

People in Gaza surviving on canned food as fresh produce rotting at border



Gaza City, March 29 (RHC)-- Palestinians in Gaza have described surviving on canned food as the UN relief chief warns fresh produce is "rotting" at Gaza's shuttered border since an Israeli blockade on crucial humanitarian aid started 10 days ago.

Tom Fletcher, chief of humanitarian affairs at OCHA, told the United Nations Security Council that all entry points into Gaza were closed to cargo with food “rotting, medicine expiring, and vital medical equipment stuck.”

“International humanitarian law prohibits indiscriminate attacks, obstruction of life-saving aid, destruction of infrastructure indispensable for civilians’ survival, and hostage-taking ... If the basic principles of humanitarian law still count, the international community must act while it can to uphold them,” he added.

Fletcher’s comments come as the UN World Food Programme (WFP) reported on Friday that it only has “5,700 tonnes of food stocks left in Gaza – enough to support WFP operations for a maximum of two weeks”.

The organisation said that amid the Israeli blockade, the price of food has drastically increased, with a 25 kg (55 lb) bag of wheat flour now costing up to \$50, a “400 percent increase compared to pre-March 18 prices”.

Since the beginning of March, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that food and aid would be banned from entering Gaza until Hamas agreed to extend the first stage of the January ceasefire deal.

However, the Palestinian group has refused to extend the first stage and has pushed to advance into the second one, which would negotiate the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and an end to the war.

At a market in Jabalia, northern Gaza, food supplies are limited to canned goods and expensive vegetables. Mustafa Homaid, a vegetable seller, told Al Jazeera that the marketplace is “almost empty” as the price of goods is too high for people to buy.

“A kilo (2.2 pounds) of tomatoes has tripled in price. I can hardly afford to buy groceries for my family. You can imagine how other people are coping,” Homaid said.

For Ahmed Balosha, a displaced child in Jabalia, the increase in prices has meant his family has not had fresh meat “for more than a year.” “We are surviving on canned food, some bread and cheese. That is all,” he said.

Amid the worsening food crisis, Gaza continues to be under intense fire from Israeli attacks.

Since Israel resumed its genocidal aggression on March 18th, nearly 900 Palestinians have been killed, adding to the overall death toll of 50,251 people since the war began on October 7, 2023.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and REUTERS]

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