

# *UN aid chief says Israel's blocking of food to Gaza is a war crime*

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Palestinians gather to receive a hot meal at a food distribution point in the Nuseirat camp for

## refugees in the central Gaza Strip on May 21, 2025. (AFP)

Geneva, June 1 (RHC)-- The UN's humanitarian chief said Israel's blocking of food aid to starving Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip in an attempt to forcibly remove the population amounts to a war crime.

"We're seeing food sat on the borders and not being allowed in when there is a population on the other side of the border that is starving, and we're hearing Israeli ministers say that is to put pressure on the population of Gaza," UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher said in an interview over the weekend.

"Using food as a weapon "is classified as a war crime," he said, adding that it would be for the courts and history to judge.

In recent days, several aid seekers have been killed by Israeli forces while trying to reach an aid distribution point west of Rafah in the south of the besieged strip under the US and Israeli mechanism.

International aid agencies have already warned that Israeli plans to control aid distribution in Gaza, including the US-backed proposal, will only add to the suffering in the devastated Palestinian territory.

The head of the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) recently censured the new United States-backed aid model in Gaza, saying it is a "distraction from atrocities" taking place there.

"I believe it is a waste of resources and a distraction from atrocities," UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini said. "We already have an aid distribution system that is fit for purpose."

Israel blocked all aid from entering Gaza on March 2, before resuming its campaign of genocide on March 18 after talks to prolong a six-week ceasefire collapsed. Fletcher also warned Israel against the forced displacement of Palestinians from Gaza.

Israel's far-right ruling coalition, led by Netanyahu, has embraced U.S. President Donald Trump's proposals on Gaza to displace Palestinians permanently outside the territory and turn it into a seaside real-estate development.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Fletcher called on Netanyahu to ensure that "this language, and ultimately, this policy ... of forced displacement, isn't enacted."

Earlier this month, Israel's far-right minister Bezalel Smotrich said Gaza would be "totally destroyed" within six months and Palestinians there would be so desperate that they would be "looking for relocation to begin a new life in other places."

Most Gazans have been displaced at least once during 19 months of Israeli aggression against the besieged region.

Fletcher, time and again, has called on international organizations to take action against the Israeli genocidal campaign in the blockaded Palestinian territory. On May 14th, Fletcher told the UN Security Council that it must act to prevent genocide in the besieged Palestinian region. He said the comments were in response to what his colleagues on the ground were telling him.

"What they're reporting is forced displacement. They're reporting starvation, they're reporting torture, and they're reporting deaths on a massive scale," he said. "And that's my call to the Security Council and the world right now, 'will you act to prevent genocide?'" "History will be tough in the way it judges us. And it must be."

In the most recent Israeli attacks, more than 50 Palestinians were killed in the latest Israeli attacks across the Gaza Strip as the regime presses ahead with its genocidal war.

Most of the casualties are coming from attacks on northern Gaza, where the Israeli military issued evacuation orders earlier.

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