consignment. Based on the 2,100 kilocalories per person daily energy requirement, across the 2.2 million population, Oxfam calculated that 221 food trucks per day minimum are needed each day.

The Israeli government was forced to release [Food Consumption in the Gaza Strip – Red Lines](#) in October 2012, following a long legal battle by Israeli human rights organisation Gisha. The document included information about the policy of restricting the entrance of food to the Gaza Strip, which was in effect between 2007 and 2010, calculating the exact number of calories and the weight of various basic food items Gaza residents require, according to age and gender, to avoid malnutrition and hunger.

A 400g can of fava beans contains between 250 and 340 calories.

The [UN](#) and other agencies have reported children are dying of starvation in Gaza.

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