

U.S.-built \$320 million pier in Gaza, washed away in high seas, is doomed to fail

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By Maryam Qarehgozlou / Press TV

The U.S.-built floating pier near the Gaza Strip, according to observers, is an attempt by Washington to hoodwink the international community at a time when millions in the besieged territory are on the brink of starvation due to the Israeli-American genocidal war and blockade.

The pier has been coming up while food bound for Palestinians in the territory continues to rot outside the territory as the regime has shut the Rafah border crossing to aid supplies for weeks now.

In an interesting development reported on Saturday by the US Central Command (CENTCOM), four vessels connected to the floating pier in the Mediterranean Sea broke free from their moorings after the pier was disconnected from the small boat tugging it during the transportation of humanitarian aid.

Two of the vessels are now anchored on a Gaza beach near the pier, and the other two are beached further north, on a coast near the occupied city of Ashkelon, the statement said.

The incident drew reactions from social media users, who said the mission was bound to fail in the first place as the Biden administration continues to be deeply complicit in the genocidal war on Gaza.

Construction of the floating pier began late last month following a directive by US President Joe Biden's administration, claiming that the initiative is meant to deliver aid to people in Gaza.

Many, however, scoffed at the claims, referring to the American supply of lethal arms to the Israeli regime used against the same people in the territory, which have already claimed close to 36,000 lives.

The construction of the \$320 million pier project was criticized as an attempt to distract attention from Israel's deliberate blockade of land crossings to Gaza, using starvation as a weapon against 2.3 million Palestinians trapped in the area, more than half of whom are children.

Human rights groups see the pier as a way for Biden to pretend that he's taking steps to address the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Gaza due to the mounting international pressure, while also sweeping under the rug Israel's blunt refusal to open land borders to aid trucks.

The United Nations aid agencies, humanitarian and relief groups, as well as pro-Palestine rights activists have all warned that the aid delivery through the pier is not going to help starving Palestinians.

Jeremy Konydnyk, a former White House public health official who now runs Refugees International, an independent humanitarian organization, slammed the effort as a "humanitarian theater."

"The pier doesn't solve the major bottleneck in Gaza: aid access for last-mile delivery," said Konydnyk.

Pentagon spokesman Maj. Gen. Patrick Ryder also told reporters last week that he did not believe any of the aid transferred via the pier had reached people in Gaza. "It is not flowing at a rate that any of us are happy with," he was quoted as saying, admitting to the failure of the much-hyped project.

Asal Rad, a US-based pro-Palestine activist who holds a PhD in West Asia history, wrote in a post on X, formerly Twitter, on Sunday that the pier was a "predictable disaster." "Israel is deliberately starving people and the US is putting on a show to pretend that's not happening," she stated, calling out the American hypocrisy.

Medea Benjamin, a political activist and co-founder of the anti-war group CodePink, also slammed the initiative, calling on the U.S. authorities to force the Israeli regime to open the Rafah crossing "instead of wasting our tax money on such projects."

On Friday, the UN said it had received the equivalent of 97 trucks of humanitarian supplies through the floating dock since it came into operation, which means that the pier capacity remains far below the 150 trucks a day that officials had hoped for.

Meanwhile, aid groups say Gaza needs a total of 600 trucks a day to meet its colossal humanitarian needs.

The UN keeps maintaining that land deliveries are the "most viable, effective, and efficient" way to address the growing humanitarian crisis in the narrow strip, where nearly 36,000 people have been killed since the genocidal war was launched on October 7, 2023.

On May 6, defying international warnings, Israel pressed on with its assault on Gaza's southern city of Rafah and seized control of its border crossing, cutting off a vital route for humanitarian aid and potential sanctuary for thousands of civilians from a building offensive.

Last week on Tuesday, the UN announced it had suspended food distribution in Rafah due to a lack of supplies and insecurity caused by Israel's expanding military offensive, warning that humanitarian operations across the territory were nearing collapse. It also warned that the pier project may fail unless Israel starts providing the conditions humanitarian groups need to operate safely.

Meanwhile, on Sunday night, days after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) again called on the Israeli regime to immediately halt its offensive in Rafah, more than 30 Palestinians were massacred there.

Craig Mokhiber, a former top UN human rights official who resigned last year, in a post on X said the pier had "failed to have any meaningful impact" while "Israel continues to block aid at all crossing points." He described it as a "fig leaf to cover US complicity in genocide and the destruction of UNRWA."

UNRWA, formally known as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, is the main agency in Gaza providing humanitarian aid and social services — critical at a time when there are dire shortages of food, water and sanitary conditions because of Israel's genocidal war against the besieged territory.

Israel's attempts to dismantle UNRWA go back many years, however, since the regime began its new war against Gaza on October 7, it has also doubled its effort to target the aid agency by framing its workers as complicit in Hamas' Operation Al-Aqsa Storm into the occupied territories.

Despite no evidence to back up those claims, several Western countries, led by the US, suspended their funding to the largest humanitarian relief body in Gaza.

This comes as according to the World Food Programme, about half of the total population of Gaza — roughly 1.1 million Palestinians — are at catastrophic levels of hunger, especially in northern Gaza, where fears of a famine have been strongest.

The Geneva-based Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor said in a statement on Sunday that famine must be declared in the Gaza Strip "due to Israel's insistence on committing the crime of starvation and using it as a weapon of war against the Palestinian people in the Strip, which is part of a larger crime of genocide."

Media reports on Friday revealed that some of the food supplies waiting to enter Gaza from Egypt have begun to rot as the Rafah border crossing remains shut to aid deliveries for a third week after Israel began its assault on Gaza's southern city.

Mahmoud Hussein, a truck driver, was quoted by media as saying that his goods that had been loaded on his vehicle for a month were gradually spoiling in the sun. Some of the foodstuffs are being discarded, others are sold at cheap rates.

"Apples, bananas, chicken and cheese, a lot of things have gone rotten, some stuff has been returned and is being sold for a quarter of its price," he was quoted as saying. "I'm sorry to say that the onions we're carrying will at best be eaten by animals because of the worms in them."

According to UN data, only 900 truckloads have entered Gaza in total since May 7th. A UN document seen by media also shows that as of May 16th, more than 2,000 UN and international NGO trucks were waiting to enter Gaza, including 1,574 carrying food supplies.

Ismail Al-Thawabta, director of the Gaza government media office, has said that many of the goods that enter the Gaza Strip are "unfit" for human use and are "unhealthy."

Meanwhile, Israeli settlers keep attacking and vandalizing trucks delivering aid to Gaza and preventing humanitarian supplies from reaching the territory where people grapple with starvation.

Videos emerged on social media showing Israeli settlers throwing boxes of much-needed supplies on the ground, stomping on them and setting ablaze the trucks.

Despite international condemnation, footage of the incident clearly showed that Israeli regime troops did nothing to stop the attacks on aid convoys.

Last week, the Guardian, quoting multiple sources, revealed that Israeli forces are tipping off settlers to the location of aid trucks delivering supplies to Gaza, enabling the groups to block and vandalize them.

Israeli war minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, said last Sunday that settlers are “allowed to demonstrate,” but suggested the regime itself should be stopping aid trucks to Gaza instead of leaving it to the settlers.

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