



Facts Sheet:

Israel's Policy of Starvation During its Genocidal Campaign:

Impact on Women and Girls in Northern Gaza Strip.

August 2024

Introduction:

Since the start of the current aggression, Israel has imposed a complete siege on the Gaza Strip, tightening it on the northern Gaza Strip, where the Israeli Occupying Forces (IOF) ordered the residents to evacuate with the aim of clearing Gaza of its Palestinian Population. Israel has used starvation as a weapon of war along with willful killings, imposing measures intended to prevent births, and the widespread destruction of civilian objects and vital infrastructure in Gaza. All these acts amount to war crimes and a crime of genocide committed with a clear political will and explicit intent outspoken in statements by the Israeli senior leaders.

On 09 October 2023 was the first statement revealing the Israeli authorities' intent to starve and annihilate the Gaza Strip population when the Israeli Defense Minister, Yoav Gallant, said: "I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed. We are fighting human animals, and we are acting accordingly."¹ The latest statement reflecting this political will was on 08 August 2024, when the Israeli Finance Minister, Bezalel Smotrich, stated: "No one in the world will allow us to starve 2 million people, even though it might be justified and moral in order to free the hostages"².

IOF block aid deliveries to northern Gaza and simultaneously systematically destroys food production systems, such as bakeries, farmlands, and factories, in addition to the fishing sector and markets. As a result, Gazans are facing acute food insecurity with a high risk of imminent famine.

Women are particularly vulnerable to the starvation policy, especially mothers, pregnant women and nursing mothers. There are many interconnected reasons that war causes disproportionate increases in hunger among girls and women, but they boil down to social and economic roles that have been shaped by pervasive gender discrimination. This paper aims to shed light on the specific and interrelated impact of the starvation policy during the ongoing aggression on women and girls in northern Gaza Strip and provide an analysis of the exacerbation of the physical and mental health effects resulting from women's gender roles in this society.

¹ Statement by Yoav Gallant (2024. October 9). We are fighting human animals - and we act accordingly. We are laying siege to Gaza City" - Minister of Defense, Yoav Gallant (Translation)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nxvS9VY-t0>

² Statement by Bezalel Smotrich (2024. August 8). WATCH: Israeli Minister Advocates for Starving 2 Million Palestinians. The Young Turks.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzOlTkwZ40k>

The paper outlines Israel's starvation policies against the northern Gaza Strip residents during the ongoing war and the legal analysis of Israel's commission of a war crime and genocide by using starvation as a method of war. The paper also displays the repercussions of starvation policy on women in northern Gaza Strip:



1. Israel's use of starvation as a method of warfare in northern Gaza Strip:

Israel has pursued several policies aimed at starving the northern Gaza Strip residents and forcibly displaced them to the southern Gaza Strip, committing a war crime according to the rules of international law. These policies are as follows:

1.1 Israel's starvation policies against the northern Gaza Strip residents during the ongoing war..

Top Israeli officials, including Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, and Energy Minister Israel Katz, have made public statements expressing their intent to deprive civilians in the Gaza Strip of food, water, and fuel. These public statements constituted the actual beginning of the siege starvation in the Gaza Strip.

IOF have closed all crossings with the Gaza Strip with 600 trucks daily entering the Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing before the war. On 13 October 2023, IOF ordered the residents of Gaza City and northern Gaza to evacuate south ahead Gaza Valley,³ and then began its ground invasion into

³ Israel Defense Forces, @IDF, Tweet (8:50 am, October 13, 2023)
<https://x.com/IDF/status/1712707301369434398>

northern Gaza Strip on 31 October 2023, separating the two northern governorates from the central and southern governorates by splitting Salah al-Din Street in the east and the coastal al-Rashid Street in the west and tightening the siege on about 300,000 people in the two northern governorates in order to force them to evacuate to the southern Gaza Strip.⁴

During the first weeks of the Israeli war, the residents of the northern Gaza Strip consumed all the food stored in their houses. Afterwards, foodstuffs gradually began to run out of shops, especially after IOF prevented the entry of any kind of aid into the northern Gaza Strip and simultaneously systematically destroyed food production systems, such as bakeries, farms, and factories, in addition to the fishing sector and markets. Additionally, due to the relentless intense and unprecedented bombardment of residential neighborhoods and evacuation orders, hundreds of thousands of civilians were forced to evacuate several times, leaving the food they stored behind. Consequently, Gazans faced acute food insecurity with a high risk of imminent famine.

