

*Oxfam says starvation used as a
weapon of war on civilians in
Gaza*

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Palestinians, who fled their houses due to Israeli strikes, gather to get their share of charity food offered by volunteers, amid food shortages, at a UN-run school where they take refuge, in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, October 24. REUTERS/Mahmoud al-Masri

London, October 25 (RHC)-- Oxfam has renewed its call for essential goods to enter the besieged Gaza Strip and said starvation was being used as a “weapon of war” after Israel cut off supplies of food, water, electricity and fuel to the territory.

Israel imposed a “complete siege” on Gaza after Hamas fighters launched an attack from Gaza on southern Israel on October 7, killing at least 1,400 people according to Israeli authorities. In addition to the siege, Israel has bombarded the territory relentlessly, killing more than 6,600 people, according to authorities in Gaza, which is governed by Hamas.

United Nations officials have warned of a humanitarian catastrophe and UN agencies and pleaded for Israel to allow more aid trucks into Gaza. Fewer than 70 relief trucks have entered the impoverished territory since the war began.

In a statement on Wednesday, Oxfam said only “two percent of food that would have been delivered has entered Gaza since the total siege.” To overcome the urgent food crisis, Oxfam said about 104 trucks a day would be needed to deliver food to Gaza.

Sally Abi Khalil, Oxfam’s regional Middle East director, said, “The situation is nothing short of horrific – where is humanity? Millions of civilians are being collectively punished in full view of the world, there can be no justification for using starvation as a weapon of war. World leaders cannot continue to sit back and watch, they have an obligation to act and to act now.”

“Every day, the situation worsens. Children are experiencing severe trauma from the constant bombardment; their drinking water is polluted or rationed, and soon families may not be able to feed them too. How much more are Gazans expected to endure?” Khalil added.

Referencing international humanitarian law, which prohibits starvation as a method of warfare, Oxfam said it was “becoming painfully clear that the unfolding humanitarian situation in Gaza fits the prohibition condemned in the resolution”.

The NGO also called for the UN Security Council (UNSC) and member states to prevent the situation from worsening and demanded an immediate ceasefire so all necessary food, fuel, water, and medical supplies can be met.

The UNSC is expected on Wednesday to consider proposals from the United States, which hopes to secure support for short pauses in the conflict to allow more aid to enter Gaza, and a Russian resolution calling for a broader ceasefire.

On Tuesday, UN agencies said they were pleading for unimpeded aid into Gaza and said more than 20 times the current deliveries were needed to support the population.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) said medicines and health supplies had been delivered to three essential referral hospitals in southern Gaza. However, they still needed to reach the north of the Palestinian enclave.

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