

# *United Nations Says Israeli Siege Dashes Gazans' Hope for Future*

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United Nations, March 6 (RHC)-- The United Nations' humanitarian office has criticized the persisting siege imposed on the Gaza Strip by Israel, saying the blockade has shattered the hopes of Gazans for a "prosperous future."

"Longstanding restrictions on the movement of people and goods to and from Gaza have undermined the living conditions of 1.8 million Palestinians in Gaza," The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in its latest report on Gaza, which was released on Thursday.

"These restrictions have reduced access to livelihoods, essential services and housing, disrupted family life, and undermined the people's hopes for a secure and prosperous future," the UN office said.

The report further shed light on how the misery is deteriorated by the restrictions Egypt has imposed in the Rafah border crossing. "The situation has been further compounded by the restriction imposed since 2013 by the Egyptian authorities at Rafah Crossing, which had become the main crossing point used by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip given the above restrictions," the report said.

Analysts call the Israeli blockade of Gaza illegal, and accuse Egypt of acting as Israel's proxy by maintaining Tel Aviv's years-long blockade of the Palestinian enclave.

Earlier this month, the United Nations' Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process Robert Serry expressed concerns about the economic situation in the besieged Gaza Strip, saying that the lifting of the Israeli siege on the coastal enclave is the "prerequisite" for vitalizing its economy.

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