Moreover, the Israeli-imposed siege on the northern Gaza Strip has taken a new form, as it was not limited to blocking the entry of humanitarian aid, but also used the very limited number of trucks that were allowed to enter as ambushes to injure and kill civilians, who were forced by hunger and lack of food to go to places near the two Israeli checkpoints established on Salah al-Din and al-Rashid Streets and wait for humanitarian aid trucks⁵.

On the other hand, the Israeli authorities continue to proliferate false and misleading allegations about the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA staff and operations, which is the largest relief organization in the Gaza Strip with its staff of community acceptance and their longstanding experience gained over several conflicts and crises. With over 2 million people in dire need of life-saving humanitarian assistance in Gaza, no other Agency is able to respond at the scale needed at present. The Secretary-General of the United Nations described UNRWA as the backbone of all humanitarian responses in Gaza.⁶ Due to these incitement campaigns, many countries temporarily suspended their funding to UNRWA, including the United

⁴ Al-Haq Organization(23 March 2024). Voices from the midst of famine in the northern Gaza Strip. Famine forces thousands of Palestinian men and women to evacuate the north to the south.

https://www.alhaq.org/ar/advocacy/22828.html#_ftn1

⁵ The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (29 February 2024), Impunity Persists as Israeli Forces Open Fire On Starving Palestinians Seeking Vital Aid.

<https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/22752.html>

⁶ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (May 2024). UNRWA: Claims Versus Facts.

<https://www.unrwa.org/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-february-2024>

tates (US), the largest donor to UNRWA, contributing to the starvation of the largest relief agency best placed to feed the starving civilians in the Gaza Strip.⁷

1.2 Israel commits a war crime and genocide by using starvation as a method of warfare..

“Intentionally starving civilians by “depriving them of objects indispensable to their survival, including willfully impeding relief supplies as provided for under the Geneva Conventions” constitutes a war crime during international armed conflicts under Article 8 (2) (b) (25) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Article 54 (1) of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions also prohibits starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, as it explicitly states: “Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited.” Although Israel is not a party to Protocol I, the prohibition is recognized as reflective of customary international law.⁸

Starvation as a method of warfare means deliberately provoking starvation or deliberately causing the population to suffer hunger, particularly by depriving it of its sources of food or of supplies. It is clear that the acts undertaken for this purpose are not consistent with the general principle of protection of the civilian population. The second paragraph of the same article stipulates: “it is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations, supplies and irrigation works, for the specific purpose of denying them for their sustenance value to the civilian population or to the adverse Party, whatever the motive, whether in order to starve out civilians, to cause them to move away, or for any other motive.” It thus describes the most common ways in which starvation can be applied.⁹

The United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry concluded that the Israeli authorities are responsible for the war crime of starvation as a method of warfare in the Gaza Strip. The Commission determined that Israel’s imposed a “total siege” which amounts to collective punishment against the civilian population. Israeli authorities have weaponized the siege and used

⁷ Human Rights Watch (2024, July 18). Gaza: US, UK Outliers in Holding Back UNRWA Funding.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/18/gaza-us-uk-outliers-holding-back-unrwa-funding>

⁸ The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Rule 53. Starvation as a method of warfare.

<https://www.icrc.org/en/expert-analysis/starvation-as-a-method-of-warfare-and-applicable-ihl>

⁹ The relationship between these two provisions is particularly clear in Article 14 of Protocol II, as the second sentence of which begins with the words “therefore prohibited” and “for that purpose” which states: “starvation of civilians as a method of combat is prohibited. It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless, for that purpose, objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations, supplies and irrigation works.” ICRC. Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977: Commentary of 1987 Article 54 - Protection of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.

