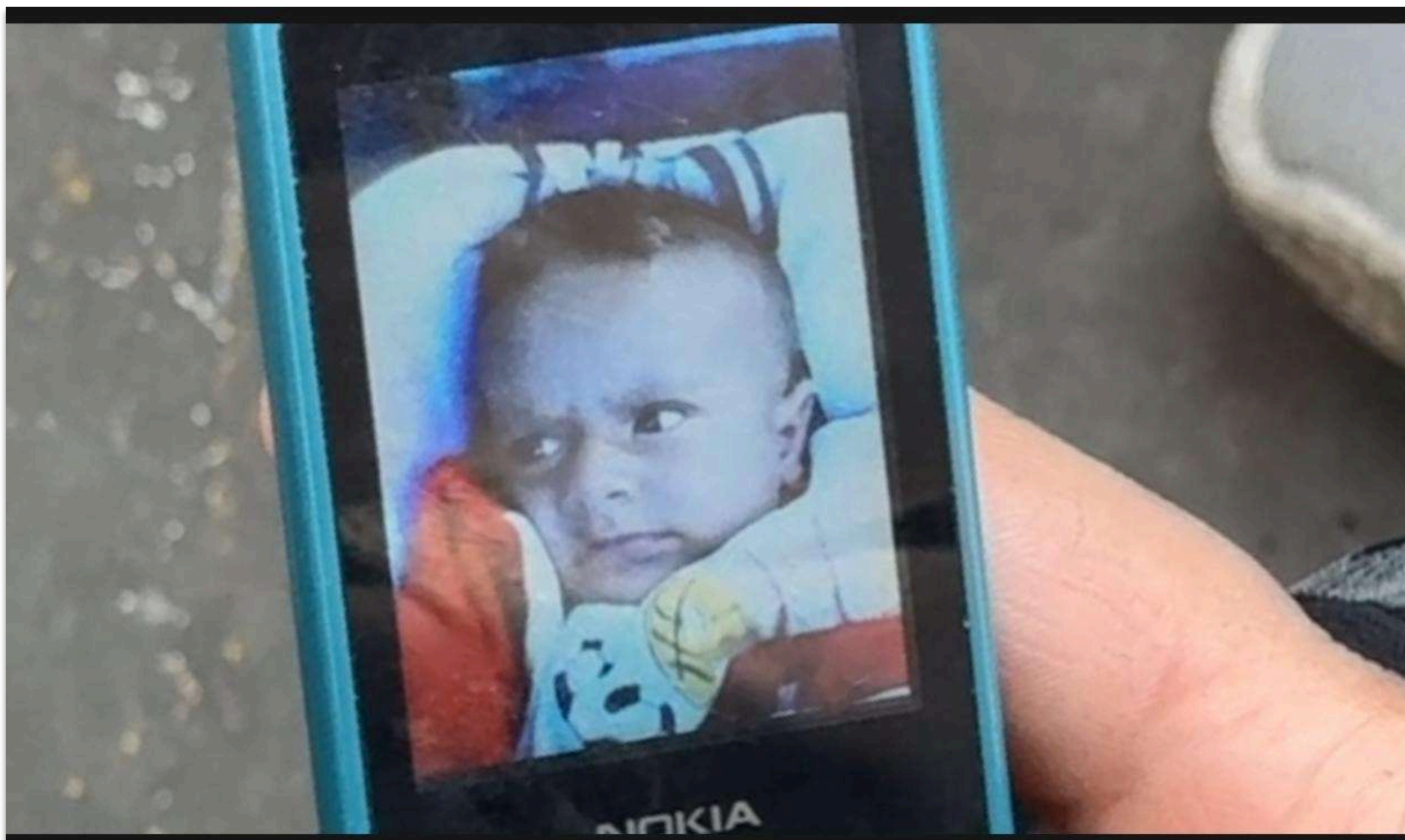


# Following the death of an infant, Euro-Med Monitor warns of growing number of Palestinian victims of Israeli starvation campaign



24 Jan 2024

Israel-Palestinian Territory

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**Geneva** – The number of Palestinian victims of Israeli starvation in the Gaza Strip is poised to grow, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor warned in a new statement, particularly among children and the elderly. The rights group said that Israel is using starvation as a weapon in its genocidal war against the Gazan people, ongoing since 7 October 2023.

The 2.3 million people living in the Gaza Strip face an increasing risk of starvation, according to Euro-Med Monitor. This risk is correlated with a severe decline in health, nutrition, and food security, an increase in the number of deaths brought on by infectious diseases, and a severe lack of access to basic water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

Born in August 2023 in the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Hanoun, a baby boy called Jamal Mahmoud Jamal Al-Kafarna died from starvation along with his mother. Jamal's grandmother, Samah Youssef Al-Kafarna, informed the Euro-Med Monitor team that they had been forced to flee to a tent in a Jabalia schoolyard at the start of the Israeli military assaults on the Gaza Strip, and that they were experiencing a growing scarcity of humanitarian supplies.

