



## FAST FOR GAZA

### Briefing Notes

#### Background

Food deprivation and malnutrition have been used as a means of collective punishment since the siege of Gaza was imposed in 2007. It was referred to by an Israeli government minister as “putting Gaza on a diet” The result was that in 2018 Oxfam reported that half the population did not have enough food to feed their families.

In October 2023 Defence Minister Gallant declared a total siege on Gaza ... *“No electricity, no food, no water, no gas – it’s all closed,”* Since March 2025, following a brief ceasefire and resumption of aid, the use of starvation as a weapon of war has intensified, bringing conditions of famine. Israel is thus **deliberately** creating for the population of Gaza *“conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”* (Genocide convention article 2)

#### Targeting Aid and Aid Agencies

In March 2024 at least 112 people were killed in the “flour massacre” when Israeli troops opened fire on people gathering to collect flour from an aid truck

In April 2024 Israeli forces killed seven people from the World Central Kitchen charity as they travelled in a convoy emblazoned with the charity’s logo and had coordinated its movements with the Israeli military.

Israel has consistently attacked UNRWA, the main provider of food and other aid as well as education, declaring it a terrorist organisation and preventing it from operating in Palestine

#### Politicising and Militarising Aid

In May 2025 Israel declared that the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation run by America would be the main provider of aid despite warnings by all other aid agencies that it was not equipped to perform this role. It has been used to lure Gazans towards exile and to their deaths. Over 400 citizens have been killed by Israeli forces while desperately seeking food and countless others injured

#### Effects of starvation and malnutrition

The effects on **children** are especially severe with long term, irrevocable impacts including stunting their growth, physically, cognitively and emotionally.

For **women** there are massively increased risks in pregnancy and giving birth and in their ability to breast feed.

**Men** are more likely to be forced to seek food in the lethal GHF feeding stations and risk being killed or severely injured

On **all members of the population**, but especially those already vulnerable, there is a catastrophic effect on the ability to recover from injury and infection

## **Psychological impacts**

Parents report feelings of guilt and inadequacy at not being able to feed their hungry children

There is shame and humiliation in being forced to stampede for food or to beg from others

Starvation brings feelings of lethargy and hopelessness

## **Community Impacts**

There has been a deliberate attempt by Israel to erode the normally strong ethos of community solidarity in Gaza. Gazans report an increasing feeling of “everyone for themselves”

Israel has financed and armed criminal gangs which steal food and resell it at unaffordable prices. These gangs threaten the safety of citizens and create additional fears of violence within the community.

Even if people have money in their accounts they often cannot use it with stall holders who demand cash or refuse paper notes that are too worn.

## **Destruction of Gaza’s agricultural sector since October 2023**

Before October 2023 there were 400-500 aid trucks per day entering Gaza. Since then not only have the aid trucks massively diminished but Gaza’s capacity to grow its own food has been destroyed. Its agricultural sector has been devastated with only 4.6 percent of cropland area now available for cultivation. Even this is too dangerous. The rest has been appropriated by the army, damaged or rendered toxic.

## **References**

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