



Fact sheet

Flour ambushes in Gaza

**Chaos and starvation are weapons used
by the occupation against civilians
in the Gaza Strip**

Introduction:

Nearly six months have passed of Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip with the specter of death still hanging over people's heads. The occupation has blasted residential blocks on top of the heads of their inhabitants, separated the north of the Gaza Strip from its south, erased entire families from the Palestinian civil registry and wiped out entire neighborhoods, displaced hundreds of thousands of citizens, while all along, using the weapon of starvation in a way that has not never been witnessed in modern history. Israeli bombardment has affected all aspects of life in the Strip. The occupation army has targeted government and private sector headquarters, universities, schools, municipalities, service and commercial facilities, hospitals, water supplies, bakeries, and shops and warehouses of essential supplies. It completely isolated the north of the Gaza making it unfit for human life. As wheat and flour ran out from the north, families started grinding and using barley and corn. They searched poultry and cow farms, and farmhouse storage facilities for animal feed of hay corn and barley, cleansed and ground these to make bread instead of wheat flour.

A report by 15 UN agencies as well as the World Food Program (WFP) warns of the risk of severe hunger in northern Gaza as it is rapidly sliding into famine and disease. Food and potable water have become unbelievably scarce and diseases have spread, putting women and children's nourishment and immunity at risk, leading to an unprecedented surge in cases of acute malnutrition. Another report prepared by UNICEF of tests carried out in shelters and health centers in the north found that 15.6 per cent, or 1 in 6 children under the age of two, suffer from acute malnutrition¹.

The current war of extermination, siege and starvation represents the peak of measures and policies of the Israeli occupation, which have gradually escalated since the beginning of the blockade on the Gaza Strip in the fall of 2007, that is, for two continuous torturous decades. A report prepared by the Famine Review Committee and the Integrated Food Security Classifications team on March 18, 2024 about the current and expected food security situation in the Gaza Strip, concludes that food insecurity has been increasing daily due to hostilities and restricted access to humanitarian and relief aid. The report also concludes that famine in the Gaza Strip is highly probable and imminent, especially in the northern Gaza Strip, and that it is expected to spread further over time as food insecurity is rising significantly in the entire the Strip. This was based on data of substantial acceleration in deaths by severe malnutrition. The report further concludes that this death rate will not decrease unless there is an immediate cessation of hostilities along with vital safeguarding of civilians².

While the police and civil administrative apparatuses in the Gaza Strip are struggling to endure the specter of famine, in its north in particular, and to preserve in as much as possible the rule of law and order. The Israeli occupation army has been systematically and deliberately targeting people of the police and civil services as well as members of emergency aid committees. The objective of the Israeli military occupation is to subjugate and even annihilate people by starving to them to death by preventing them from having safe access to food and proper medical care for the sick and injured. These relentless crimes of the occupation have caused the death of thousands of innocent people by starvation, making them pay with their lives for their resilience and steadfastness.

With this policy, the Israeli occupation also seeks to create an chaotic social reality that serves it in accomplishing its political plans. It does this by targeting official and civil bodies that play important roles in giving relief to citizens, such as managing and organizing aid delivery and distribution, and achieving integrity, justice and efficiency in managing those areas. Their work strengthens the people's steadfastness on the ground and thwarts the attempts of the occupation to make citizens pay a heavy price for their strength and patience. With the repeated and systematic targeting of these aid and safety workers, the occupation seeks to create doubt among the people in the capabilities of these committees, bodies or agencies to control and manage aid and provide a humanitarian response to the needs of the people, specifically in the northern Gaza Strip, thus giving rise to uncontrollable chaos.

1 <https://www.wfp.org/news/un-food-agency-pauses-deliveries-north-gaza>

2 https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Famine_Committee_Review_Report_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Feb_July2024_Special_Brief.pdf

This fact sheet outlines information and evidence of crimes committed by the Israeli occupation in targeting aid convoys, distribution centers, organization delivering flour and foodstuffs, and other bodies formed to facilitate their access and management. It also describes the catastrophic effects of targeting police and civilian administrative agencies working in the field, which in itself a major war crime.

