

# STARVATION AS WEAPON OF WAR BEING USED AGAINST GAZA CIVILIANS

Press Releases

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*Just 2 per cent of usual food delivered to Gaza since siege imposed*

Starvation is being used as a weapon of war against Gaza civilians, Oxfam said today as it renewed its call for food, water, fuel and other essentials to be allowed to enter.

The international agency analysed UN data and found that just 2 per cent of food that would have been delivered has entered Gaza since the total siege - which tightened the existing blockade - was imposed on 9 October; following the atrocious attacks by Hamas and the taking of Israeli civilian hostages. While a small amount of food aid has been allowed in, no commercial food imports have been delivered.

As the escalation of the conflict extends to its 19th day, a staggering 2.2 million people are now in urgent need of food. Prior to the hostilities, 104 trucks a day would deliver food to the besieged Gaza Strip, one truck every 14 minutes.

Despite 62 trucks of aid being allowed to enter southern Gaza via the Rafah crossing since the weekend, only 30 contained food and in some cases, not exclusively so. This amounts to just one truck every three hours and 12 minutes since Saturday.

Sally Abi Khalil, Oxfam's Regional Middle East Director said: "The situation is nothing short of horrific - where is humanity? Millions of civilians are being collectively punished in full view of the world, there can be no justification for using starvation as a weapon of war. World leaders cannot continue to sit back and watch, they have an obligation to act and to act now.

“Every day the situation worsens. Children are experiencing severe trauma from the constant bombardment, their drinking water is polluted or rationed and soon families may not be able to feed them too. How much more are Gazans expected to endure?”

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) strictly prohibits the use of starvation as a method of warfare and as the occupying power in Gaza, Israel is bound by IHL obligations to provide for the needs and protection of the population of Gaza. In 2018, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2417, which unanimously condemned the use of starvation against civilians as a method of warfare and declared any denial of humanitarian access a violation of international law. Oxfam said that it is becoming painfully clear that the unfolding humanitarian situation in Gaza squarely fits the prohibition condemned in the resolution.

Clean water has now virtually run out. It's estimated that only three litres of clean water is now available per person – the UN said that a minimum of 15 litres a day is essential for people in the most acute humanitarian emergencies as a bare minimum. Bottled water stocks are running low and the cost of bottled water has already surged beyond the reach of an average Gaza family, with prices spiking fivefold in some places. A spokesperson for the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNWRA) pointed out that some of the food aid allowed in - rice and lentils - is useless, because people do not have clean water or fuel to prepare them.

A series of airstrikes have left several bakeries and supermarkets either destroyed or damaged. Those that are still functional, can't meet the local demand for fresh bread and are at risk of shutting down due to the shortage of essentials like flour and fuel. Gaza's only operative wheat mill is redundant due to the power outages. The Palestinian Water Authority says Gaza's water production is now a mere 5 per cent of its normal total, which is expected to reduce further, unless water and sanitation facilities are provided with electricity or fuel to resume its activity.

Notably, essential food items, like flour, oil and sugar, are still stocked in warehouses that haven't been destroyed. But as many of them are located in Gaza city, it is proving physically impossible to deliver items due to the lack of fuel, damaged roads and risks from airstrikes.

The electricity blackout has also disrupted food supplies by affecting refrigeration, crop irrigation, and crop incubation devices. Over 15,000 farmers have lost their crop production and 10,000 livestock breeders have little access to fodder, with many having lost their animals. Oxfam said that the siege, combined with the airstrikes, has crippled the fishing industry with hundreds of people who rely on fishing losing access to the sea.

Oxfam is urging the UN Security Council and UN Member States to act immediately to prevent the situation from deteriorating even further. And is calling for an immediate ceasefire, unfettered, equitable access to the entire Gaza Strip for humanitarian aid, and all necessary food, water, medical and fuel supplies for the needs of the population to be met.

## Ends

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## Notes to editor

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) data on food deliveries to Gaza prior to the siege can be found [here](#) - this includes both humanitarian food aid and imports

OCHA [updates](#) show that a total of 62 trucks of aid have been allowed to enter Gaza via the Rafah crossing from Saturday 21 – Tuesday 24 October.

Saturday 21 October - 20 trucks entered via Rafah, 5 of which contained food.

Sunday 22 October - 14 trucks entered via Rafah, 12 of which contained food.

Monday 23 October - 20 trucks entered, 11 of which contained food.

Tuesday 24 October- 8 trucks entered, 2 of which contained food.

UN Security Council resolution [UNSC 2417](#) – Protection of civilians in armed conflict

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