



EXPLAINER: GAZA HUMANITARIAN AID – MYTHS AND FACTS

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Overview: In response to reports of widespread starvation in Gaza, the Israeli government and its allies have promulgated several myths regarding the extent of and responsibility for the humanitarian situation in Gaza. In this piece, we pick apart each of these claims, showing that widespread starvation was entirely foreseeable, and that flooding Gaza with humanitarian aid would alleviate the starvation, eliminate the killing at or near Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) distribution sites and end the looting and reselling of aid.

Myth #1: “There is no starvation happening in Gaza.”

Fact: The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), World Health Organization (WHO), and UNICEF have all documented widespread hunger in Gaza.

- The [IPC](#) described conditions in Gaza as the “worst-case scenario of famine,” with 30% of children suffering from acute malnutrition, 24% of households experiencing very severe hunger, and wheat flour prices up 1,400–5,600% compared to late February.
- In July alone, the WHO [identified nearly 12,000 children](#) under the age of five as acutely malnourished.
- UNICEF found that [one in three](#) people in Gaza has gone days without eating.
- **Bottom Line: There is no doubt that large segments of the Palestinian population in Gaza are suffering from severe hunger and acute malnutrition.**

Myth #2: You cannot trust starvation figures from the IPC, WHO, UNICEF, or any other NGO. They are anti-Israel and use Hamas sources.

Fact: The IPC, WHO, UNICEF, and other international nongovernmental organizations have established protocols for evaluating data related to hunger in conflict environments, and the US relies on this data all over the world; they are transparent in presenting the basis for their findings and their analysis is subject to constant peer review by experts in the field. Moreover, the government of Israel does not dispute that for at least five months the quantity of food aid allowed to enter Gaza was well below the minimum required to sustain Gaza’s population.

- No food aid was allowed to enter Gaza for all of March, April, and most of May.
- The [Israeli government’s own figures](#) show that in June and July, only [60% of the minimum quantity of food aid required](#) for subsistence entered Gaza, after almost three months in which no aid entered.
- The GHF reports that, from May 19 to August 5, it [distributed 108 million meals](#), amounting to roughly 1.4 million meals a day. Even if all these meals were distributed as intended, this is far below the quantity required to feed Gaza’s 2.1 million people.
- The GHF food baskets provide a first aid response, but do not address the nutrition deficit facing the population, particularly infants and other vulnerable populations. According to [a leading nutrition expert](#), the GHF food basket is “designed to stop the haemorrhaging effect

that is acute hunger [but] a diet like this over weeks would lead to 'hidden hunger', increasing the risk of diseases like anaemia and scurvy.”

- **Bottom line: Food aid in Gaza remains far below survival levels, even assuming the effective distribution of the GHF food packages since May 19.**

Myth #3: “The starvation in Gaza is caused by Hamas stealing UN-delivered aid and reselling it for a profit.”

Fact: USAID, the IDF, and aid groups have not reported any evidence that Hamas has systematically stolen UN aid for resale on the black market. Flooding Gaza with aid would halt any systematic looting and reselling.

- During the early-2025 ceasefire, Israel allowed the UN and other NGOs to surge aid, and an average of 600 trucks a day entered the Strip. Given that supplies were widely available and that prices were lower and stable, the incentives for theft by gangs or looting by hungry civilians did not exist.
- [Two senior Israeli military officials](#) and [USAID](#) have confirmed that there is no evidence that Hamas systematically stole UN aid throughout the post-October 7 conflict period.
- **Bottom Line: The theft and resale by criminal gangs only proliferate when there are severe Israeli restrictions on aid. If Gaza is flooded by aid, the resale prices will plummet, and incentives to loot will disappear.**

Myth #4: “The UN is at fault for the starvation in Gaza – look at the pallets of aid awaiting collection on the Gaza side of the border.”

Fact: The UN’s delivery capacity has been significantly limited by the IDF’s refusal to approve aid deliveries and provide safe routes.

- More than half of the UN’s movement requests in May, June and July were [denied by the IDF](#).
- The UN cannot safely deliver aid in the current conditions, as there is no security force protecting its trucks from looting by hungry civilians or armed gangs, and many roads are badly damaged. Now that the Hamas-run police force is no longer operational, it is entirely the IDF’s responsibility to ensure that these aid trucks are safe, and not the UN’s.
 - [88 percent of UN trucks were intercepted by armed actors and hungry civilians between May 19 and August 1](#), demonstrating how unsafe delivery routes are currently. During the early-2025 ceasefire, the UN and other aid groups were allowed to deliver 600 trucks per day, and there were no widespread interceptions by armed gangs or hungry civilians.
- **Bottom Line: Whereas the IDF provides safe routes to the GHF, to its own troops and even cooperated with the UN and other aid groups earlier in the war, it has failed to facilitate the UN’s safe operations since March of this year. Surging aid and cooperating with the UN would allow the UN to safely deliver aid.**

Myth #5: “The GHF is a good replacement for UN-delivered aid.”

Fact: The GHF’s limited number of distribution sites, the insufficient amount of aid provided, and the chaotic, militarized, and deadly distribution process have resulted in more than 1,000 Palestinians killed in the vicinity of GHF sites and severe food insecurity affecting much of the population in Gaza.

- GHF operates with [limited transparency](#) regarding the source of its funding or the amount of its monthly expenditures.
- With [only four operating hubs](#), many civilians travel over three miles to retrieve 40-pound packages and are vulnerable to being robbed on the journey home. Some civilians who receive the package break it apart, carrying only those items deemed most essential to their homes.
- GHF pickup [does not require any identification](#), so resellers can return several times a week. This means that the GHF system fails to prevent black market resale by Hamas or others.
- The unregulated distribution process – allowing thousands to flood the hubs at once – has resulted in a survival of the fittest competition that effectively excludes the most vulnerable.
- [More than 1,000 aid seekers](#) have been killed at or near GHF distribution hubs since they began operating. Thus, Palestinians have had to choose between starving to death by staying home or risking being shot or trampled at a GHF site.
- **Bottom line: The GHF has undoubtedly alleviated some of the hunger in Gaza, but it does not provide a sufficient solution to Gaza’s food insecurity reality. Hence, regardless of whether a decision is made to continue its operations, the U.N. and other international organizations must be mobilized and allowed to operate in Gaza to avert further disaster.**