



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (EAFORD)

2024 marks 48 years of **EAFORD's** Dedication
To Upholding and Promoting the International Convention on the Elimination of
All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Joint Statement:

Gaza's Famine should be Officially Declared Amidst Israel's Use of Starvation as a Weapon



Geneva - All relevant official authorities and competent UN and international institutions should officially declare famine in the Gaza Strip in light of the current rapid spread of famine and the rates of acute malnutrition and its expansion geographically and among all groups, especially among children, said 70 organizations in a joint statement.

Food insecurity is increasing throughout the Gaza Strip due to Israel's use of starvation as a weapon of war against the Palestinian people, which the organizations said is part of a larger crime of genocide.

The organizations stated that food security levels have significantly declined as a result of the Israeli army's ground operation in Rafah City, south of the Gaza Strip, which began on 7 May and was preceded the day before by blocking the entry of humanitarian aid trucks through the Rafah crossing. Thousands of trucks on the other side of the Rafah crossing have been at a standstill for weeks and are inaccessible to the residents whose lives depend on them due to Israel's decision to starve the people of the Gaza Strip, close the crossings, and prevent the entry of aid.

They called on Israel to act immediately to implement the precautionary measures announced by the International Court of Justice regarding the opening of the Rafah crossing in order to provide basic services and much-needed humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza.

The majority of goods entering the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom (Kerem Abu Salem) crossing are intended for merchants, and the residents, many of whom have lost their livelihoods, must purchase them. Despite the limited aid provided by Israel, it is insufficient to meet the increasing needs of the growing number of displaced people in the south.

These goods are completely inaccessible to the areas north of the Gaza Valley, including Gaza City and the northern parts of the Gaza Strip, where residents are facing severe shortages of essential food supplies such as vegetables, meat, and other dietary necessities.

On May 11, the northern Gaza Strip experienced another downturn as Israeli forces resumed a fierce military campaign against Jabalia and its camp. Tens of thousands were compelled to flee their homes, carrying only their scant food supplies and belongings, or seeking refuge.

Over 800,000 residents and internally displaced individuals were forcibly evacuated from Rafah to the west of Khan Yunis and Deir al-Balah, most of them leaving with minimal possessions and food supplies. Simultaneously, approximately 100,000 people were evacuated from Jabalia, including its camp, and Beit Lahia, in the north of the Gaza Strip, to the west of Gaza City.

With the crossings closed and humanitarian aid being prevented from entering, the threat of famine and acute malnutrition has resurfaced and swiftly spread, affecting the 2.3 million people living in the Gaza Strip, half of whom are children. This impact is particularly felt in the northern Gaza Valley where essential supplies such as food and medicine have run out.

The collapse of job opportunities, lack of cash flow, and local production has rendered all Gaza residents dependent on foreign humanitarian aid. Without it, they would lack access to essential food and necessities for survival.

Only a small amount of very low-quality aid was delivered through the floating pier, with the majority of it not distributed throughout the Strip. Seemingly, the pier is just an official tool designed by the US to defuse criticism leveled at Israel for continuing its starvation crime and prevent relief supplies from reaching the country by land.

According to reports from various United Nations agencies, international humanitarian organizations, and the International Court of Justice, land border crossings continue to be the most efficient means of delivering aid.

The second report from the working group responsible for this classification, which addresses the food situation in the Gaza Strip, confirmed that the entire population in the Gaza Strip (2.23 million people), including the governorates of Deir al-Balah, Khan Yunis, and Rafah, are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity, with half of them in IPC Phase 5, or the disaster/famine stage.

According to this report, which was released on 18 March, all three famine thresholds have either been reached or are highly likely to be reached in the North Gaza and Gaza City governorates. In these areas, the famine threshold for acute food insecurity has already been reached, the famine threshold for acute malnutrition has most likely already been reached, and the famine threshold for mortality is anticipated to accelerate and be exceeded soon. Due to these factors, the IPC came to the conclusion that famine is predicted to strike at any point between the report's publication date and May.

Even before the recent rapid deterioration of the Gaza Strip's food situation, the estimates contained in this report — based on internationally approved technical foundations and equations — were raising alarms about the urgent need for action to halt the spread of famine and reverse its effects. Israel's closure of the land crossings for weeks exacerbated this situation.

