# UN official warns genocide looms as Gaza’s blockade triggers severe famine risk



The humanitarian crisis in Gaza continues to escalate, drawing urgent attention from international bodies and humanitarian officials. Recently, Tom Fletcher, the head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, delivered some of the strongest remarks to date regarding Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the region. In a briefing to the Security Council, he characterised the current situation as a “grim undertaking,” particularly following Israel’s imposition of a near-total blockade on humanitarian aid for over ten weeks. Fletcher emphasised the dire consequences of this blockade, warning that the Security Council must "act now" to prevent what he described as genocide against the Palestinian people.

Fletcher's comments are underpinned by alarming reports from the World Food Programme, which indicate that approximately a quarter of Gaza’s population is at risk of famine. Despite essential food supplies being readily available in warehouses nearby, the blockade has rendered these resources inaccessible. Antoine Renard, the WFP’s director for Gaza, noted a drastic reduction in meal distribution—from serving 1 million people daily at the end of April to only 250,000 currently. He expressed profound concern, stating that the situation is rapidly deteriorating to a point where “people don’t even have access to a meal.”

Compounding the crisis, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification has reported that nearly half a million individuals are facing “catastrophic” hunger levels, while a significant portion of Gaza's 2.1 million inhabitants suffer from acute food insecurity. These findings reflect a significant deterioration of conditions since the onset of military operations against Hamas in March, which have largely limited humanitarian access and aid flow into the territory.

The World Health Organisation has reinforced this dire narrative, revealing that malnutrition rates among children are alarmingly high. Rik Peeperkorn, WHO’s representative for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, highlighted the severe health repercussions of the blockade, noting that 11% of children in some areas are suffering from acute malnutrition—with cases so severe that children appear significantly younger than their actual age. This rising malnutrition is expected to leave a lasting impact, impacting children's physical development and cognitive functions.

Further aggravating the situation, Israel’s response to Fletcher’s candid assessment has been one of denial. The Israeli mission to the UN has insisted that it will not support any humanitarian framework that could potentially empower Hamas. They maintain that international assistance must not support the terror group that has perpetrated violence against Israeli civilians.

In what has been described as a "cynical sideshow," Fletcher has also critiqued Israel's proposed changes to aid distribution. This new model aims to have private companies manage aid flows, a move perceived by many—including the UN Secretary-General—as an attempt to politicise humanitarian assistance and limit impartial aid access. humanitarian leaders and experts remain sceptical, arguing that any frameworks that do not prioritise unconditional aid could lead to further suffering among the civilian population.

Despite the urgency for action, the U.S. State Department echoed sentiments that hold Hamas responsible for the humanitarian conditions in Gaza. This narrative has been contested by numerous humanitarian organisations, which argue that the blockade and military actions are the primary contributors to the ongoing crisis.

The repercussions of the current humanitarian situation are not merely immediate but extend far into the future, threatening an entire generation of Gazans with the spectre of malnutrition and inadequate healthcare. With each passing day, as humanitarian aid remains blocked and military operations continue, the international community grapples with the moral imperative to address the worsening famine risk and the broader consequences of the ongoing conflict.