The reality of attacks on convoys, various vital centers and points of distribution and securing humanitarian relief aid since October 7

In addition to the crime of genocide and starvation of the population, the Israeli occupation is violating international humanitarian law, which considers the protection of administrative workers and civilian police charged with maintaining order and security and delivering basic supplies a fundamental matter. Israel is violating those principles that stipulate deference to and protection of civilian workers and humanitarian relief workers, including the police, who do not participate in hostilities and who carry out civilian and relief work. With that, the occupation is violating the fourth Geneva Conventions of 1949, and the 1977 Additional Protocols, which clearly delineate the rights of civilians during armed conflict, including administrative and official police force personnel; it provides for their protection, following the principle of discriminate targeting (i.e. avoiding targeting humanitarian and civil aid workers) in direct and indirect attacks, and allowing them to conduct their duties safely and without endangering them.

The occupation violated Article 51 (2) of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Convention by “carrying out other acts aimed at terrorizing civilian citizens” as the occupation spread terror among innocent civilian with continuous bombardment and destruction of facilities and residential buildings, and by targeting the leaders of law and order. This has caused the collapse of civil order and the spread of horror and chaos among the population³.

The Israeli occupation military forces have been deliberately targeting all places and points of distribution and storage of relief aid to citizens. It has been launching repeated raids on commercial centers who are partners with the World Food Program (WFP) while citizens are lined up to receive vouchers, and have also targeted relief aid distribution points at the headquarters of civil society associations and institutions. They purposely bombed bakeries while citizens are waiting in line to buy bread, destroyed relief aid warehouses of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) as well as water distribution vehicles. It dropped bombs on civilians, teams and crews of hospitals and schools giving relief aid to citizens, in addition to attacking patrols and cars of police and emergency teams who were trying to secure aid convoys. The latest of these attacks was the bombing of three clearly marked cars transporting World Central Kitchen (WCK) relief workers, killing all 7 of them.

In a special interview, a Palestinian police official in the Gaza Strip stated that the Civil Police recorded about 45 Israeli attacks on humanitarian aid convoys between October 7, 2023 and mid-March 2024. These convoys were targeted at least 22 times after crossing checkpoints on Al-Rasheed Street, west of Gaza City, near Al-Nabulsi roundabout, and humanitarian aid convoys were targeted 8 times on Salah Al-Din Road, specifically near the Kuwait roundabout, and about 15 attacks on relief aid convoys and distribution points were also recorded in Deir Al-Balah and Nuseirat camps in the middle of the Gaza Strip, Al-Shati camp, Jabalia camp, Al-Daraj neighborhood, Al-Sabra neighborhood and Al-Shujaiya neighborhood in the northern Gaza Strip and near Rafah crossing in the southern Gaza Strip. These attacks are still ongoing, with the current final numbers shown later this paper⁴.

Victims of Israeli attacks on workers while distributing, organizing and securing relief aid

In a documented interview conducted with an official in the Red Crescent Society, he states that 55 martyrs and more than 312 injuries were recorded among male and female workers from the Civil Defense, the Red Crescent and police crews while they were distributing, organizing and securing relief aid. However, it is not possible to determine the actual number of victims of attacks on workers who were injured or killed because many of them were community volunteers who came to help after many international institutions abandoned

³ <https://www.icrc.org/ar/resources/documents/treaty/protocol-i-additional-to-the-geneva-conventions>

⁴ Interview with a Palestinian police official in the Gaza Strip. Interview date, 16/3/2024.

their humanitarian duty of securing the entrance and distributing relief aid as a result of serious threats to their safety by the Israeli occupation army⁵.

