

UNRWA: Palestinians in Gaza 'on Verge of Famine'

GAZA (Dispatches) – Gaza population is 'on the verge of famine,' the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) warned on Sunday.

"People in Gaza are on the verge of famine," UNRWA said in a statement. "UNRWA needs to be able to reach as many people as possible with critical aid."

The UN agency said the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Palestinians in Gaza "remains the most efficient and safest way."

"Safe, unimpeded and sustained access throughout the Gaza Strip is a matter of life and death," it added. World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus also said he is gravely concerned over reports of the Zionist regime's planned ground offensive in Rafah.

"I'm gravely concerned about reports of an Israeli plan to proceed with a ground assault on Rafah," Ghebreyesus wrote on X, emphasizing that an escalation of violence in the densely populated area would lead to even more deaths and suffering, especially due to crowded health facilities.

"The 1.2 million people in Rafah do not have anywhere safe to move



Palestinians in Rafah, Gaza, queue to receive food distributed by aid organizations on March 15, 2024.

to," he added.

"In the name of humanity, we appeal to Israel not to proceed and instead to work towards peace."

The regime launched the war on October 7 after a retaliatory operation staged by Gaza's resistance movements, during which hundreds were taken captive.

At least 31,553 Palestinians, mostly women, children, and adolescents, have died in the military onslaught so far.

Ghebreyesus dismissed a so-called evacuation plan devised by

the Israeli regime ahead of Rafah's invasion.

"The 1.2 million people in Rafah do not have anywhere safe to move to," the WHO chief said.

"There are no fully functional, safe health facilities that they can reach elsewhere in Gaza," he said, adding, "Many people are too fragile, hungry, and sick to be moved again..."

"This humanitarian catastrophe must not be allowed to worsen."

A day earlier, Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office

announced in a statement that he "approved plans for a military operation in Rafah, and the army is operationally preparing for it..."

The statement provided no details on the exact time and date of the assault, and rejected the latest cease-fire proposal put forward by the Gaza-based Palestinian resistance movement Hamas as "unrealistic."

Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo says Israel's inhumane "tactics of starvation" in Gaza are "inadmissible."

In a message on X, formerly known as Twitter, the Belgian leader said the regime in Tel Aviv has to urgently "provide more humanitarian access to Gaza."

In separate remarks to journalists, during a visit to Jordan's capital Amman, he condemned Israel for using hunger as a "weapon of war" in the besieged Gaza Strip.

"I see today there is a very large population [in Gaza] at risk of famine," he said. "It's up to Israel to prove that famine won't be used as a weapon of war."

The United Nations has repeatedly warned that northern Gaza in particular faces the threat of imminent famine.

Thousands in Germany, Switzerland, UK Protest Israel's Onslaught



People, holding banners and Palestinian flags, gather to stage a demonstration in support of Palestinians, and to protest against Israeli attacks over Gaza, near Sonnenallee train station in Neukölln district of Berlin, Germany on March 16, 2024.

BERLIN (Dispatches) – Demonstrations in support of Palestine were carried in Germany and Switzerland to protest Israel's onslaught against the Gaza Strip, Anadolu Agency reports.

A large number of people gathered in the area near Sonnenallee Train Station in Berlin's Neukölln district.

Demonstrators marched to Hermann Square carrying Palestinian flags, banners and placards with messages that read: "Stop the genocide in Gaza", "Al-Quds is the capital of Palestine", "Ceasefire now" and "Freedom for Palestine."

Some joined with pans, symbolic dolls and bags of flour to draw attention to hunger in Gaza.

In Geneva, thousands gathered at Parc Des Cromptes Square to protest.

Adam McBeth, a Scottish citizen, told Anadolu that he participated to show solidarity with Palestine and the Palestinian people.

"I believe we cannot remain silent while witnessing the genocide. Viewing the photos and videos of hunger is deeply painful. I think the world is not doing enough, especially European countries. We need to be more active and voice our outrage loudly to stop the famine and genocide in Gaza," said McBeth.

American Joseph Burke said: "I think we urgently need a full and permanent cease-fire in Gaza. I particularly believe that Israel's violence and genocide must be stopped."

Meanwhile, pro-Palestinian dem-

onstrators rallied across the UK, demanding the closure of an Israeli-owned military manufacturer supplying the British army.

These series of demonstrations targeted Rafael Advanced Defense Systems' Armstrong works in Newcastle, situated by the River Tyne.

Dozens of activists, some clutching cloth bundles stained red to symbolize infants lost in the Israel war on Gaza, obstructed the facility. Among them, one woman held a sign saying, "This factory kills children," while others brandished Palestinian flags and a banner reading "Geordies Against Genocide."

Campaigners in the North-East have persistently urged for Rafael's closure since the October 7 attacks, accusing the company of complicity in "arming Israel in its genocide of the Palestinian people."

Israel has waged carnage on the Gaza Strip since Oct. 7. More than 31,500 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have since been killed in Gaza with 73,546 injured amid mass destruction and shortages of necessities.

The Israeli war has pushed 85% of Gaza's population into internal displacement amid a crippling blockade of most food, clean water and medicine, while 60% of the enclave's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, according to the UN.

Israel is accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice.

Yemenis Carry Out Military Drills Simulating Response to U.S., UK Invasion

SANA'A (Dispatches) – Yemeni armed forces have carried out military training exercises to simulate a potential U.S. and British invasion of the country.

