

UNICEF warns there are one million children in Gaza struggling to survive



Displaced Palestinian children push into a queue to get a portion of cooked food from a charity kitchen in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip, ahead of the iftar fast-breaking meal during the

United Nations, March 18 (RHC)-- UNICEF's West Asia and North Africa regional director says nearly one million children in Gaza are in critical need of life-saving health services and supplies.

In a statement released on Sunday, after a four-day visit to the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, Edouard Beigbeder described the situation in the regions as "extremely concerning." Beigbeder said that if the lack of humanitarian and medical aid persists in Gaza, roughly one million children would be living without the very basics they need to survive.

He warned that approximately 4,000 newborns cannot access critical care due to the major impact on medical facilities in the Gaza Strip. "Some children live with tremendous fear or anxiety; others face the real consequences of deprivation of humanitarian assistance and protection, displacement, destruction or death."

According to Beigbeder, the Israeli regime is preventing the entry of more than 180,000 doses of essential childhood routine vaccines into Gaza which allows for the full vaccination of 60,000 children under two years of age.

On Saturday, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said that child malnutrition in Gaza is "shocking." She added that her Organization is "being hampered by unnecessary restrictions, and those are costing children their lives."

According to UNICEF statistics, one in three children under two years of age suffers from acute malnutrition in northern Gaza. The organization said that just in recent weeks at least 23 children have lost their lives from dehydration and malnutrition in Gaza.

On January 15, the Israeli regime, failing to achieve any of its war objectives, including the "elimination" of Hamas or the release of its captives, was forced to agree to a ceasefire deal with the Palestinian resistance movements.

After more than 15 months of siege by the Israeli regime, the fragile ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas allowed for a surge of humanitarian aid to enter Gaza.

However, immediately after the first phase of the ceasefire agreement expired on March 1, the regime besieged the enclave again and cut off all humanitarian supplies from entering the region.

Human rights agencies have argued that the Israeli regime is using starvation as a tool for genocide and reshaping Palestine's demography.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and NEWS AGENCIES]

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