Direct Israeli attacks on relief aid centers, points and convoys

In an interview conducted by our researchers with an official in the Medical Association in the Gaza Strip⁶, he states that he has documented the places and centers of distribution and security points for relief and humanitarian aid targeted by the Israeli occupation as follows:

- 19/10/2023 A gathering of citizens in a shopping mall next to Al-Quds Hospital in Gaza City was targeted while they were trying to receive vouchers for the World Food Program (WFP).
- 20/10/2023 A community center affiliated with the Palestine Red Crescent Society that was providing relief assistance to the displaced inside the hospital was targeted.
- 22/10/2023 9 bakeries were targeted in Gaza governorate and the North while citizens gathered in queues to receive bread.
- 25/10/2023 The relief aid warehouses of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in Gaza City were targeted.
- 26/10/2023 Al-Weaam Charitable Society was targeted while providing relief aid in the Sheikh Zayed area.
- 2/11/2023 Water distribution vehicles were targeted in Al-Sabra neighborhood, Al-Daraj neighborhood and Al-Shujaiya neighborhood.
- 4/11/2023 The area around the gate of Al-Shifa Hospital was targeted while providing relief aid to the displaced.
- 11/11/2023 Queues of citizens were targeted in Deir al-Balah while trying to receive vouchers for the World Food Program (WFP.)
- 15/11/2023 A relief aid distribution point was targeted around the gate of Abdul Aziz Al-Rantisi Hospital in Gaza City.
- 18/11/2023 Relief aid warehouses of the UNRWA in Al-Shati Camp were targeted.
- **North of the Strip.**
 - 18/11/2023 Relief aid warehouses belonging to the UNRWA in the Jabalia refugee camp were targeted.
 - 23/11/2023 A relief aid distribution point belonging to the Al-Falah Charitable Society was targeted in Jabalia camp.
 - 3/12/2023 Individuals and police cars that were trying to secure relief assistance provided by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society were targeted.
- **In the Al-Tufah neighborhood in the northern Gaza Strip.**
 - 17/12/2023 Police personnel were targeted while trying to secure a relief aid convoy after it entered the Rafah border crossing.
 - 22/12/2023 Police personnel were targeted while trying to secure a relief aid convoy after it entered the Rafah border crossing.
 - 26/12/2023 Volunteers from the Civil Defense and the Ministry of Health were targeted while trying to organize and secure a relief aid convoy after it entered the Rafah border crossing.

5 Interview with a Red Crescent Society official. Gaza. Interview date, 16/3/2024.

6 An interview with an official in the Medical Association in the Gaza Strip. Interview date: 3/17/2024.

- 2/1/2024 Police personnel were targeted while trying to secure a relief aid convoy at the 17th roundabout.
- 7/1/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering Al-Nabulsi roundabout on Al-Rasheed Street, west of Gaza City.
- 9/1/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering Al-Nabulsi roundabout on Al-Rasheed Street, west of Gaza City.
- 12/1/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering Al-Nabulsi roundabout on Al-Rasheed Street, west of Gaza City.
- 15/1/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted on Al-Bahr Street opposite Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip.
- 16/1/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering the Nabulsi roundabout on Al-Rasheed Street on the Gaza Sea.
- 22/1/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering the Rafah border crossing.
- 26/1/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering Al-Nabulsi roundabout on Al-Rasheed Street, west of Gaza City.
- 28/1/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering the Kuwait roundabout on Salah Al-Din Street.
- 29/1/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering Kuwait roundabout on Salah Al-Din Street.
- 4/2/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering Al-Nabulsi roundabout on Al-Rasheed Street, west of Gaza City.
- 5/2/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering Al-Nabulsi roundabout on Al-Rasheed Street, west of Gaza City.
- 2/2/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted on Al-Bahr Street opposite Deir Al-Balah.
- 8/2/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering Al-Nabulsi roundabout on Al-Rasheed Street, west of Gaza City.
- 12/2/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering Kuwait Roundabout on Salah Al-Din Street.
- 19/2/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering the Kuwait Roundabout on Salah Al-Din Street.
- 24/2/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering the Kuwait Roundabout on Salah Al-Din Street.
- 3/3/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering the Kuwait roundabout on Salah Al-Din Street.
- 5/3/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering Al-Nabulsi roundabout on Al-Rasheed Street, west of Gaza City.
- 8/3/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering the Kuwait roundabout on Salah Al-Din Street.
- 10/3/2024 A relief aid convoy was targeted after entering the Kuwait Roundabout on Salah Al-Din Street.
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How are employees targeted?