According to the Yemen Press Agency, the Promised Day Maneuver showcased intense combat training, during which an air landing by U.S. and British forces on a Yemeni village was simulated.

The SABA news agency noted that units of the Special Forces of the Central Military District carried out one of its largest combat training and military maneuvers which lasted more than two hours, in which a thousand fighters from the region participated, including the popular resistance committees.

In a speech delivered during the

exercise, Yemeni Minister of Defense, Major General Nasser al-Atifi affirmed Yemen's capability to defend itself and "deal with an international community that respects only the strong."

He added, "Yemen's engagement in the battle against the hateful and usurping Zionist entity and its maritime blockade is not a luxury but a sovereign, national, Islamic, and humanitarian decision."

Al-Atifi further stated: "We will enforce new rules of engagement forcefully, and the price will be paid dearly by the American, the British, and the Zionist and those in their orbit. The battle of The Promised Conquest and the Sacred Jihad in support of Al-Aqsa Flood will triumph and inevitably lead to geopolitical changes

in line with a new world order."

The Yemeni defense minister said the country's military will continue its maritime operations against Israeli-linked vessels as well as U.S. and British interests in the Red Sea area, stressing that the Sana'a government is going to establish new rules of engagement against Washington and London.

He noted that Yemenis are not belligerent and aggressive, but the barbaric Israeli crimes in Gaza prompted freedom-loving nations of the world, including, Yemenis, to declare their position against such atrocities.

The Yemeni defense minister emphasized that the country's army will continue strikes against Israeli-affiliated merchant vessels, and will prevent ships from passing through the Red Sea and

sailing towards ports in the Israeli-occupied territories.

Yemenis have declared their open support for Palestine's struggle against the Israeli occupation since the regime launched a devastating war on Gaza on October 7 after the territory's Palestinian resistance movements carried out the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm.

The maritime attacks have forced some of the world's biggest shipping and oil companies to suspend transit through one of the world's most important maritime trade routes.

Tankers are instead adding thousands of miles to international shipping routes by sailing around the continent of Africa rather than going through the Suez Canal.

EU Bolsters Egypt Ties With Billions in Funding

CAIRO (Reuters) – European leaders announced a multi-billion euro funding package and an upgraded relationship with Egypt in Cairo, part of a push to stem migrant flows across the Mediterranean that has been criticized by rights groups.

The agreement is designed to enhance cooperation in areas including renewable energy, trade, and security while delivering grants, loans and other funding over the next three years to support Egypt's faltering economy.

European governments have long been worried about the risk of instability in Egypt, a country of 106 million people that has been struggling to raise foreign currency and where economic adversity has pushed increasing numbers to migrate in recent years.

Inflation has been running close to record highs and many Egyptians say they struggle to get by. Over the past month, however, the financial pressure on the government has eased as Egypt has struck a record deal for Emirati investment, expanded its loan program with the IMF, and sharply devalued its currency.

Diplomats say Egypt's strategic importance has been underscored by the conflict in neighboring Sudan, which has created the world's biggest displacement crisis, and the war in Gaza, which borders Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

Egypt has been the main conduit for international humanitarian aid sent to Gaza, and along with Qatar and the United States has been trying to mediate a truce between the

Zionist regime and Palestinians.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will lead a delegation that also includes the Italian and Greek prime ministers and the Cypriot president.

Egypt's finance minister has said the government has lined up a total of \$20 billion in multilateral support after increasing its loan and economic reform program with the IMF.

Of that, funding from the European Union is expected to total \$5-6 billion, Finance Minister Mohamed Maait told Asharq Business.

Egyptian officials say Egypt deserves recognition for hosting an estimated nine million foreign residents and largely shutting off irregular migration from its north coast since 2016.

Palestinian Dies in Israeli Jail Due to Torture, Medical Negligence

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Another Palestinian prisoner has died in Israeli jails, independent and non-governmental rights organizations say.

The latest death has brought to 13 the number of detainees who have lost their lives due to torture and medical negligence in Israeli jails ever since the regime launched its genocidal war against Gaza on October 7 last year.

The Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoner's Society (PPS) announced on Saturday the death of 26-year-old Juma Abu Ghanima in the Negev desert prison.

PPS pointed out that Israel Prison Service (IPS) officials transferred Abu Ghanima from his cell in Eshel Prison to a hospital in a serious health condition. His situation worsened drastically and he died five days later.

The independent rights organization held the IPS, which continues to exercise various forms of torture and systematic medical negligence against Palestinian detainees, fully responsible for the death of the young Palestinian man.

According to the official Palestinian news agency Wafa, Abu Ghanima was ar-

rested in January for his resistance to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.

The Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoner's Society stated that at least 250 Palestinian prisoners have died in Israeli prisons since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, including East Al-Quds, in 1967.

The total number of Palestinian detainees being held in Israeli prisons has soared to 9,100, including 3,558 administrative detainees.

Human rights organizations say Israel violates all the rights and freedoms granted to prisoners by the Fourth Geneva Convention. They say administrative detention violates their right to due process since the evidence is withheld from prisoners while they are held for lengthy periods without being charged, tried, or convicted.

Palestinian detainees have continuously resorted to open-ended hunger strikes in an attempt to express outrage at their detention. Israeli jail authorities keep Palestinian prisoners under deplorable conditions without proper hygienic standards. Palestinian inmates have also been subject to systematic torture, harassment, and repression.