

Israel-Hamas war

Dozens of Gazans shot seeking aid, say local officials

Thirty-four Palestinians killed in worst incident since start of US and Israeli-backed distribution system



Palestinians carry a man who was injured while waiting for aid in Rafah on Monday © AFP/Getty Images

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Israeli soldiers killed 34 Palestinians trying to access food at sites in Gaza on Monday, according to the local health ministry, the deadliest day yet in a string of shootings that have marred a new aid distribution system.

Killings of Palestinians seeking to collect food for starving families have become a near-daily occurrence since the start of the new aid programme, under which a previously unknown private group called the [Gaza Humanitarian Foundation](#) has replaced the UN as the main conduit for aid.

Gaza's health ministry said that 33 people were killed on Monday trying to reach the GHF centre near Rafah in the south of the enclave. Another was killed while en route to another GHF hub in the centre of the strip.

[Israel](#) has imposed a full siege on Gaza for more than three months, blocking entry to

all humanitarian deliveries and allowing only a trickle of aid to enter in recent weeks. UN agencies say the population of the Gaza Strip is on the edge of famine, and thousands of children are already severely malnourished.

The restrictions, which have been condemned by humanitarian groups and even some of Israel's allies, have continued since Israel launched an [attack on Iran](#) on Friday.

Some 300 people had already been killed and more than 2,600 people injured trying to reach the food centres as of Sunday, according to a toll published by the Gaza health ministry. The centres have been open for less than three weeks.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said that more than 200 injured people arrived at their field hospital in Rafah on Monday, "marking the highest number received by the Red Cross field hospital in one mass casualty event". ICRC said the wounded had been trying to access a food distribution centre in Rafah.

ICRC also said its field hospital had received 170 injured people on Sunday, many of whom had gunshot wounds and who had also said they had been trying to reach a GHF site.

Monday's shooting in southern Gaza is reported to have happened at Alam Roundabout, the last point where thousands of starving Palestinians who have marched for hours overnight congregate before the food centre has opened, ready to rush in to try to secure a box before the aid runs out.

The IDF said its soldiers had opened fire after people approached them in a way they deemed threatening, and that the shooting had taken place in an area it classified as a combat zone.

The GHF scheme, which started in late May, has been cast by its US and Israeli backers as an alternative to the long-standing aid system run by UN agencies and other non-governmental groups.

The UN has condemned the scheme as a system that “weaponised” badly needed aid to force the displacement of Gazans to the south of the strip, and refused to co-operate with GHF. The scheme is run by private contractors with armed guards in areas secured by the Israeli military.

GHF said last week that their aid was getting delivered securely and that “instead of bickering . . . they [the UN] need to get in the game. We are ready to collaborate and help them get their aid to people in need”.

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