As per the grandmother, Jamal's mother gradually became unable to breastfeed her child because of dehydration brought on by the scarcity of food, forcing her to drink salt water and gradually lose her milk. Thus, the baby became flabby and severely dehydrated due to the lack of food and the strict siege imposed on the Gaza Strip, especially with the lack of any alternatives to artificial infant formula. According to his grandmother, the infant starved to death on 18 January 2024 in his mother's arms.

Euro-Med Monitor reported that a similar incident occurred involving one-and-a-half-year-old Gaza City resident Baraa Al-Haddad, who starved to death on 30 December 2023.

According to testimony received by the human rights organisation, a number of elderly people in the Gaza Strip have also died as a result of starvation and dehydration, including Samira Abu Barbar, 59, Issam Al-Najjar, 63, and Jawda Zidane Shaker Al-Agha, 81. The organisation previously documented several similar cases of people starved to death in the Gaza Strip, including Jana Deeb Qudeih, a girl with cerebral palsy who was proclaimed dead on 8 December 2023 at the Taiba School in the Strip's southern town of Abasan Al Kabira, east of Khan Yunis; she died from malnourishment and a shortage of oxygen, which was required for her condition.

Euro-Med Monitor reiterated that Israel has disregarded United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 2720, which was issued a month ago, regarding expanding humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, and is still using starvation as a weapon of war against Palestinian civilians. It added that Israel has turned the aforementioned resolution into mere ink on paper, just like the rest of its obligations under the rules of international law. Meanwhile, the man-made famine in

the Strip continues to reach unprecedented levels and threatens to expand the spread of diseases due to food insecurity.

The UNSC adopted the resolution on 22 December 2023 on the ongoing crisis in Gaza, with 13 votes in favour, and the United States and Russia abstaining. “The resolution, among other points, demands immediate, safe, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale directly to the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Gaza Strip,” according to the [UN’s website](#). The UNSC also requested that the UN Secretary-General appoint a Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator with the responsibility of facilitating, coordinating, monitoring, and verifying in the Strip.

Euro-Med Monitor highlighted Israel’s continued broad restrictions on allowing humanitarian supplies into large areas of the Gaza Strip, especially Gaza City and the Strip’s northern areas, and almost limiting their distribution entirely to the southernmost city of the Strip (Rafah)—all while pushing for the additional displacement of 10s of thousands of Palestinians to Rafah. Israel continues to use starvation as a weapon of war in the Gaza Strip and targeting aid workers—who should never be targeted—despite the UN Security Council resolution and numerous UN warnings, said the rights group.

The Euro-Med Monitor statement stressed that a permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the lifting of all Israeli restrictions on the flow of humanitarian supplies, as well as the provision of multi-sectoral assistance, are vital first steps to take to prevent famine there.

The heads of the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) said on 15 January that getting enough supplies into and across Gaza now depends on the opening of new entry routes; more trucks being allowed through border checks each day; fewer restrictions on the movement of humanitarian workers; and guarantees of safety for people accessing and distributing aid. The agency heads also emphasised the urgent need to lift the barriers and restrictions on aid delivery to and within Gaza, and for commercial traffic to resume. They reiterated the call for a humanitarian ceasefire to enable this vitally important roll-out of a massive, multi-agency humanitarian operation.

The results of an analytical study conducted by Euro-Med Monitor and published on 19 December 2023 revealed that over 71% of participants suffered from extreme hunger. The study included a sample of 1,200 people in the Gaza Strip and was organised with the aim of

ascertaining the impact of the humanitarian crisis that Gazans are experiencing in the midst of Israel's ongoing genocidal war. According to the study's findings, 98% of respondents said that they eat insufficient amounts of food, while 64% admitted to eating grass, fruits, immature food, and expired materials to satiate their hunger.

Under international pressure, Israel reopened the Rafah land crossing; however, the crossing is open to an average of just 100 trucks per day carrying humanitarian supplies coming from Egypt. This number is a far cry from the average load of 500 trucks that entered the Strip prior to 7 October to meet humanitarian needs.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor stressed that international humanitarian law strictly prohibits the use of starvation as a weapon, and that, as an occupying power, Israel is obligated to provide basic needs and protection to the Gazan people. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court provides that intentionally starving civilians by "depriving them of objects indispensable to their survival, including willfully impeding relief supplies" is a war crime, said the Geneva-based rights group.

Euro-Med Monitor called for decisive international action to impose a permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and prevent further deterioration of the situation by providing fair and unrestricted access to basic and relief materials to the entire Strip. The international community must pressure Israel to allow the entry of food, water, medical, and fuel supplies into Gaza, the group said, in order to meet the needs of the Strip's population.