

Dozens of Palestinians starve to death under Israel's blockade of Gaza



Osama al-Raqab, 5, whose mother says his cystic fibrosis has worsened since the start of the war due to the lack of meat, fish and enzyme tablets to help him digest food, at the malnutrition clinic in Nasser Hospital, Khan Younis, Gaza, on Thursday, May 1, 2025 [Abdel Kareem Hana/AP Photo]

As trucks carrying vital supplies pile up at border with Egypt, hungry children look through rubbish for food

Gaza City, May 4 (RHC)-- At least 57 Palestinians have starved to death in Gaza as Israel's punishing blockade of food, water, and other critical aid to the besieged enclave stretches into its third month amid relentless bombardment.

Gaza's Government Media Office said on Saturday that most of the victims were children, as well as the sick and elderly, condemning the "continued use of food by the Israeli occupation as a weapon of war" and urging the international community to exert pressure on Israel to reopen the borders and allow in aid.

Gaza has been under total Israeli blockade since March 2nd, video obtained by Al Jazeera Arabic showing large numbers of trucks carrying vital supplies piling up on the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip on Saturday, the queue extending south beyond the city of Arish, located approximately 45 kilometres (28 miles) from Rafah border crossing.

Al Jazeera's team identified one of the latest victims on Saturday, a baby girl called Janan Saleh al-Sakafi, who died of malnutrition and dehydration in the Rantisi Hospital, west of Gaza City. More than 9,000 children have been admitted to hospital for treatment for acute malnutrition since the start of the year, according to the United Nations.

Reporting from Gaza City, Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud said he had witnessed heartbreaking scenes of children rifling through rubbish, "looking for whatever is left of canned food products." The enclave, he added, had reached a "critical" point with international organisations out of supplies and community kitchens unable to prepare meals for displaced people.

"Finding a single meal has become an impossible quest," Ahmad al-Najjar, a displaced Palestinian in Gaza City, told Al Jazeera. "People here have witnessed one charity after another declaring they're out of supplies, that they're shutting down their operations because they're in no position to ... offer the population the needed relief."

"It's frustrating and infuriating to have trucks piling up on the other side of the fence be denied entrance while the people, even children, are in dire conditions."

Suhaib al-Hams, the director of the Kuwaiti Hospital in Rafah, said in a statement that medical services were experiencing "acute shortages in more than 75 percent of essential medicines", with only around a week of supplies left.

He warned that most of the enclave's medical services will stop without "immediate intervention" to reopen borders and allow medical and humanitarian aid through. He added that patients, who are "slowly dying every day without treatment", needed to be evacuated urgently.

The continued blockade is the longest such closure the Gaza Strip has ever faced, and has come as Israeli forces continue bombarding the territory, killing at least 70 Palestinians and wounding 275 others over the two days spanning Thursday to Saturday morning, according to the Health Ministry.

On Saturday, two women were killed in an Israeli air raid on a house in the town of al-Fakhari near Gaza's southern city of Khan Younis, according to reports from Al Jazeera Arabic.

Separately, a fisherman was killed and another injured by an Israeli naval attack off the coast of Gaza City. Later in the day, two Palestinians were killed in an Israeli drone attack on southern Gaza's al-Mawasi area, once an Israeli-designated "safe zone".

Israel's war on Gaza has killed at least 52,495 people and wounded 118,366 since October 7, 2023, according to the Health Ministry. Thousands more missing under the rubble are presumed dead.

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