An official in the Palestinian police in the Gaza Strip explained the process of targeting workers while distributing and securing relief aid. He stated that when the relief aid convoys enter the Strip, they receive information about the number of trucks and their crossing route, but there is no coordination with the police to secure these convoys. Worse yet, in all the times when the police and volunteers from civil society associations and institutions tried to secure this aid, they were targeted directly by the occupation forces in order to create a state of chaos, destroy confidence and fuel societal tension and frustration, particularly with the severe state of famine and the deterioration of living conditions. Thus, it becomes easy for the occupation to impose its will on the Palestinian people. It is a systematic policy to obliterate and waste all the resources of the Palestinian people's resources, which are crucial in helping them stand firm against the Israeli brutal onslaught. In fact, the occupation tried to communicate with some notables of certain families to urge them to receive and coordinate relief aid convoys, which is a clear attempt to create an alternative group to the official aid workers, but that offer was bluntly rejected by all Gaza families⁷.

In an interview with another official in the civil police in the central governorate, he indicates that the Israeli occupation deliberately damaged the warehouses in which flour and other foodstuffs were stored, targeting them with aerial bombardment, destroying them completely, rendering them totally useless. The official added that the occupation deliberately destroyed a food aid distribution point next to the an UNRWA school east of Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip, which killed 5 people and injured 4 members of the Civil Police. This, on top of the martyrdom of 18 of its members who were working to secure aid trucks and supervising the distribution of that aid. Although they were officially registered with the Civil Police in the Central Governorate, still, all of them were directly targeted at the distribution points of that aid. The Civil Police also documented the Israeli military's deliberate killing of the Director of the Emergency Committee by directly targeting him with an air strike while he was working alongside the administrative teams in organizing and securing the logistics department for the delivery of aid in the city of Rafah⁸.

In the testimony of a field coordinator for the passage of aid trucks to the governorates of Gaza and the North, he says, "After the occupation searches the trucks, it orders us to pass through Al-Rashid Street or Salah Al-Din Street without prior warning, and because the occupation destroys these streets every day, whether by bulldozers or by building sand mounds or by throwing missiles and large bombs in the middle of these streets, we can only cross a few meters at the Nabulsi roundabout or the Kuwait roundabout. They also target all those who attempt to repair those streets. I stop either at the Nabulsi roundabout, the 17th roundabout or the Kuwait roundabout, but there is no coordinating point to receive this aid. The dangerous thing about the matter is that the drones (quadcopter) and tanks of the occupation advance while we cross those areas and shoot at the people gathered to receive aid, often killing dozens and wounding dozens more."

The field coordinator added that about two weeks ago (from the time of his testimony,) the occupation intercepted three aid truck drivers, ordered them not to stop and forced them to cross Al-Rashid Street at high speed or else they and their trucks would be bombed, which forced the drivers to comply and inadvertently run over some people who could not get out of the way. He also noted that they do not have any destination to turn to for help in delivering relief provisions; in, fact all parties that tried to coordinate with them to receive aid, whether the police, volunteers of the Red Crescent societies or civil bodies, were deliberately targeted⁹.

For his part, the driver and coordinator of the transit of relief aid trucks coming from the Rafah crossing to the Gaza and the northern governorates spoke of the systematic and deliberate targeting of relief aid convoys, wherein he confirms that out of every 10 relief convoys, at least 7 are targeted, "We are working in a very dangerous situation, many of our colleagues were martyred or injured while crossing the convoys, where drones (quadcopters) are fired near us, and sometimes tanks or warplanes bomb trucks directly, as happened in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip on 2/2/2024, or by bombing gatherings of people near the trucks. We are also injured or killed, as happened many times, after waiting long hours at Al-Baidar checkpoint on Al-Rashid Street and when we cross the checkpoint. The Israeli military shoots people waiting for relief aid since we are all in the crosshairs."¹⁰

7 Previous source.

8 Interview with a Palestinian police official in the Central Governorate. Interview date, 18/3/2024.

9 An interview with a field coordinator for the crossing of aid trucks into the Gaza and northern governorates. Interview date, 3/17/2024.

