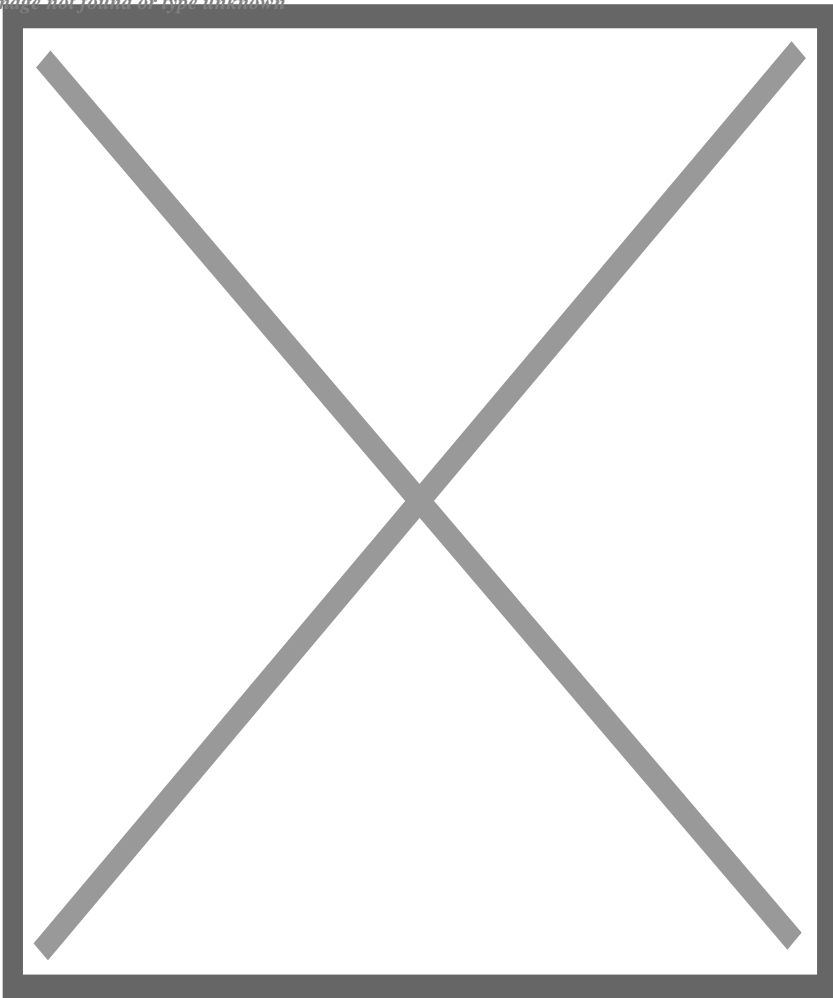


Gaza's food is running out amid Israel's war of starvation

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Khan Younis, November 18 (RHC)-- Samar Rabie is wondering how she is going to feed the 15 people living with her. The mother of four has been hosting her husband's friends and their families, who were displaced from Gaza City, in her home in Khan Younis, and is struggling to find basic items like bread. "I went to one of the malls to buy some things, but I did not find anything," the 28-year-old says.

The shelves are empty, with no sugar, legumes, cheese or any other kind of dairy products. "There is only cooking oil," Rabie says, pointing out that the price of food has tripled since the war began. "We are being deprived of many staple foodstuffs, as if everything was arranged so that in addition to not having

electricity or water, we would be starved.”

Due to the lack of bread, the family and friends have relied on cooking pasta and rice, but supplies of those are drying up rapidly as well. “I’m just worried about how we will feed each other after two or three days, and what we will live on in these difficult days that are increasingly suffocating us,” Rabie says.

Mahmoud Sharab, also a resident of Khan Younis, says that although he is dismayed by the increasing prices, he doesn’t blame grocers for the inflation when it comes to vegetables. “Their farms have been destroyed by the constant Israeli bombing,” the 35-year-old says. “They cannot reach their lands.”

Sharab goes out every day to scour the shops and markets for food, hoping at the very least to find canned food and grains. “I can’t find anything,” he says. “I’ve had to ask people if they have extra canned beans or meat so that I can buy them for my family.

“What Israel is doing is a war of starvation for citizens, and this policy is frightening a lot of people including children as well,” he said, adding that the deliberate bombing of bakeries has left people queuing for six or seven hours just to obtain a bag of bread.

According to the United Nations, no bakery in the northern Gaza Strip has been active since November 7 due to the lack of fuel, water and wheat flour and because of structural damage. A total of 11 bakeries in the Gaza Strip have been completely destroyed, while others are unable to operate because of the lack of flour, fuel and electricity.

“There are indications of negative coping mechanisms due to food scarcity, including skipping or reducing meals and using unsafe and unhealthy methods for making fire,” a report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said on Wednesday. “People are reportedly resorting to unconventional eating, such as consuming combinations of raw onion and uncooked eggplant.”

Since Israel imposed a total siege on the Gaza Strip on October 7, aid convoys have barely trickled through, meaning they can provide just a “drop in the ocean” of what the 2.3 million people in the territory need, say humanitarian agencies.

Ninety-one trucks carrying aid entered from Egypt on November 14, bringing the total number of trucks entering Gaza since October 21 to just 1,187. Before the war began, an average of 500 trucks would enter the Gaza Strip each day.

Despite a limited amount of fuel being allowed in on Wednesday for the first time since October 7, Israeli authorities said it would be used exclusively for trucks distributing incoming humanitarian aid to shelters, clinics and other beneficiaries.

Any other use, such as for the operation of generators at hospitals or water and sanitation facilities, is banned. Furthermore, it has become impossible to deliver aid to the north at all, as access has been largely cut off.

Limited food supplies are distributed primarily to displaced people and host families in the southern Gaza Strip, with only flour provided for bakeries in the southern Strip, while any transportation of food to Gaza City and north of it is not allowed by Israel.

According to the advocacy group Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, Israel has sharply escalated a “war of starvation” against civilians in the Gaza Strip as a tool of subjugation as part of its ongoing war.

Before the Israeli war, 70 percent of the Strip’s children already suffered from varying health issues including malnutrition, anaemia and weakened immunity. This number has increased to more than 90 percent as a result of Israel’s bombardment, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor said.

The report highlighted that Israel has focused attacks on electrical generators and solar energy units on which commercial establishments, restaurants, and civilian institutions depend to maintain the minimum possible level of operation.

It also warned that Israel's attacks included the destruction of the agricultural area east of Gaza, flour silos and fishermen's boats, as well as supply centres for relief organisations, especially the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which provides the majority of humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip.

The hundreds of thousands of Palestinians displaced and sheltering in UN-run schools and hospitals are dependent on UNRWA aid. "We depend on aid to feed our children," says Maysara Saad, who was displaced with her nine children from the northern town of Beit Hanoon to a school in Bani Suhaila, east of Khan Younis.

"There is nothing in the shops, and the shelves are empty. We were displaced from our homes in order to protect our children, but we do not want them to die of hunger either." The 59-year-old said that the townspeople in Bani Suhaila often come to the schools to see whether there is leftover aid for their families.

"Everything is impossible to obtain and, with winter coming, staying warm has also become one of our responsibilities," Saad said.

"It is as if the Israelis are telling us that if we do not die from the bombing, they will make us die of thirst, hunger or cold. This is a very cruel war that has no humanity."

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