Israel maintains complete control over all land and sea crossings into the Gaza Strip, enforcing an illegal blockade that has led to widespread destruction of civilian homes, livelihoods, and agricultural lands. This blockade has resulted in a catastrophic humanitarian and food crisis affecting the entire population, providing conclusive evidence of Israel's use of starvation as a method of war. These devastating effects prompted the International Criminal Court's Prosecutor to file requests for arrest warrants against the Israeli Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, accusing them of using starvation as a method of war.

The majority of Gaza's population already suffers from extreme hunger, with thousands of tons of weight collectively lost in recent months. Hundreds of thousands of children and elderly individuals, in particular, are experiencing emaciation.

While health authorities have officially recorded 30 deaths due to famine, estimates suggest that famine-related deaths occur nearly daily, compounded by bombings and inadequate medical treatment.

The international community bears a moral and legal obligation to halt the spread of famine in the Gaza Strip and provide immediate life-saving aid. Delaying the official declaration of famine equates to failing to apply significant pressure on Israel to end its crimes and lift the arbitrary siege on Gaza. Further delays will only exacerbate hunger, poverty, malnourishment, and death.

The entire Gaza Strip must have humanitarian access restored, which entails enabling the entry of life-saving supplies and their swift, efficient movement through border crossings and land roads. This also includes re-establishing health services, water, and sanitation facilities, providing safe, nourishing, and ample food for the entire population, as well as infant formula, treating malnutrition cases and related diseases, and re-establishing local production systems and the entry of commercial goods.

As the source of the famine, the international community has a legal obligation to put an end to the crime of genocide that Israel has been committing against the people of the Gaza Strip since October 7. Without doing so, it is impossible to discuss the creation of a suitable environment for providing humanitarian aid or to begin the process of restoring basic services to stop the famine from spreading and reverse its effects.

To protect Palestinian civilians from the threat of genocide in the Gaza Strip, real pressure tools should be activated to force Israel to immediately cease all of its crimes and comply with international law and the rulings of the International Court of Justice. This includes halting all forms of political, financial, and military support for Israel's military attack on the Gaza Strip and holding it accountable for all of its crimes.

International pressure must be applied to Israel immediately to stop it from carrying out the crime of starving the people living in the Gaza Strip, to lift the siege entirely, to establish the necessary systems to guarantee the safe, efficient, and timely delivery of humanitarian supplies, and to take significant action to address the rapidly spreading famine among Palestinian civilians in the Strip.

The undersigned organizations:

- Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor
- International Lawyers Organization
- International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Union of Arab Jurists
- Arab Organization for Human Rights
- Maonah Association for Human Rights and Immigration
- Geneva International Center for Justice
- Association of Victims of Torture - Geneva.
- Ethiopian Disabled Lawyers Association (ELDA)
- Geneva Bridge Association
- The Arab Organization for Human Rights in Central Europe
- Bahraini Society of Jurists
- Principles Organization for Human Rights

- Salam Organization for Democracy and Human Rights - London
- Arab Council Foundation - Geneva
- AFDI International - Paris
- One Justice Organization - France
- Taqse Organization for Development and Human Rights - Yemen
- Defense Foundation for Rights and Liberties - Yemen
- International Association of Bloggers - Geneva
- Haqqi Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms
- Dialogue Forum for Development and Human Rights
- Brussels Court
- Solidarity for Human Rights - Geneva
- Al Karama Organization - Geneva
- SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties - Geneva
- Solidarity of Peace Support Organization (SOAP)
- Women Journalists without Chains Organization
- Local Development Organization
- The Yemeni Coalition to Monitor Human Rights Violations
- Free Voice Organization for Defending Human Rights - Paris
- Rights Radar Organization for Human Rights

- Communication Organization for Human Rights
- Group of families of missing persons
- United Tunisian Network - Washington
- The American-Libyan Alliance - Washington
- National Forum for Defending Freedoms - Jordan
- The Iraqi Center for Human Rights
- Egyptian Organization for Human Rights
- Arab Lawyers Organization in the United Kingdom
- International Association of Syrian Jurists in Türkiye
- International Alliance for Rights and Development (IAHRD)
- The National Authority for the Defense of Rights and Freedoms (HUD)
- Local Development Organization (LDO)
- Justice Organization for Human Rights - Istanbul
- American Center for Justice - Michigan
- Al-Marsad Organization for Human Rights
- European Saudi Organization for Human Rights
- Association of Mothers of Abductees
- Association of Detainees and Missing Persons in Southern Syria
- Alternative Press Syndicate - Lebanon

- Refugees Platform in Egypt - RPE
- Human Rights and Civic Participation
- Law and democracy support foundation - LDSF