10 An interview with a field coordinator for the crossing of aid trucks into the Gaza and northern governorates. Interview date, 3/17/2024.

Another driver said, “The trucks transporting aid are subject to meticulous inspection, obstacles, restrictions and control imposed by the Israeli military before and while they are traveling on the road designated for them. They also deliberately target them.” The driver then added, “I suffered from severe panic and anxiety for many days following the shocking events on the night of 17/1/2024. We were targeted while transporting and unloading food and flour to the northern Gaza Strip, where the occupation army had forced us to circle around the outskirts of the central Gaza Strip near Juhr al-Deek, a distance of 32 kilometers, to reach the Kuwait roundabout near Gaza City, which delayed the delivery of this aid, mainly because of running out of fuel, which left these trucks exposed to looting by local armed groups.¹¹”

An official employee in Rafah Governorate also stated that since the first day of the war, Gaza Governorate has made great and continuous efforts to open prospects of coordination with the Egyptian brothers to secure the arrival of relief aid convoys to our people, but the occupation disrupted these efforts, and instead, targeted any presence of the civil police at the points of distribution of relief aid. He added, “we have become fully convinced that the occupation deliberately disrupts the arrival of relief aid in order to spread feelings of frustration, confusion, helplessness and feelings of betrayal and insecurity that would drive people to migrate towards the south.¹²”

Societal risks resulting from the cessation of civil bodies and police teams’ ability to carry out their role

The Israeli occupation is deliberately creating a state of disorder, paralyzing the ability of administrative and police agencies to provide basic services, and systematically using the weapon of starvation in order to push people into chaos and to escalate tension and societal conflicts by thwarting attempts of various bodies to maintain order, specifically the police apparatus, whose duty is to protect citizens. The occupation forces deliberately undermine any attempt to revive the role of administrative agencies in organizing the fair delivery of relief aid to those in need, which exacerbates the humanitarian crises that have reached the point of famine among the people of Gaza. An official doctor in the Department of Mental and Community Health at the Psychiatric Hospital indicated that one of the most prominent societal risks facing the Gaza Strip is the Israeli attempts to destroy the people’s conscious capabilities, and fueling societal violence during that state of famine, chaos, destruction of trust and the absence of relief aid provision¹³.

The National Assembly of Palestinian Tribes, Clans and Families confirmed that the Israeli occupation continues to propagate chaos by targeting the Palestinian Civil Police and the Popular Protection Committees, who are the shield of protection and safety from the occupation and its supporters, and are responsible societal peace. The Assembly condemned the occupation for its continuous and repeated attempts to assault the police system and the Popular Protection Committees, and, in a statement issued on March 19 2024, called on its members to stand behind the Palestinian police force and the Popular Protection Committees despite all attempts by the occupation to destroy them.

Alternatives and societal mechanisms used to overcome the restrictions and risks imposed by the occupation on the safety of workers

In the face of famine, chaos and deteriorating living conditions, the official teams responsible for organizing and securing aid take a position that combines the victims and the heroes at the same time. For instance, the civil defense and civil police crews that somewhat succeeded at securing some of the aid that was able to enter the northern Gaza Strip by stopping thieves who try to steal large quantities of this aid. They also confiscated any aid material sold in markets and redistributed it to people for free. Also, the civil police that prevented the flocking of citizens to Al-Rasheed Street or Salah Al-Din Street during the arrival of aid convoys, and directing trucks towards the displaced population locations in schools and universities, so the supplies can be distributed to people fairly. In addition, teams from the Civil Defense and municipalities opened some roads

11 An interview with the coordinator and driver of relief aid trucks coming from the Rafah crossing to the Gaza and northern governorates. Interview date, 3/17/2024.