<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/api-1977/article-54/commentary/1987>

the provision of life-sustaining necessities, including by severing water, food, electricity, fuel and humanitarian assistance, for strategic and political gains.¹⁰

On the other hand, starvation is considered as a method of warfare and used as a weapon to annihilate or weaken the population, as it could also be a crime of genocide if it were undertaken with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, according to Article II (c) of the Genocide Convention, which states: "In this Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such ... : (c) (Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."¹¹

Public statements by senior Israeli officials in military operations evidence their deliberate intent to use starvation as a method of warfare and expresses their genocidal intent against the Gaza Strip population. The Defense Minister, Yoav Gallant, stated on 09 October: "I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed. We are fighting human animals, and we are acting accordingly."¹² He also informed IOF on the Gaza border that: "I have released all the restraints"¹³ declaring categorically: "Gaza will not return to what it was. We will eliminate everything."¹⁴

Israeli Energy and Infrastructure Minister, Israel Kantz, said on 13 October: "All the civilian population in Gaza is ordered to leave immediately. We'll win. They will not receive a drop of water or a single battery until they leave the world."¹⁵ He also announced on 16 October: "I supported the agreement between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Biden to supply water to the southern

¹⁰ United Nations (June 12, 2024). UNRWA: Israeli authorities, Palestinian armed groups are responsible for war crimes, other grave violations of international law, UN Inquiry finds.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/06/israeli-authorities-palestinian-armed-groups-are-responsible-war-crimes>

¹¹ ICRC. Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977: Commentary of 1987

Article 54 - Protection of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.

<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/api-1977/article-54/commentary/1987g>

¹² Statement by Yoav Gallant (2024. October 9). We are fighting human animals - and we act accordingly. We are laying siege to Gaza City" - Minister of Defense, Yoav Galant (Translation)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nxvS9VY-t0>

¹³ Filmography: Ariel Harmoni, Ministry of Defense (2024, October 10). (Translation)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l9wx7e4u-xM>

https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/gallant-israel-moving-to-full-offense-gaza-will-never-return-to-what-it-was/

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Israel Katz, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, Member of the Political-Security Cabinet, Member of Knesset, @Israel_katz, Tweet (6:01 pm, 2024. October 13)

https://twitter.com/Israel_katz/status/1712876230762967222

Gaza Strip because it aligned with Israeli interests too. I am vehemently opposed to lifting the blockade and letting goods into Gaza for humanitarian reasons."¹⁶

The Israeli National Security Minister, Itamar Ben Gvir, tweeted on 17 October: "As long as Hamas does not release the hostages in its hands - the only thing that needs to enter Gaza are hundreds of tons of explosives from the Air Force, not an ounce of humanitarian aid."¹⁷

The Prime Minister's Office announced that Israel will not block humanitarian aid from entering Gaza from Egypt after pressure from the US and other international allies and added: "In light of President Biden's demand, Israel will not thwart humanitarian supplies from Egypt as long as it is only food, water and medicine for the civilian population in the southern Gaza Strip."¹⁸

These official public statements and others by officials in the Israeli government and IOF were reflected in the latter's military operations and constituted a crime of genocide against the Gaza Strip residents.



2. Israel's policy of starvation has repercussions for mothers in northern Gaza Strip

Israel's policies of starvation against the people of northern Gaza during the ongoing war have affected everyone, but women are more likely to be severely and diversely affected due to their

¹⁶ Israel Katz, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, Member of the Political-Security Cabinet, Member of Knesset, @Israel_katz, Tweet (9:42 am, 2024. October 16)
https://x.com/Israel_katz/status/1713807517816348906

¹⁷ Itamar ben gvir, Minister of National Security, Chairman of Otzma Yehudit Party, @itamarbengvir, Tweet (9:00 pm, 2024. October 17)
<https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1714340519487176791>
<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/bkm3wl3bp>

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch (December 18, 2023). Israel: Using starvation as a weapon of war in Gaza.
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/18/israel-starvation-used-weapon-war-gaza>

ascribed social roles and responsibilities, as well as the gender-based discrimination. Here is an explanation of the repercussions of starvation policies for women in northern Gaza, considering their roles as mothers, pregnant and nursing mothers, and as breadwinning mothers:

