

# GAZA: Starvation or Gunfire - This is Not a Humanitarian Response

***160+ NGOs call for immediate action to end the deadly Israeli distribution scheme (including the so-called Gaza Humanitarian Foundation) in Gaza, revert to the existing UN-led coordination mechanisms, and lift the Israeli government's blockade on aid and commercial supplies. The 400 aid distribution points operating during the temporary ceasefire across Gaza have now been replaced by just four military-controlled distribution sites, forcing two million people into overcrowded, militarized zones where they face daily gunfire and mass casualties while trying to access food and are denied other life-saving supplies.***

Today, Palestinians in Gaza face an impossible choice: starve or risk being shot while trying desperately to reach food to feed their families. The weeks following the launch of the Israeli distribution scheme have been some of the deadliest and most violent since October 2023.

In less than four weeks, more than 500 Palestinians have been [killed](#) and almost 4,000 injured just trying to access or distribute food. Israeli forces and armed groups - some reportedly operating with [backing](#) from Israeli authorities - now routinely [open fire on desperate civilians](#) risking everything just to survive.

The humanitarian system is being deliberately and systematically dismantled by the Government of Israel's blockade and restrictions, a blockade now being used to justify shutting down nearly all other aid operations in favour of a deadly, military-controlled alternative that neither protects civilians nor meets basic needs. These measures are designed to sustain a cycle of desperation, danger, and death. Experienced humanitarian actors remain ready to deliver life-saving assistance at scale. Yet more than 100 days since Israeli authorities reimposed a near-total blockade on aid and commercial goods, Gaza's humanitarian conditions are collapsing faster than at any point in the past 20 months.

Under the Israeli government's new scheme, starved and weakened civilians are being forced to trek for hours through dangerous terrain and active conflict zones, only to face a violent, chaotic race to reach fenced, militarized distribution sites with a single entry point. There, thousands are released into chaotic enclosures to fight for limited food supplies. These areas have become sites of repeated [massacres](#) in blatant disregard for international humanitarian law. Orphaned children and caregivers are among the dead, with children harmed in over [half](#) of the attacks on civilians at these sites. With

Gaza's healthcare system in ruins, many of those shot are left to bleed out alone, beyond the [reach of ambulances](#) and denied lifesaving medical care.

Amidst severe hunger and famine-like conditions, many families tell us they are now too weak to compete for food rations. Those who do manage to obtain food often return with only a few basic items - nearly impossible to prepare without clean water or fuel to cook with. Fuel is nearly depleted, bringing critical lifesaving services – including bakeries, water systems, ambulances, and hospitals – to a standstill. Families are sheltering under plastic sheets, operating makeshift kitchens amid the rubble, without fuel, clean water, sanitation, or electricity.

This is not a humanitarian response.

Concentrating more than two million people into further confined areas for a chance to feed their families is not a plan to save lives. For 20 months, more than two million people have been subjected to relentless bombardment, the weaponization of food, water and other aid, repeated forced displacement, and systematic dehumanization - all under the watch of the international community. The Sphere Association, which sets minimum standards for quality humanitarian aid, has [warned](#) that the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's approach does not adhere to core humanitarian standards and principles.

This normalization of suffering must not be allowed to stand. States must reject the false choice between deadly, military-controlled food distributions and total denial of aid. States must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, including prohibitions on forced displacement, indiscriminate attacks, and obstruction of humanitarian aid. States must ensure accountability for grave violations of international law.

We, the undersigned organizations, once again call on all third states to:

- Take concrete measures to end the suffocating siege and uphold the right of civilians in Gaza to safely access aid and receive protection.
- Urge donors not to fund militarized aid schemes that violate international law, do not adhere to humanitarian principles, deepen harm, and risk complicity in atrocities.
- Support the restoration of a unified, UN-led coordination mechanism—grounded in international humanitarian law and inclusive of UNRWA, Palestinian civil society, and the wider humanitarian community—to meet people's needs.

We reiterate our urgent calls for an immediate and sustained ceasefire, the release of all hostages and arbitrarily detained prisoners, full humanitarian access at scale, and an end to the pervasive impunity that enables these atrocities and denies Palestinians their basic dignity.

### **Editor's Note**

- [On 15 June](#), the Red Cross field hospital in Al Mawasi received at least 170 patients injured while trying to reach a food distribution site. The following day, 16 June, more than 200 patients arrived at the same facility - the highest number recorded in a single mass casualty incident in Gaza. Of that number, 28 Palestinians were declared dead. A WHO official underscored the deadly pattern: "The recent food distribution initiatives by non-UN actors every time result in mass casualty incidents."
- These deaths add to the broader toll: since October 2023, over 56,000 Palestinians have [been killed](#) in Gaza, including at least 17,000 children.

