

UN agency warns children starving in Gaza amid persistent aid access obstacles

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United Nations, June 4 (RHC)-- The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has warned that far too little aid is reaching Palestinians in Gaza to the extent that children are now starving, urging Israel to respect international law regarding the safe passage of lifesaving relief in the war-battered territory.

"I would say they are certainly not getting the amount that they desperately need to prevent a famine, to prevent all kinds of horrors that we see. It's very, very little that is going around at the moment," OCHA spokesperson Jens Laerke said. He reiterated that the Israeli authorities are obligated under international

humanitarian law to facilitate the delivery of aid to the besieged Gaza Strip.

Such a duty “does not stop at the border. It does not stop when you drop off just a few meters across the border and then drive away and then leave it to humanitarians to drive through active combat zones – which they cannot do – to pick it up. So, to answer your question, no, the aid that is getting in, is not getting to the people,” the OCHA spokesperson said when responding to questions about aid access obstacles.

Laerke also noted that land crossings for aid convoys into Gaza remain “the only way to get (aid) in at scale and at speed...We need more of these land crossings and we need them open and we need them safe for use to pick up the aid when it’s dropped off.”

The remarks come as a 13-year-old Palestinian has lost his life due to starvation in the central Gaza Strip following the Israeli closure of the Rafah border crossing to humanitarian aid. Palestine’s official news agency WAFA reported on Saturday that the teenager, identified as Abdul Qader al-Sarhi, succumbed to death at al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah.

Local medical sources were cited by WAFA as saying that the death toll from malnutrition and dehydration has risen to 37 in the Gaza Strip as Israel presses ahead with its brutal aggression on the southern city of Rafah.

Fayez Abu Ataya, a seven-month-old Palestinian infant, also starved to death on Thursday in central Gaza due to the lack of milk and medicine as a result of Israel’s crippling blockade. Resembling a bare skeleton, Fayez was filmed succumbing to starvation and dying in his father’s arms at al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah.

Israel waged the atrocious onslaught against the Gaza Strip, targeting hospitals, residences, and houses of worship after Palestinian resistance movements launched a surprise attack, dubbed Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, against the usurping regime on October 7th.

At least 36,439 Palestinians have been killed, most of them women and children, and another 82,627 individuals have sustained injuries. More than 1.7 million people have been internally displaced during the war as well.

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