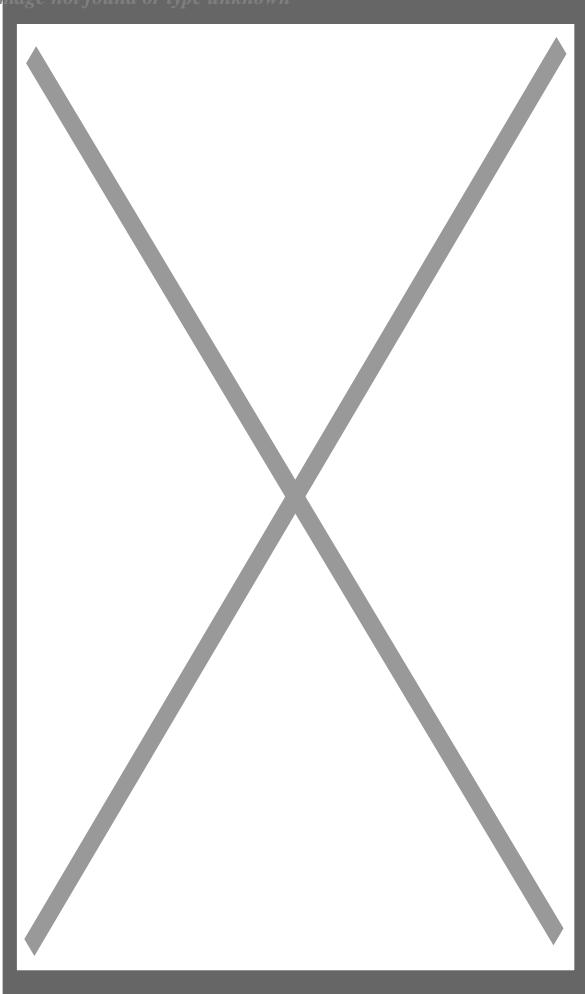


*United Nations issues another  
urgent warning: Gaza Strip  
getting closer to famine as people  
starving to death*

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United Nations, April 25 (RHC)-- The besieged Gaza Strip is getting closer by the day to famine as some inhabitants of the war-torn Palestinian territory are actually starving to death, the United Nations warns.

In their latest Global Report on Food Crises published on Wednesday, the UN agencies cautioned that dangerous levels of acute hunger had affected some 281.6 million people across the globe last year.

The report -- a joint initiative involving FAO, the UN World Food Program (WFP) and the UN children's agency (UNICEF) -- also touched upon the dire situation in the Gaza Strip, which has been under Israel's brutal bombardment and ground assault since October 7.

After nearly seven months of Israeli bombardment, "people cannot meet even the most basic, food needs. They have exhausted all coping strategies, like eating animal fodder, begging, selling off their belongings to buy food. They are most of the time destitute and clearly some of them are dying of hunger," said Gian Carlo Cirri, director of the Geneva office of the WFP.

The Tel Aviv regime has imposed a complete siege on the Gaza Strip, cutting off fuel, electricity, food and water to the more than two million Palestinians living there, while it is also blocking aid deliveries to the impoverished territory.

"We are getting closer by the day to a famine situation. Malnutrition among children is spreading. We estimate 30 percent of children below the age of two is now acutely malnourished or wasted and 70 percent of the population in the north is facing catastrophic hunger," Cirri added.

"There is reasonable evidence that all three famine thresholds – food insecurity, malnutrition, mortality – will be passed in the next six weeks," the WFP chief further said.

Israel has continued to obstruct the delivery of aid into Gaza amid its 7-month genocidal war on the besieged territory, using food as a tool to "pressure" and "blackmail" Palestinians, according to a rights group.

Earlier this month, the UN Relief Works and Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) warned that a "man-made" famine was tightening its grip across Gaza.

UNRWA Commissioner General Philippe Lazzarini on April 17 sounded the alert, condemning the occupying regime for preventing aid deliveries from reaching Gaza and attempting to end the agency's activities in the war-ravaged coastal sliver.

Lazzarini, whose agency is a critical source of support for people in Gaza, also said that in the north of the Palestinian territory, "infants and young children have begun to die of malnutrition and dehydration."

The occupying regime, however, prevents UNRWA from delivering the desperately needed aid to starving inhabitants of Gaza. According to UNRWA, throughout Gaza, "food insecurity" has increased by 80 percent since December.

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