

UN expert accuses Israel of “deliberate starvation” as a means of exterminating the Palestinians

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Michael Fakhri, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, has published a report accusing Israel of carrying out the “deliberate starvation” of the Palestinians in Gaza as a means of exterminating them and annexing their land.

“Israel has engaged in an intentional starvation campaign against the Palestinian people, which evidences genocide and extermination,” Fakhri said in his report.

“Never in post-war history has a population been made to go hungry so quickly and so completely as was the case for the 2.3 million Palestinians living in Gaza.” The report continues, “On October 9, 2023, Israel announced its starvation campaign against Gaza. By December, Palestinians in Gaza made up 80 percent of the people in the world experiencing famine or catastrophic hunger.”

The UN rapporteur’s report stands as an indictment not only of Israel but also of the imperialist powers, including the United States, UK, France, Germany and Canada, that have funded, armed and politically defended the genocide.

Fakhri was appointed by the UN Human Rights Council as the lead investigator, also known as special rapporteur, on the right to food in 2020. He is a professor at the University of Oregon School of Law.

Since Israel launched its genocidal onslaught last year, 34 Palestinians have been confirmed to have starved to death, while the entire population lacks sufficient food, and 90 percent report going hungry for 24 hours or more.

In a post on X, Fakhri noted, “In Gaza, malnutrition, famine, and disease are killing more people than bombs and bullets.”

Fakhri asks, “Why is this happening? This is about land. In 2023, Israel seized more Palestinian land than in any given year in the past 30 years. Israel wants to erase the Palestinians from their homeland and territory and deny them their right to return to Palestine.”

Fakhri’s report asserts that famine is always deliberate because humanity produces more than enough food necessary to feed everyone. It declares, “The world produces enough food to feed 1.5 times the current population, and yet the prevalence of hunger, malnutrition, and famine is on the rise. Hunger and famine are not production problems; they are always caused by acts and omissions that deny people access to food.”

Israel’s deliberate promotion of famine was announced by Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on October 9, who declared, “There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed,” because “We are fighting human animals, and we are acting accordingly.”

Current and former government officials have repeatedly stated that mass starvation and the promotion of disease are the goals, not the byproducts of Israeli policy. In November, Giora Eiland, the former head of the Israeli National Security Council, declared that “severe epidemics in the south of the Gaza Strip will bring victory closer and reduce casualties among IDF soldiers,” adding that Israel’s aim is “not the mere killing of more Hamas fighters” but “irreversible harm to their families.”

Commenting on these and other statements, Fakhri’s report declares:

Israel made its intentions to starve everyone in Gaza explicit, implemented its plans, and predictably created a famine throughout Gaza. Tracking the geography of Israel's starvation tactics alongside Israeli officials' statements confirms its intent. Israel opened with a total siege that weakened all Palestinians in Gaza. Then, Israel used starvation to induce forcible transfer, harm, and death against people in the north, pushing people into the south, only to starve, bombard, and kill people in newly created refugee camps in the south.

Fakhri's report makes clear that the purpose of the famine is the depopulation and annexation of the entire Gaza Strip. "What is at stake is nothing less than Israel's attempt to annex Gaza, as the current government has indicated on multiple occasions," it asserted.

The report notes, "Israel has not only denied and restricted the delivery of humanitarian aid and violated its obligations to ensure that the aid that is let through reaches the population, but it has also created a climate of horror by targeting humanitarian workers and civilians seeking humanitarian aid."

According to official statistics, 40,435 Palestinians have been killed and 93,534 injured since October last year. But this figure does not include 10,000 people thought to be killed and buried under the rubble. According to official figures, the death toll includes 17,000 children, meaning that 2.6 percent of all of Gaza's children have been killed, with an average of 53 children killed every day since October 7.

Once the victims of Israel's deliberate famine and promotion of disease are added, the real death toll could be 186,000 or more, according to an estimate published in *The Lancet* medical journal.

In July, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave an address to a joint session of the US Congress, in which he vowed to expand Israel's war against the Palestinian population into a conflict throughout the Middle East, centrally targeting Iran.

Netanyahu received a standing ovation from Democratic and Republican members of both houses of Congress, followed by separate meetings with US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

After her meeting with Netanyahu, Harris declared, "I will always ensure that Israel is able to defend itself, including from Iran and Iran-backed militias such as Hamas and Hezbollah."

Last month, the US approved a \$20 billion arms sale to Israel, including 50 F-15 fighter jets, Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles, or AMRAAMs, 120 mm tank ammunition, high-explosive mortars and tactical vehicles.



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