

# *OCHA affirms Gaza's food system has collapsed as famine deepens, blocking aid means more deaths*

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Geneva, July 8 (RHC)-- The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has warned that Gaza's food system has completely collapsed, as famine tightens its grip on hungry Palestinians seeking assistance in the besieged coastal territory.

The UN agency announced in a statement on Monday that the ongoing obstruction of humanitarian aid is leading to the avoidable deaths of countless civilians. This comes as the United Nations has stated that families in Gaza are forced to risk their lives in search of food.

OCHA stressed that rates of acute malnutrition have doubled among children, and that infant formula is on the verge of running out. According to new figures from the Gaza Health Ministry, more than 700 Palestinians have been killed trying to get food in the Gaza Strip over the past few weeks.

The Health Ministry said over the weekend that at least 743 Palestinians were killed and more than 4,891 others were injured while seeking assistance at the so-called Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) distribution sites.

Earlier this week, a report from The Associated Press news agency cited American contractors who stated that live ammunition and stun grenades have been discharged at Palestinian civilians attempting to receive aid at GHF distribution points.

Two unidentified contractors from the United States informed AP that staff members, who were heavily armed, seemed to be acting without restraint.

Leading humanitarian and human rights groups have demanded the immediate closure of the GHF, which they lambast for "forcing two million people into overcrowded, militarized zones where they face daily gunfire and mass casualties."

Amnesty International has denounced the group's operations as an "inhumane and deadly militarized scheme." "All the evidence gathered, including testimonies which Amnesty International is receiving from victims and witnesses, suggest that the GHF was designed so as to placate international concerns while constituting another tool of Israel's genocide," it said.

At least 57,523 Palestinians have lost their lives, predominantly women and children, while an additional 136,617 individuals have sustained injuries due to the violent Israeli assault on Gaza that commenced on October 7, 2023.

Last November, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former minister of military affairs Yoav Gallant, citing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

Israel also faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its war on the besieged coastal territory.

[ SOURCE: PRESS TV and NEWS AGENCIES ]

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