In summary, the traumas inflicted upon Gaza continue to amplify, with the entrenched humanitarian blockade and surrounding political narratives impeding meaningful assistance. As both aid officials and international observers express increasing alarm, the call for action resonates louder than ever, beckoning the world to reassess its profound responsibilities in the face of crisis.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/tom-fletcher-gaza-israel-security-council-palestinians-b2750427.html)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/tom-fletcher-gaza-israel-security-council-palestinians-b2750427.html), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/world/un-aid-chief-slams-israels-gaza-aid-plan-cynical-sideshow-2025-05-13/)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/tom-fletcher-gaza-israel-security-council-palestinians-b2750427.html), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/gaza-hunger-crisis-ripples-across-health-sector-israeli-blockade-endures-2025-05-07/), [[7]](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/entire-population-gaza-continues-face-critical-risk-famine-global-hunger-monitor-2025-05-12/)
4. Paragraph 4: [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-warns-permanent-impact-hunger-generation-gazans-2025-05-13/), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/gaza-hunger-crisis-ripples-across-health-sector-israeli-blockade-endures-2025-05-07/)
5. Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/tom-fletcher-gaza-israel-security-council-palestinians-b2750427.html), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/world/un-aid-chief-slams-israels-gaza-aid-plan-cynical-sideshow-2025-05-13/)
6. Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/tom-fletcher-gaza-israel-security-council-palestinians-b2750427.html), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/world/un-aid-chief-slams-israels-gaza-aid-plan-cynical-sideshow-2025-05-13/)
7. Paragraph 7: [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-strike-gaza-hospital-kills-wounded-journalist-2025-05-13/), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk-export-f-35-parts-israel-unlawful-palestinian-ngo-tells-court-2025-05-13/)
8. Paragraph 8: [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-strike-gaza-hospital-kills-wounded-journalist-2025-05-13/), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk-export-f-35-parts-israel-unlawful-palestinian-ngo-tells-court-2025-05-13/)
9. Paragraph 9: [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/tom-fletcher-gaza-israel-security-council-palestinians-b2750427.html), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-warns-permanent-impact-hunger-generation-gazans-2025-05-13/)
10. Paragraph 10: [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/tom-fletcher-gaza-israel-security-council-palestinians-b2750427.html), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-strike-gaza-hospital-kills-wounded-journalist-2025-05-13/), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/gaza-hunger-crisis-ripples-across-health-sector-israeli-blockade-endures-2025-05-07/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/tom-fletcher-gaza-israel-security-council-palestinians-b2750427.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/un-aid-chief-slams-israels-gaza-aid-plan-cynical-sideshow-2025-05-13/> - UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher criticized Israel's proposed Gaza aid plan, calling it a 'fig leaf for further violence and displacement.' Since March 2, 2025, no aid has reached Gaza, with about half a million people facing starvation. Israel's plan suggests private companies manage aid distribution in southern Gaza amid an impending military offensive, shifting the role traditionally held by UN and international aid groups. Fletcher warned this model limits access, forces displacement, and politicizes humanitarian assistance. The UN and Secretary-General Antonio Guterres have opposed the plan, emphasizing that aid must be distributed independently and impartially.
* <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-warns-permanent-impact-hunger-generation-gazans-2025-05-13/> - The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that rising malnutrition rates in Gaza may have lasting effects on an entire generation of children. Rik Peeperkorn, WHO's representative for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, described severe cases of undernutrition among children, including those who appear significantly younger than their actual age. Since March, Israel has blockaded supplies to Gaza amid a renewed military campaign against Hamas, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. Approximately half a million people face starvation, according to a global hunger monitor. WHO reports show that 11% of children in some areas suffer from acute malnutrition, with at least 55 children having died as a result. Health facilities are overwhelmed, and the WHO can only treat a fraction of affected children. Peeperkorn emphasized the potentially permanent consequences, including stunting and cognitive impairments, due to the lack of nutritious food, clean water, and healthcare. He noted most deaths occur from related illnesses like gastroenteritis and pneumonia due to weakened immune systems. Israel accuses Hamas of diverting aid, a claim Hamas denies.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-strike-gaza-hospital-kills-wounded-journalist-2025-05-13/> - On May 13, 2025, an Israeli airstrike targeted a hospital in Khan Younis, southern Gaza, killing Hassan Aslih, a prominent Palestinian journalist recovering from a previous attack. Aslih, who operated the Alam24 news outlet and had collaborated with Western media, was accused by Israel of participating in the Hamas-led October 7, 2023 attack on southern Israel, which killed approximately 1,200 people and resulted in 251 hostages. Israel claimed the strike hit Hamas operatives using the hospital as a command center. The attack caused significant damage and further strained medical services. Gaza health officials reported two deaths and several injuries from the strike. Director of Nasser Hospital, Atef Al-Hout, expressed despair over the situation. The incident adds to a growing toll on journalists, with over 160 reported killed by the International Federation of Journalists since the war began. Gaza officials claim at least 215 journalists have died and accuse Israel of targeting media workers, a charge Israel denies. The broader conflict has left over 52,000 Palestinians dead and driven severe humanitarian crises, including a blockade-induced famine risk, while a WHO official warned about the long-term impact of hunger on Gaza’s population.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk-export-f-35-parts-israel-unlawful-palestinian-ngo-tells-court-2025-05-13/> - Al-Haq, a Palestinian rights group based in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, has filed a legal challenge against the UK government in London’s High Court, arguing that the United Kingdom's decision to continue exporting F-35 fighter jet components to Israel is unlawful. Despite suspending some arms export licenses in 2024 due to concerns over Israel’s compliance with international humanitarian law, especially in Gaza, the UK carved out an exemption for F-35 parts, citing national security interests and the importance of maintaining U.S. and NATO confidence. Al-Haq contends that this exemption breaches Britain’s obligations under international law, including the Geneva Conventions. The group claims that the UK disregarded its own findings that Israel was not fully committed to humanitarian principles, which undermines the legality of the F-35 export decision. Represented by lawyer Raza Husain, Al-Haq emphasized that the case focuses on whether British ministers misinterpreted legal obligations, without necessarily challenging Israel’s actions in Gaza directly. The UK government defends its stance, asserting that the decision was legally sound and driven by security imperatives. This case follows similar legal efforts in other countries, including an action in Dutch courts aimed at halting arms exports to Israel.
* <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/gaza-hunger-crisis-ripples-across-health-sector-israeli-blockade-endures-2025-05-07/> - A severe hunger crisis in Gaza is critically impacting the health sector, as a comprehensive Israeli blockade continues. Since the conflict's resurgence in March 2024, Israel has restricted supplies into Gaza, affecting over 2 million residents who rely heavily on external food sources. The blockade has halted aid deliveries since March 2, causing acute shortages of nutritional and medical supplies. Aid agencies, including the UN and MSF, report alarming malnutrition rates, especially among children, pregnant women, and those with chronic illnesses. At least 57 people, predominantly children, have reportedly died from malnutrition-related causes, and over 65,000 children exhibit malnutrition symptoms. The situation deteriorates as medical facilities face depleting stocks and an increasing number of malnourished patients with war-related injuries or chronic conditions. Humanitarian groups warn of rising preventable deaths and call for immediate aid access. Meanwhile, Israel maintains the blockade, citing efforts to prevent aid from reaching Hamas, while denying the existence of a hunger crisis.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/entire-population-gaza-continues-face-critical-risk-famine-global-hunger-monitor-2025-05-12/> - According to a report released by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) on May 12, 2025, the entire population of Gaza is at critical risk of famine, representing a major deterioration since October. Based on analysis from April 1 to May 10 and projections through September, 93% of Gaza’s 2.1 million people are suffering from acute food insecurity. Of these, 244,000 are already at the most severe 'catastrophic' level, with the number projected to rise to 470,000 by September. An additional million people are expected to be at 'emergency' food insecurity levels. The worsening crisis follows Israel’s sealing of Gaza in early March and the resumption of military operations against Hamas, severely restricting humanitarian aid access. Although Israeli officials deny a hunger crisis and claim adequate aid has been delivered, the IPC contends that newly announced aid delivery plans are insufficient and will face major logistical barriers. The report urges immediate action to prevent further starvation, deaths, and the descent into full-scale famine. The analysis includes contributions from U.N. agencies and NGOs.