

Head of Palestinian refugee agency says Israel keeps UN from providing lifesaving aid to northern Gaza

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Geneva, March 25 (RHC)-- The head of the UN's Palestine refugee agency has condemned the Israeli regime's decision to halt approval for aid convoys managed by UNRWA amid widespread hunger and starvation in the Gaza Strip.

Philippe Lazzarini slammed the move as "outrageous" and accused Israel of intentionally obstructing lifesaving assistance during a man-made famine in Gaza. "This is outrageous [and] makes it intentional to obstruct lifesaving assistance during a man made famine. These restrictions must be lifted,"he wrote in an X post.

Expressing grave concerns, Lazzarini warned that these restrictions could accelerate the onset of famine in northern Gaza. He highlighted the looming threat of hunger and dehydration, which could claim many lives if immediate action is not taken. According to the Integrated Food-Security Phase Classification (IPC), famine is projected to strike northern Gaza as early as May, potentially spreading throughout the region by July.

The IPC's recent report revealed that 70 percent of Palestinians in certain parts of northern Gaza are facing severe food shortages, surpassing the threshold for famine by threefold. About 1.1 million Palestinians in Gaza, half of the population, are grappling with catastrophic food scarcities.

In another message on X, Lazzarini said the decision by the United States to slash hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to UNRWA will have serious repercussions for Palestinians in Gaza and beyond.

The U.S. foreign aid spending bill for 2024 limits funding to UNRWA until March 2025.

Lazzarini stressed that any funding shortfall to UNRWA could jeopardize critical services such as food assistance, shelter, healthcare, and education at a time of profound crisis. He urged the international community to step up support to address the escalating humanitarian crisis and prevent further suffering in Gaza.

The U.S., being the largest donor to the UN agency, suspended its funding until March 2025 following allegations by Israel that a number of UNRWA staff members were involved in October 7th attacks against the Israeli regime.

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