2.1 Repercussions of Starvation Policies for Women as Mothers in Northern Gaza..

Women are the family caregivers, assuming sole or primary responsibility for taking care of children, elders, and family members who are ill. Women have also, however, risen to the challenge of feeding their families.¹⁹ Based on a UN survey, 70% of male and female survey respondents reported that caring for children, including feeding and physical care, is primarily a mother's responsibility.²⁰

On the other hand, in countries facing hunger crisis due to conflict or occupation, women often skip meals and reduce their food intake to give it to other household members.²¹ The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) staff in northern Gaza has documented that women are forced to skip meals and prioritize their children over themselves when eating the available food. According to women's testimonies, they have lost 4-20 kilograms of their weight since the start of the war.

Regarding food insecurity in northern Gaza, Maximo Torero, FAO Chief Economist, emphasized that, "despite some improvements in the Northern parts during the period of analysis, the situation still remains very fragile, unpredictable, and critical, and any significant change may lead to a rapid deterioration into famine in Gaza." He added that in Northern Gaza especially the ground operations continue with high intensity triggering forced displacement thus further exacerbating the social and food security situation.²²

Ms. Nisreen Al- 'Aklouk (50), stated to PCHR's staff that, "Since the war began, we have been displaced from one place to another, escaping death and indiscriminate Israeli bombardment, that has forced us to leave behind any available food supplies. During this war, we had to eat animal feed to starve off hunger, which led to me contracting several illnesses, and 20 kilograms weight loss. When goods enter, prices are very high; My children see the goods available in the market, but I

¹⁹ UN Women: Jemimah Njuki and Carla Kraft Op-ed: How conflict drives hunger for women and girls in 22 March 2024. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/op-ed/2024/03/op-ed-how-conflict-drives-hunger-for-women-and-girls>

²⁰ UN News: At least 557,000 Women in Gaza Are Facing Severe Food Insecurity in 27 June 2024: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/at-least-557000-women-in-gaza-unwomen-270624/>

²¹ UN Women: Jemimah Njuki and Carla Kraft Op-ed: How conflict drives hunger for women and girls in 22 March 2024. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/op-ed/2024/03/op-ed-how-conflict-drives-hunger-for-women-and-girls>

²² FAO: FAO Sounds Alarm Over High Risk of Famine Across the Whole Gaza Strip Amidst Humanitarian Access Constraints on 26 June 2024: [FAO sounds alarm over high risk of famine across the whole Gaza Strip amidst humanitarian access constraints](https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/detail/country/Gaza-Strip?lang=en)

cannot afford buying them. The pains of war grow within me, and the pain of their hunger is so triggering that it squeezes my heart every night.”²³

Ms. Amina Mohammed Ahl (33), stated to PCHR’s staff: “IOF is hindering access to aid and food supplies into the northern Gaza Valley and have targeted many bakeries in the Strip. Only a few weeks after the outbreak of the war, we exhausted all the foodstuffs we had stocked in our home, and they ran out of shops that we could safely access. I will never forget the deep sadness and helplessness I felt in front of my children, a heinous feeling that will haunt me for many years. I cannot imagine that my children craved a piece of bread, and I was forced to ask others for a loaf so they would share it together. I have cried for many nights from the hunger I felt and the pain of seeing my children starving, even though I always put them first and didn’t eat.”²⁴

2.2 Repercussions of Starvation Policy for Pregnant Women and Breastfeeding Mothers in Northern Gaza..

Pregnancy and breastfeeding are women's unique biological heritage. Before pregnancy, women need nutritious and safe diets to establish sufficient reserves for pregnancy. During pregnancy and breastfeeding, energy and nutrient needs increase. Meeting them is critical for women’s health and that of their child – in the womb and throughout early childhood.²⁵

However, pregnant and breastfeeding women in northern Gaza suffer from severe food insecurity, as IOF continue to hinder access to nutrient-rich food supplies that are insufficient to meet the needs of children, pregnant women, and breastfeeding mothers.²⁶ According to Action Against Hunger (AAH)’s reports, between May 1 and 20, only 50% of aid missions in southern Gaza and 37% of missions to northern Gaza were facilitated by Israeli authorities. Oftentimes, these projects are impeded or denied altogether. AAH also highlighted that the food distributions are less diverse and less nutritious, as they are no longer able to distribute meat or eggs, nor have they been able to distribute bread for a few weeks. Therefore, these distributions are not sufficient to starve off malnutrition.²⁷

²³ PCHR’s staff received this testimony at Asmaa Bint Abi Bakr School in Sheikh Radwan in Gaza City on 03 July 2024.

