

U.S.-backed aid sites shut temporarily after Israeli massacre of starving Gazans

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Displaced Palestinians ferry bags of food aid after storming a World Food Programme

Washington, June 4 (RHC)-- The U.S.-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) in the Gaza Strip says it has temporarily closed its aid distribution sites, following the Israeli massacre of dozens of starving Palestinians in recent days.

The GHF made the announcement in a statement on Wednesday, saying its "distribution centers will be closed for renovation, reorganization and efficiency improvement work." The aid distribution sites would resume operations on Thursday, it added.

The closure came as the Israeli military warned against traveling "on roads leading to the distribution centers, which are considered combat zones." It also came after 27 people were killed on Tuesday when Israeli forces opened fire near a GHF aid site in southern Gaza.

On Wednesday, at least 32 people had lost their lives in Israel's bombardment of Gaza since morning, including 12 in a single strike on a tent housing displaced people, the Gaza Ministry of Health said.

At least 95 Palestinians have been killed and injured 440 others injured in Gaza in the past 24 hours, it added. The ministry went on to say that two bodies of the people killed in previous Israeli attacks were also recovered from the rubble.

Medical sources warned that a large number of victims are still trapped under the rubble or in the streets, and relief and civil defense teams are unable to treat and transport them due to continued bombardment and destruction of infrastructure.

The total death toll from Israel's war on the besieged territory has reached 54,607 people since October 7, 2023, the ministry said.

Israel has killed 4,335 Palestinians and injured 13,300 since breaking a ceasefire in March this year.

The U.S.-backed aid sites began operations in the Gaza Strip last Monday, May 26th. Early the next morning, as thousands of starving Palestinians lined up at the aid site, Israeli forces opened fire, killing and injuring dozens of them.

The GHF opened a second site last Wednesday, but Israeli forces again opened fire on aid seekers west of the southern Gaza city of Rafah, killing more Palestinians. The Gaza Media Office said in a statement on Sunday that in less than a week the Israeli regime had killed dozens of people and wounded hundreds at GHF sites.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has condemned as "unacceptable" the deaths of Palestinians seeking food aid in Gaza, calling the loss of life in the blockaded territory "unthinkable."

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk has also denounced the attacks against starving civilians, saying they constitute a grave breach of international law and a war crime.

The GHF is a Geneva-based "aid" group backed by the U.S. and Israel, that has been set up to function as an alternative to the already established methods of aid delivery, through UN-affiliated organizations, to Gaza.

The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas says the aid distribution sites run by the GHF have become "death traps" for starving civilians and a displacement tool.

According to the UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), Gaza suffers from phase 5 famine, and nearly 71,000 children under the age of five are at risk of acute malnutrition.

[SOURCE: AFP and NEWS AGENCIES]

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