

Famine confirmed for first time in Gaza

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More than half a million people in Gaza are trapped in famine, marked by widespread starvation, destitution and preventable deaths, according to a new Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis released today. Famine conditions are projected to spread from Gaza Governorate to Deir Al Balah and Khan Younis Governorates in the coming weeks.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNICEF, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have collectively and consistently highlighted the extreme urgency for an immediate and full-scale humanitarian response given the escalating hunger-related deaths, rapidly worsening levels of acute malnutrition and plummeting levels of food consumption, with hundreds of thousands of people going days without anything to eat.

The agencies reinforced that famine must be stopped at all costs. An immediate ceasefire and end to the conflict is critical to allow an unimpeded, large-scale humanitarian response that can save lives. The agencies are also gravely concerned about the threat of an intensified military offensive in Gaza City and any escalation in the conflict, as it would have further devastating consequences for civilians, where famine conditions already exist. Many people – especially sick and malnourished children, older people and people with disabilities – may be unable to evacuate.

By the end of September, more than 640,000 people will face Catastrophic levels of food insecurity – classified as IPC Phase 5 – across the Gaza Strip. An additional 1.14 million people in the territory will be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and a further 396,000 people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) conditions. Conditions in North Gaza are estimated to be as severe – or worse – than in Gaza City. However, limited data prevented an IPC classification, highlighting the urgent need for access to assess and assist. Rafah was not analysed, given indications that it is largely depopulated.