12 An interview with a responsible employee in Rafah Governorate. Interview date, 3/15/2024.

13 Interview with an official in the Department of Mental and Community Health at the Gaza Psychiatric Hospital. Interview date, 3/17/2024.

for the arrival of aid, along with groups of emergency committees and popular committees, in addition to notable family members who volunteered to help in securing and distributing relief aid, and in gathering fuel for bulldozers that had to carve out paths through the rubble to facilitate the arrival of that aid to the UNRWA distribution centers in the north of the Strip¹⁴.

Considering the Israeli killing and starvation machine, and in light of the systematic and continuous targeting of official or civil organizations, it is important to emphasize the need to continuously strive to innovate and build models that contribute to official bodies and law enforcement agencies, who are essential in maintaining law and order in all components of civil society. It is also necessary to develop flexible and effective procedures for that purpose, such as neighborhood committees and popular emergency committees. Establishing an innovative organizational means to manage aid fairly, equitably and efficiently is critical to bolstering the resilience and steadfastness of the people of Gaza, which also strengthens their internal front in the face of this brutal war of annihilation.

Concluding recommendations

Many countries and peoples of the free world today stand side by side with the Palestinian people in their tragedy and struggle to stop the war of extermination and starvation being waged against them. They vehemently support the Palestinian right to get rid of the Israeli occupation and to hold this brutal occupation accountable for its crimes, which have had deeply intense impact on all those with a live conscience. Those people will not remain silent and totally reject all the false excuses and justifications for these crimes of genocide and starvation. We hereby ask everyone to join these people of conscience in a campaign of pressure on the Israeli occupation, demanding the following:

- Call for the immediate cessation of the war of extermination and starvation waged by the Israeli occupation against our Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, which is besieged by hunger, starvation and the loss of all necessities of life.
- Unify all international and popular efforts to organize medical convoys and relief aid to break the military siege on northern Gaza and save around 300-500 thousand Palestinian citizens from the scourge of this war of extermination and starvation.
- Condemn the occupation's targeting of administrative and police centers and distribution and relief points as military mean to force helpless people to submit and surrender, and call for accountability of the Israeli occupation for the grave violations committed against administrative and police workers in the field of distributing and securing relief aid.
- Demand that the Palestinian government declare a critical state of famine in the governorates of Gaza and northern Gaza and direct all available efforts and resources to put an end to it.
- Oppose the Israel use of humanitarian relief interventions for the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip as a military target, and demand a radical change in the United Nations Security Council, whose laws and regulations basically obstructs all efforts to stop the war of extermination and starvation, and to hold the occupation accountable for its crimes, especially with the continuous United States vetos of UN ceasefire resolutions, who is in effect an accomplice in this war of extermination and starvation.

¹⁴ Interview with an official at the Community Training and Crisis Management Center. Interview date, 3/16/2024.

Sources¹⁵

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- Interview with an official of the Red Crescent Society. Gaza. Interview date, 16/3/2024.
- Interview with an official of the Medical Association in the Gaza Strip. Interview date, 17/3/2024.
- Interview with a field coordinator for the transit of aid trucks to the Gaza and North governorates. Interview Date 17/3/2024.
- Interview with the coordinator and driver of relief aid trucks coming from the Rafah crossing to the Gaza and North governorates. Interview date, 17/3/2024.
- Interview with a truck driver transporting relief aid from Rafah crossing to Kuwait roundabout near Gaza City. Interview date, 18/3/2024.
- Interview with an official in Rafah governorate. Interview date, 15/3/2024.
- Interview with an official in the Department of Mental and Community Health at the Gaza Psychiatric Hospital. Interview date: 3/17/2024.

An interview with an official at the Community Training and Crisis Management Center. Interview date: 3/16/2024

¹⁵ The Center reserves the right to not reveal the names of the individuals interviewed during the preparation of the fact sheet, in order to preserve the safety of people.