

**UN Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territory****Ramallah****18 June 2025****Desperate Palestinians seeking food killed in Gaza**

The UN Human Rights office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory calls on the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) to immediately cease its use of lethal force around food distribution points in Gaza, following repeated instances of shooting and killing of Palestinians seeking to access food there. Since the so-called ‘Gaza Humanitarian Foundation’ (GHF) started food distribution in southern Gaza on 27 May, more than 400 Palestinians have been reportedly killed while trying to access food or other humanitarian assistance. We are horrified at the repeated incidents, continuously reported in recent days across Gaza, and we call for an immediate end to these senseless killings.

The victims have been killed while trying to approach four GHF distribution points in southern Gaza or while waiting for UN humanitarian convoys. In many cases, witnesses reported being fired on by fire from Israeli military ground forces and quadcopters, as well as the shelling of crowds waiting for food. Many more have been seriously injured and without access to lifesaving medical treatment - following the Israeli military’s almost complete destruction of the health system across Gaza - they face excruciating pain and potential death.

In just one incident on 17 June, the Israeli military reportedly shelled a crowd of Palestinians waiting for UN food trucks. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, at least 51 people were killed and 200 were injured. On 16 June, Israeli shelling had reportedly killed 3 Palestinians and injured several others waiting for trucks carrying food in western Beit Lahiya. There is no information to suggest that the people killed or injured were involved in hostilities or posed any threat to the Israeli military or to staff of GHF distribution points.

Rendering the situation worse is the disintegration of civil order as a result of 20 months of hostilities, Israel’s destruction of civilian infrastructure across Gaza, its almost 3 months of complete blockade of the strip, continued severe impediments to the entry and distribution of humanitarian assistance and attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure including the civilian police force. As a result, Palestinians are increasingly facing the inhumane choice of dying from starvation or risking being killed while trying to access the little food that is available.

Israel’s militarised humanitarian assistance mechanism violates international standards, endangers civilians, and contributes to the catastrophic situation in Gaza. The weaponisation of civilians’ food and the restriction or prevention of access to other life sustaining services constitute a war crime and may constitute elements of other crimes under international law.

Israel, as the occupying power, has the duty to ensure the provision of food and medical care for the population as needed. Furthermore, they have the obligations to facilitate access by

international humanitarian service providers and to facilitate access of the civilian population to that assistance. The office recalls that in 2024, the International Court of Justice, having found that there was a real and imminent risk of irreparable prejudice to the plausible rights of Palestinians in Gaza under the Genocide Convention, issued binding orders to Israel to take all measures to ensure, without delay, and in cooperation with the UN, the unhindered provision at scale of aid and assistance to Gaza.

Unlawful restrictions and impediments on the UN and other humanitarian actors a must be lifted immediately and food and other humanitarian assistance essential to save and sustain the lives of Palestinians there must be permitted rapid and unimpeded entry to Gaza.

**ENDS**

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