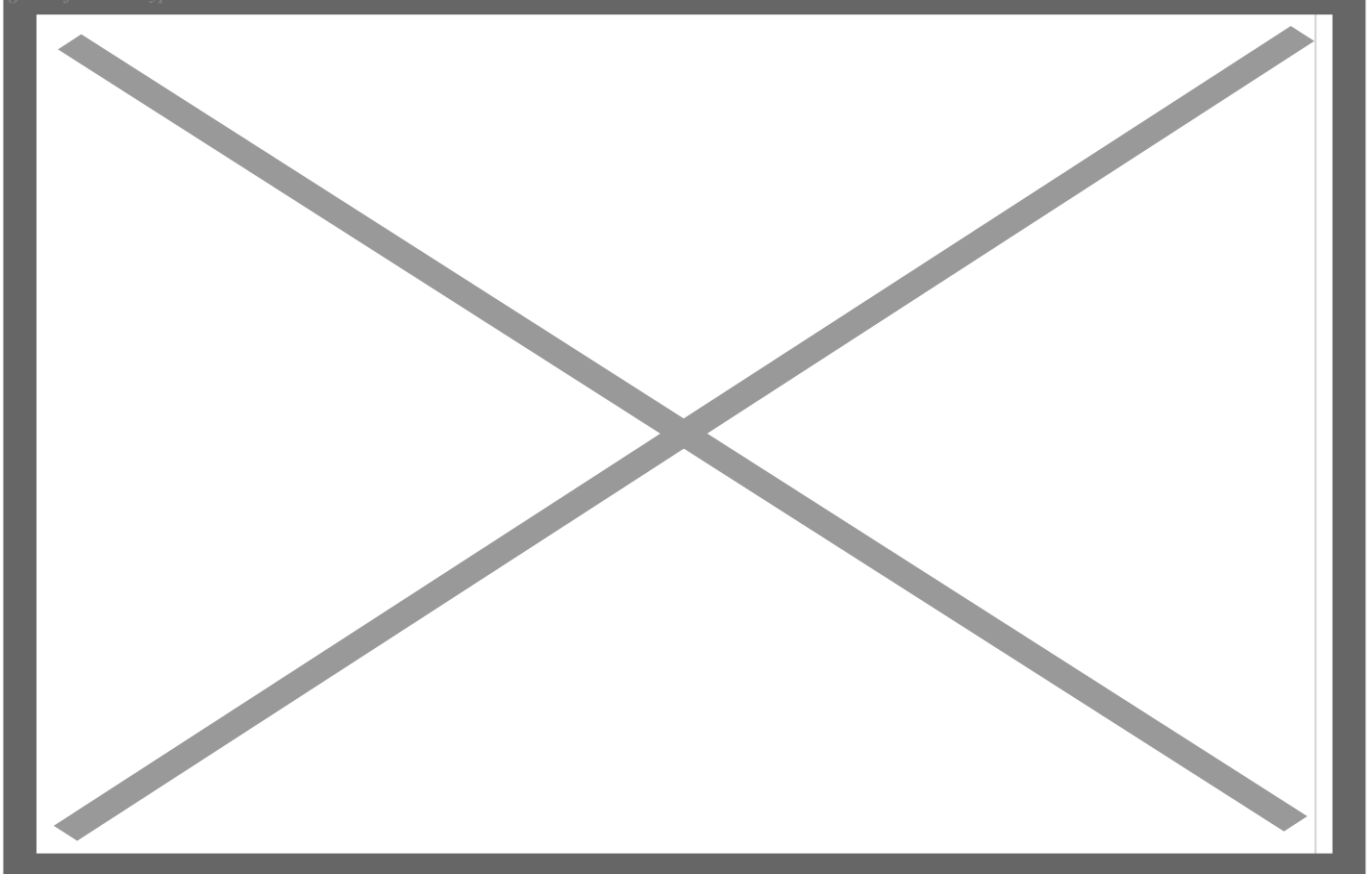


World Food Program says children in Gaza are being wasted away

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United Nations, March 27 (RHC)-- The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) has warned that famine is imminent in the northern Gaza Strip. The WFP's Palestine Country Director Matthew Hollingworth said in a video filmed in Gaza on Tuesday that children were going to sleep hungry and exhausted, as Israel continues to hinder aid deliveries to the region.

Malnutrition among children is proceeding at a record pace, and one in three children below the age of two is now acutely malnourished or “wasted.” “There is nowhere else in the world where so many people

face imminent famine. Here in Gaza City, we're at the epicenter of the crisis, here in the Gaza strip. Today I've met so many people who are angry and tired and despairing because their children go to sleep every night hungry," Hollingworth said.

The WFP has only managed to send 11 convoys with food to the north since the start of the year, he said.

A senior member of Hamas says Israel is deliberately stalling the ongoing indirect Gaza ceasefire talks. The WFP official said food aid needed to flow massively into the besieged Palestinian territory immediately "if we're going to prevent famine, prevent further death, prevent wasting amongst children, prevent really the desperate situation that is already in place." Some 70 percent of the population in northern Gaza is facing catastrophic hunger, he warned.

Across the whole Gaza Strip, the number of people facing catastrophic hunger has risen to 1.1 million, half the population, according to Hollingworth. A recent UN-backed report said famine was "likely to occur by May" in the northern Gaza Strip, where some 300,000 people face constant attacks by Israeli forces.

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