

# Israel Is Starving Gaza

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*At least one UNRWA staff member was killed after Israel targeted a food distribution center in Rafah, in southern Gaza, on March 13. Another 22 UNRWA workers were injured in the attack by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).*

On March 14, the IDF released a statement to the U.S. media CBS news, that the IDF has precisely targeted a ' Hamas Operations Unit ' based on intelligence, which the IDF claims were distributing humanitarian aid to ' terrorists '.

UNRWA confirmed that the aid distribution center attacked was on a list of UN supported facilities across Gaza which are by international law to be safe for civilians and aid workers alike. By Israel attacking known humanitarian sites, such as food centers, schools and clinics, the IDF is declaring that there is nowhere safe in Gaza, or in southern Gaza, where Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had instructed all civilians to gather for safety.

The UN has warned that the people in Gaza are close to famine from lack of food aid during the current and ongoing bombardment of civilian homes and infrastructure.

Over 30 people have died recently from lack of food and water, and many were children.

## Open Arms

On March 12, a Spanish ship, 'Open Arms', left Cyprus for Gaza. It is expected to arrive on Friday, March 15 carrying 200 tons of aid.



Chef José Andrés with White House liaison staff (From the Public Domain)

This desperate attempt to stave off famine in Gaza is the brain-child of Spanish-American celebrity chef, José Andrés, founder of the non-profit World Central Kitchen (WCK).

WCK has Palestinians building a jetty in Gaza, utilizing rubble and materials from bombed buildings, which will play a role in offloading the food and supplies. This jetty is a temporary structure and is not related to the pier the U.S. is planning.

“I had no doubt that we could open the maritime route. The most difficult thing was the diplomatic side of it, and the easiest thing was getting to Gaza,” said Andrés.

Andrés is an advisor to the White House, and held countless meetings in Israel, Egypt and Jordan to obtain the necessary permits, while also obtaining support from Cyprus, King Abdullah II of Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, which has co-financed the mission together with WCK.

After arrival, the 130 pallets of aid will go into trucks to be delivered to the 60 kitchens that the WCK has set up in the Gaza Strip, and to other aid distribution points.

## Who Shut the Gates?

Israel controls all land crossings into Gaza, which has seven border crossings, six with Israel and one with Egypt. However, only the crossing at Rafah, with Egypt, is partially open.

The quickest and most efficient way to delivery aid to Gaza is by land and the gates that exist. But, Israel restricts aid and supplies from entering in Gaza. All of the aid agencies report that their donations sit in park trucks, filled to overflowing, but unable to enter Gaza

because the IDF has locked the gates and refuses to open them.

Israel maintains that they will not allow any aid into Gaza which could be used by Hamas. The aid agencies have repeatedly asked for a list of restricted items so that they can make sure their cargoes meet the criteria. However, Israel refuses to publish or distribute a list of restricted items. Instead, the IDF uses the aid as a weapon of war, intent on starving the civilians. The IDF claim that if they find one item in a cargo load which meets their undisclosed definition of prohibited items, they will not allow the entire cargo to enter. In one very famous case, the item was a single pair of small scissors to be used to cut the tape in conjunction with bandages.

Doctors Without Borders, MSF, reported they have been repeatedly prohibited from importing electricity generators, water purifiers, solar panels and other medical equipment.

## Land Routes

On March 12, for the first time in three weeks, the UN's World Food Program sent in six aid trucks to feed 25,000 people through a gate in the security fence. This is but a drop in an ocean of need, and is not sustainable.

Some Arab nations, such as Morocco have sent supplies destined for Gaza to Israel's Ben Gurion airport.

All the experts agree, that land routes which already are established are the most efficient delivery method of aid to Gaza. But, it is Israel alone standing in the way, and this is their political objective.

Cargo trucks typically carry 20 tons, and the flow of trucks prior to the current conflict was about 500 a day. But, even that amount of daily arrivals would not meet the needs of the 2.3 million people in Gaza.

## UNRWA Accusations

Israel began a political campaign to discredit and destroy UNRWA, by accusing the agency of complicity with Hamas in the October 7 attack on Israel.

