

PRESS STATEMENT



**EMBARGOED UNTIL THE LAUNCH OF THE IPC DECLARATION, 12 NOON
PALESTINE TIME, FRIDAY 22nd AUGUST**

ActionAid condemns deliberate starvation in Gaza as UN- backed experts confirm famine

22nd August: Today, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) has confirmed famine in Gaza after months of deliberate starvation imposed through the Israeli government's blockade of lifesaving aid, which is a breach of international humanitarian law.

Famine (IPC Phase 5) has been confirmed in Gaza Governorate - the area around Gaza City - and is projected to spread to Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis by the end of September. Over 500,000 people are already enduring catastrophic conditions marked by starvation, destitution, and death, while more than half the population, 1.07 million people, are in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and a further 396,000 (20%) in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

The repeated closure of border crossings, the obstruction of humanitarian convoys, and the weaponisation of food and medical supplies constitute collective punishment. Under international humanitarian law, the deliberate starvation of civilians as a method of warfare [constitutes a war crime](#).

ActionAid and partners have warned that famine was inevitable if the siege continued. Now, the consequences are undeniable and catastrophic. Mothers are being forced to feed their babies with unsafe substitutes for milk; children are dying from preventable causes; and entire families, including ActionAid staff and humanitarian workers, are starving.

Dr. Ra'ed Al-Baba, Al Awda Hospital, states: "There are mothers who resort to using legume water, herbs, and other alternatives to infant milk because of the severe shortage. These methods carry catastrophic risks, causing gastroenteritis, food poisoning, delayed growth, severe anaemia, and even the inability to move. We have seen cases of extreme dehydration from polluted water mixed with these substitutes. This is not survival, this is slow death."

The devastating consequences of famine and the aid blockade are being felt by everyone. Humanitarian workers, ActionAid staff and our partners are unable to feed themselves and their families.

Faten, Senior Project Officer with WEFAQ, an ActionAid partner, says:

"In the past two months, I have lost 20 kilograms. My children have lost weight and are malnourished. We haven't had proper meals for three days. I am exhausted, dizzy, and terrified my children will get sicker. I cry daily. This is the first time in my life I have wished I didn't have children – because watching them waste away is unbearable."

ActionAid is calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the full and unfettered entry of humanitarian aid, and urgent international diplomatic pressure to ensure full compliance with international law. Also, ActionAid demands an independent investigation into the causes of the famine and accountability for any violations of international law.

Jamil Sawalmeh, Country Director, ActionAid Palestine, warns: “Today the world has woken up to see the famine officially confirmed, something we have been warning about for months. The famine inside Gaza is a war crime. It is a man-made catastrophe, driven by deliberate political decisions. I am sure we will hear words of condemnation across the world, but where is the action?

“Everything feels all too familiar. Only last week, the inhumane planned occupation of Gaza City was announced, yet another blatant breach of international humanitarian law. Hundreds of thousands of starving people will once again be displaced. The Israeli government continues to act with impunity.

“The ongoing forced mass displacement in Gaza, paired with famine and weaponised aid, amounts to collective punishment for the people of Gaza. Aid drops are a distraction; the humanitarian situation is a death trap, and Gaza has become hell on earth. The international community must act now; not with words, but with meaningful actions, and diplomatic pressure to end the war and uphold international law.”

ActionAid continues to work with partners across Gaza to deliver whatever aid is possible under the current restrictions and stands ready to scale up operations if access is granted.

ENDS

Jamil Sawalmeh, Country Director of ActionAid Palestine is available for interview. Please contact the press office at media-enquiries@actionaid.org for requests.

About ActionAid

[ActionAid](#) is a global federation working for a world free from poverty and injustice. We want to see a just, fair and sustainable world, in which everybody enjoys the right to a life of dignity, and freedom from poverty and oppression. We work to achieve social justice and gender equality, and to eradicate poverty.