### **Undersigned:**

1. ABCD Bethlehem
2. ACT Alliance
3. Act Church of Sweden
4. Action Against Hunger (ACF)
5. Action Corps
6. ActionAid
7. Age International
8. Agricultural Development Association - PARC
9. Al Ard for Agricultural Development
10. Al-Najd Developmental Forum
11. American Friends Service Committee
12. Amnesty International
13. Amos Trust
14. Anera
15. Anti-Slavery International
16. Arab Educational Institute - Pax Christi Bethlehem

17. Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz
18. Asociación de Solidaridad Internacional UNADIKUM
19. Association for Civil Rights Israel (ACRI)
20. Association Switzerland Palestine
21. B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories
22. BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights
23. Beesan Charitable Association
24. Bimkom - Planning and Human Rights
25. Bisan Center for Research and Development
26. Botswana Watch Organisation
27. Breaking the Silence
28. Broederlijk Delen
29. CADUS e.V.
30. Caritas Germany
31. Caritas International Belgium
32. Caritas Internationalis
33. Caritas Jerusalem
34. Caritas Middle East and North Africa
35. Center of Jewish Nonviolence
36. CESIDA - Spanish Coordinator of HIV and AIDS
37. Children Not Numbers
38. Choose Love
39. Christian Aid
40. Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)
41. CIDSE - International Family of Catholic Social Justice Organisations
42. CNCD-11.11.11
43. codepink
44. Combatants for Peace
45. Comité de Solidaridad con la Causa Árabe
46. Congregations of St Joseph

47. COOPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION
48. Cordaid
49. Council for Arab-British Understanding (Caabu)
50. Coventry Friends of Palestine
51. Cultures of Resistance
52. DanChurchAid
53. Danish Refugee Council
54. DAWN
55. Diakonia
56. Ekō
57. Embrace the Middle East
58. Emmaüs International
59. Entraide et Fraternité
60. Episcopal Peace Fellowship Palestine Justice Network
61. EuroMed Rights
62. FÓRUM DE POLÍTICA FEMINISTA
63. Friends Committee on National Legislation
64. Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA)
65. Fund for Global Human Rights
66. Fundación Mundubat
67. Gaza Culture and Development Group (GCDG)
68. Gaza Society for Sustainable Agriculture and Friendly Environment (SAFE)
69. German Platform of Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs (VENRO)
70. Gisha - Legal Center for Freedom of Movement
71. Glia
72. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P)
73. Greenpeace
74. HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual
75. Hands for Charity
76. HEKS/EPER(Swiss Church Aid)
77. HelpAge International

78. Human Security Collective
79. Humanité Solidarité Médecine (HuSoMe ONG)
80. Humanity & Inclusion - Handicap International
81. Humanity Above All
82. INARA
83. Independent Catholic News
84. Indiana Center for Middle East Peace
85. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
86. International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO)
87. INTERSOS
88. Islamic Relief Worldwide
89. Jewish Network for Palestine
90. Jüdische Stimme für Demokratie und Gerechtigkeit in Israel/Palästina, JVJP
91. Just Foreign Policy
92. Just Treatment
93. Kairos Ireland
94. Kenya Human Rights Commission
95. Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
96. Martin Etxea Elkarte
97. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
98. Médecins du Monde International Network
99. Médecins Sans Frontières
100. MedGlobal
101. Medical Aid for Palestinians
102. Medico International
103. medico international schweiz
104. Medicos sin fronteras (MSF - Spain)
105. Mennonite Central Committee
106. Middle East Children's Alliance
107. Mothers Manifesto
108. MPower Change Action Fund

109. Muslim Aid
110. Mwatana for Human Rights
111. Nonviolent Peaceforce
112. Norwegian Church Aid
113. Norwegian People's Aid
114. Norwegian Refugee Council
115. Oxfam International
116. Palestine Children's Relief Fund (PCRF)
117. Palestine Justice Network of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
118. Palestinian American Medical Association (PAMA)
119. Parents Against Child Detentions
120. Partners for Palestine
121. Partners for Progressive Israel
122. PAX
123. Pax Christi Australia
124. Pax Christi England and Wales
125. Pax Christi International
126. Pax Christi Italy
127. pax christi Munich
128. Pax Christi Scotland
129. Pax Christi USA
130. Peace Direct
131. Peace Watch Switzerland
132. Penny Appeal Canada
133. Physicians for Human Rights Israel
134. Plan International
135. Plataforma de Solidaridad con Palestina de Sevilla
136. Plateforme des ONG françaises pour la Palestine
137. Polish-Palestinian Justice Initiative KAKTUS
138. Première Urgence Internationale
139. Presbyterian Church (USA)

140. Quixote Center
141. Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary - NGO
142. ReThinking Foreign Policy
143. Right to Movement
144. Rumbo a Gaza-Freedom Flotilla
145. Saferworld
146. Saskatoon Chapter of Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East
147. Save the Children
148. Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund
149. Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team
150. Solsoc
151. Stichting Heimat International Foundation
152. STOPAIDS
153. Støtteforeningen Det Danske Hus i Palæstina
154. Terre Des Hommes International Federation
155. Terre des hommes Lausanne
156. Terres des Hommes Italia
157. The Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET)
158. The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD UK)
159. The Palestine Justice Network of the Presbyterian Church USA Bay Area
160. The Rights Forum
161. Union of Agricultural Work Committees-UAWC
162. United Against Inhumanity (UAI)
163. Universities Allied for Essential Medicines UK
164. US-Lutheran Palestine Israel Justice Network
165. Vento di Terra
166. War Child Alliance
167. War on Want
168. Welthungerhilfe
169. Yesh Din