

**«From
Occupation
to Famine: Examining
the Violation of the
Right to Food in
Gaza»**

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Introduction

Since 7 October 2023, the Gaza Strip has witnessed an unprecedented humanitarian crisis—one not initiated with Israeli bombs or bullets, but with a silent weapon: the systematic, deliberate denial of food. Over time, starvation has evolved into a method of warfare, strategically deployed against a besieged civilian population. The scale, coordination, and





This nightmare must end.
Ending this worst-case scenario will take the best efforts of
all parties - now.

...

This is a test of our shared humanity - a test we cannot afford
to fail.

António Guterres, Secretary-General, 29 July 2025

human toll of this starvation campaign by Israel, constitute one of the most egregious violations of international humanitarian law in recent history.

As stated by UN Secretary-General António Guterres on 22 July 2025, Gaza is experiencing “a catastrophe that haunts the conscience of humanity” and warned that “famine is at every doorstep.” This is not a natural disaster—it is a man-made policy of deprivation.

Field Realities

According to UN OCHA Humanitarian Situation Update #306 (16 July 2025):

- **At least 58,380 Palestinians have been killed, including 17,921 children and 9,497 women;**
- **139,607 have been injured;**
- **Since 27 May 2025, at least 851 civilians have been killed and 5,634 injured while queuing for food aid;¹**
- **Between 16 and 23 July 2025 alone, 646 people were killed in food lines.²**

1. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-306-gaza-strip>

2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_Gaza_Strip_aid_distribution_killings?utm_source=chatgpt.com

The 29 February 2024 “Flour Massacre” has become a brutal symbol: Israeli forces opened fire on civilians waiting for flour on Al Rashid Street near the Nabulsi Roundabout. At least 118 were killed and 760 injured. Victims’ bodies were found soaked in a mix of blood and flour—an emblem of starvation weaponized.¹



1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_Gaza_Strip_aid_distribution_killings?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Beyond Statistics: The Human Cost

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported 74 malnutrition-related deaths in Gaza in 2025, 63 of which occurred in July alone — including 24 children under five. Over 5,100 children were admitted to severe malnutrition



programs that month. In Gaza City, one in five children under



five now suffers from acute malnutrition.

The death of five-month-old Zainab Abu Halib in Khan Yunis, weighing less at death than at birth, is not an isolated incident—it is a tragic marker of systemic collapse in child nutrition and care under siege.



I have never felt so shaken. Children are dying of hunger. Falling one after another, like petals of a dying flower. Under our watch. How do you sleep, Presidents, Foreign Ministers, political leaders, diplomats, civil servants - doing nothing to stop Israel's starvation campaign? (25 Jul 2025)

Engineered Starvation: A Deliberate Policy

“Forensic Architecture”, in its 21 July 2025 investigation, described the destruction of farmland, water infrastructure, and aid routes as part of an “engineered starvation” strategy a deliberate method to dismantle civilian survival mechanisms.¹

Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territory, warned in her 1 October 2024 report titled “Genocide as Colonial Erasure” that starvation was being used as a weapon of war. On 3 June 2025, she tweeted: “after 19m of genocidal violence, and 60 days without a grain of rice entering Gaza, Palestinians have to be “shown” to the world while scrambling for food as if they were gasping for air, grabbing it from filthy grounds, getting hurt while seeking a hole in the human flesh amassing for a handful of emptiness? People of Gaza. Palestinians. Your hunger today is our shame. We should not be given access to your suffering if we are too indifferent, too lazy, too selfish, too corrupt, to stop it immediately.”² UN Secretary-General António Guterres described the starvation policy as “systematic and targeted,” noting its impact on women and children.³

1. <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/humanitarian-violence-in-gaza>

2. <https://x.com/FrancescaAlbs/status/1918559704873136440>

3. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/07/1165506>



Human Rights Watch, in its 1 August 2025 report, declared the Israeli targeting of Palestinians seeking food as “clear war crimes.” The report documents attacks on distribution centers, calling them “death traps.”¹

1. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/08/01/gaza-israeli-killings-of-palestinians-seeking-food-are-war-crimes>

Legal Framework and Violations

The starvation campaign violates multiple key instruments of international law:

- **Geneva Convention IV (1949):**
 - Article 23: Mandates unimpeded access to food and medicine for civilians;
 - Article 33: Prohibits collective punishment;
 - Article 55: Obligates occupying powers to ensure essential supplies.
- **Additional Protocol I (1977):**
 - Article 54: Prohibits starvation as a method of warfare.
- **Rome Statute of the ICC (1998):**
 - Article 8(2)(b)(xxv): Classifies starvation as a war crime.
- **UN Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018):**

Condemns use of starvation in armed conflict.
- **UN General Assembly Resolution 3318 (1974):**

Affirms special protection for women and children.
- **Customary International Humanitarian Law - Rule 53 (ICRC):**

Prohibits starvation of civilians in all conflict settings. On 21 November 2024, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, explicitly citing starvation among the charges.

Visual Documentation and Human Narratives

Photographs and field evidence depict long queues for aid, bloodstained flour sacks, emaciated children, and bombed food convoys. These are not accidents—they are the architecture of an annihilation policy.

Conclusion

Starvation in Gaza is not collateral damage. It is a strategic, deliberate weapon of war deployed to destroy a civilian population's will and ability to survive. When children starve before the world's eyes, it is not only a humanitarian crisis—it is a legal and moral failure.

This research briefing aims to provide clear, evidence-based documentation for the deliberate starvation of the people of Gaza as a strategy. It is a call for accountability, not sympathy. The time for silence has long passed.

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