With an accusation only, Israel was able to convince 16 donor countries to pull their funding, and have asked the UN General Assembly to disband the refugee agency, which would affect not only the people in Gaza, but also those in the Occupied West Bank. The agency is 75 years old, serves almost six million refugees, and now has had more than \$437 million funds frozen.

Spain announced a donation of \$22 million on Thursday, and [Canada](#) and Sweden reported on Saturday that they would resume funding to the agency in light of unfounded claims, and the risk of famine.

The UN has opened an investigation, while UNRWA defends itself against Israel's accusations, and accuses Israel of torturing its employees to force false testimonies that the IDF used as the basis of their accusations. Initially, the UN fired 12 UNRWA workers after the IDF claim.

Philippe Lazzarini, the head of UNRWA, says that he has received no evidence of agency workers in conspiracy with Hamas. However, 150 UNRWA employees have died while working in Gaza, and 3,000 have been left homeless.

Palestinians in the Occupied West Bank were arrested, blindfolded, thrown to the ground, and beaten by the IDF while the soldiers shouted, "UNRWA, Hamas! UNRWA, Hamas!"

After Israeli officials accused the UNRWA staff, the Biden administration cut-off the funding to the refugee agency.

On March 12, the U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller, said, "UNRWA plays a critical role in delivering humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians that no other agency is positioned to assume."

## Biden's Pier

U.S. President Biden announced the plans for sea corridor, saying the U.S. military would help construct a temporary pier on Gaza's Mediterranean coast to facilitate the docking of aid ships. The USS General Frank S. Besson is sailing with the supplies need for building the pier.

Experts are baffled by the suggestion that a pier should be used to deliver aid, when seven land crossings already exist, and stress that Biden can get them all open with just one phone call to Netanyahu. If Israel were made aware that their continued military aid from the U.S. is dependent on allowing food deliveries to the Palestinians in Gaza, that would open the gates at once.

## Ceasefire Talks

Ceasefire talks, which include a release of hostages in Gaza, have been ongoing in Cairo, but Qatari foreign ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari said that, although talks continued, "we are not near a deal."

## Airdrops

Both the Kingdom of Jordan and later the U.S. have undertaken airdrops of supplies into Gaza. However, this is not efficient and can be compared to filling a swimming pool while using a teaspoon.

## Israeli Position on Gaza

ON March 12, Netanyahu reiterated his plan to destroy Hamas by a planned ground invasion into Rafah.

"We will finish the job in Rafah while enabling the civilian population to get out of harm's way," he said in a video address to AIPAC, the powerful pro-Israeli lobbying group which experts say controls the U.S. foreign policy with Israel, the Middle East, and controls the U.S. Congress on issues involving Israel and Jews in the U.S.

The prospect of a Rafah invasion has sparked global alarm because it is crowded with almost 1.5 million mostly displaced people, and recently Biden has called it a 'Red Line', but without specifying what repercussions Israel would face from White House anger.



## EU Position on Gaza

On March 12, the EU's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, told the UN Security Council on that the Gaza humanitarian crisis "is man-made."

"If we look at alternative ways to provide support, it's because the land crossings have been artificially closed," he said, charging that "starvation is being used as a weapon of war."

Borrell identified the lack of delivery of aid to Gaza as a result of all the land routes being closed by Israel.

"We are now facing a population fighting for their own survival," he said.

"Starvation is being used as a war arm and when we condemned this happening in Ukraine, we have to use the same words for what is happening in Gaza," said Borrell.

## UK Position of Gaza

The UK's Foreign Secretary, Lord David Cameron, has urged Israel to open the major port of Ashdod – one of the country's three main cargo ports located just south of Tel Aviv – to seaborne aid deliveries destined for Gaza.

## US Position on Gaza

ALPAC's historic hold on the White House and Congress has prevented Biden or others from taking firm action which would result in the aid trucks being allowed into Gaza, and the avoidance of famine. Biden is painted in the U.S. media as a caring person, concerned with humanitarian laws being broken in Gaza by Netanyahu, but he is impotent to take action, which he holds in his hands.

## Number of Dead

Whether there is a ceasefire, or not, and regardless of whether food and supplies are ever delivered to Gaza, one thing we know is the number of dead and injured continues to rise after more than five months of Israeli attacks from the land, sea and air. The latest number in more than 31, 180 people killed, and most of them women and children.

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