

Israel-Hamas war

Food supplies to Gaza dwindling as famine looms, warns UN

UN agency says it has only been able to bring in half the quantity of food required



The World Food Programme supports 13 of Gaza's 18 bakeries and supplies more than 70 kitchens serving hot meals © Reuters

Heba Saleh in Cairo 8 HOURS AGO

Food supplies into Gaza have diminished even further in the two months since international experts raised the threat of famine in the enclave, according to the regional director of the World Food Programme, which has been able to bring in only about half of the quantity required.

“We clearly don’t manage to bring enough food into Gaza,” Corinne Fleischer told the Financial Times after returning from the shattered territory, citing access problems including the closure of most crossings, long delays at Israeli checkpoints and looting by gangs inside Gaza.

Fleischer said the WFP needed to bring in 24,000 tons of food per month to feed 1.1mn people, or half Gaza’s population. UNRWA, the other main UN agency working in Gaza, is responsible for feeding the other half.

“But in the last two months we brought in about half of what we require,” she said.

The WFP, a UN agency, faced several obstacles in delivering supplies to its Gaza warehouses, according to Fleischer. “We need more crossing points, very clearly, and that’s what we’re asking for,” she said.

“There’s also an issue of law and order to collect supplies from Kerem Shalom

crossing [and avoid looters] and . . . to be able to move safely and at an acceptable speed within Gaza.”

The IPC, an international advisory body which monitors hunger, warned on June 25 that 96 per cent of Gaza’s population faced acute food insecurity at “crisis” level or higher, of which about 500,00 people were enduring “catastrophic” conditions.

“The risk of famine is still there because there’s a war and we’re not able to access frequently and sufficiently [the locations] where we need to go and there needs to be sufficient food to come in,” said Fleischer, whose organisation supports 13 of the territory’s 18 bakeries and supplies more than 70 kitchens serving hot meals.

All of Gaza's population is experiencing food insecurity

IPC food insecurity classification	Projection for Jun to Sep 2024 (% of population)
<input type="radio"/> Catastrophe: Extreme lack of food; starvation; death	22.00
<input type="radio"/> Emergency: Large food consumption gaps	33.00
<input type="radio"/> Crisis: Food consumption gaps	41.00
<input type="radio"/> Stressed: Minimally adequate consumption	4.00
<input type="radio"/> Not able to meet basic food requirements	0.00

FINANCIAL TIMES

Source: [IPC](#)

Fleischer described a journey she took with a convoy from Deir al-Balah in central Gaza to collect supplies arriving at the Western Erez crossing on the northern border with Israel.

A trip that once would have taken 40 minutes instead took seven hours, she said, “because roads are destroyed” and they had to “wait for a green light at [the Israeli] checkpoints”.

Fleischer said they wanted not only more crossings but for Israel to have “faster processing of aid and a much more streamlined operation at checkpoints” to speed up

the movement of humanitarian convoys.

The WFP regional director added that compounding the problems of access were the recent evacuation orders issued by the Israeli military which have resulted in the closure of about 20 of her organisation's food distribution points, and the loss of access to one of its warehouses, which still contained food.

Some 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's offensive in Gaza, according to its health authorities. This was launched in response to the Hamas-led October 7 attack which killed 1,200 people in southern Israel, according to the government.

Overall, humanitarian aid entering Gaza has more than halved since Israel seized the important Rafah crossing with Egypt which was closed in early May, according to the UN's OCHA agency that is coordinating humanitarian operations.

It said the average of 169 aid trucks per day in April had fallen to 94 trucks in May and fewer than 80 trucks in June and July. Before the war, some 500 trucks carrying goods entered Gaza daily.

“People are already very much weakened by the numerous times they’ve had to be displaced,” said Fleischer.

“And with basic services collapsing, diseases will spread. You have a combination of no clean water and no functioning sewage and then not enough food. This weakens the body and the immune system.”

Data visualisation by Aditi Bhandari

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