²⁴ PCHR’s staff received this testimony at Al-Jarjawi School in Al-Sahaba area in Gaza City on 03 February 2024.

²⁵ UNICEF: Maternal Nutrition: Preventing Malnutrition in Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women:

[Maternal nutrition | UNICEF](#)

²⁶ Al Jazeera: Famine and epidemics worsen in northern Gaza, and medical warnings of high weather temperatures on 27 June 2024:

<https://linkshortcut.com/naKrN>

²⁷ Action Against Hunger: After 33 Weeks of Conflict, Food in Gaza is Running out on 04 June 2024:

<https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/story/after-33-weeks-of-conflict-food-in-gaza-is-running-out/>

A steep rise in malnutrition among pregnant and breastfeeding women in the northern Gaza strip poses grave threats to their health and undermines their ability to give their children the chances they need to survive, grow, and develop properly. Furthermore, malnutrition in breastfeeding women make it difficult for them to replenish their nutritional reserves and meeting their needs of nutrients during lactation.

Ms. Samar Ahl (30) stated to PCHR's staff, "The hunger has been severe since the beginning of the war. The food ran out of markets while the IOF impeded the entry of any aid or food supplies to northern Gaza Valley. There was not even flour to make some bread. It is eating me alive when I have to divide a loaf of bread into small pieces if I manage to get one, due to its scarcity and high price. At the same time, I was breastfeeding my two-year-old child, and I could not wean him because there was no alternative to feed his hunger. I feel constantly weak and have severe headaches and bone pains as I was breastfeeding with nothing to eat. I have lost about 13 kilograms of my weight and yet I still do not eat so that my children can."²⁸

Ms. Aya Shubair (28) stated to PCHR's staff: "At the beginning of this year, I was pregnant, and we did not even have flour, which forced us to eat herbs and animal feed. IOF tightened the siege on northern Gaza, preventing the entry of food aid, and we are certain this is aimed at forcing us to move to the south. During the war, I lost about 10 kilograms of weight when I should have gained more weight since I am pregnant and should eat well for myself and my unborn child's growth and development. Now, while breastfeeding, I struggle to produce milk due to the nutrient-poor foods. Vegetables, fruits, and meat are rare, and if they are available, they are shockingly expensive and unaffordable. While breastfeeding, I feel exhausted, dizzy, and extremely weak, and I suffer from constant headaches, anemia, and bone pain. Yet, it is okay for me to prioritize feeding my children over myself."²⁹

Ms. Layali Al-Shanbari (20), said to PCHR's staff: "I was five months pregnant when the Israeli war began on 07 October 2024. With multiple forced displacements in search of a safe place from the Israeli bombardment and the scarcity of food since IOF blocked entry of food into northern Gaza as there were no vegetables, fruits, or even flour. I had to eat ground animal feed. I felt extremely exhausted and weak, unable to carry out my daily chores. I suffered from joint pains and was constantly worried about losing my first baby. I lost about 15 kilograms of weight and developed anemia. Hence, I had preterm labor and prematurely gave birth to a baby girl whom I could not breastfeed for not being able to produce milk due to malnutrition. As a result, I had to feed her baby formula from the first day. Unfortunately, she developed a severe lung infection and passed away a

²⁸ PCHR's staff received this testimony at Al-Jarjawi School in Al-Sahaba area in Gaza City on 17 February 2024.

²⁹ PCHR's staff received this testimony at Dar Al-Arqam School in Al-Karama area in Northern Gaza on 01 August 2024

month after her birth. I felt immense guilt and believed I was unworthy of being a mother, wishing I would die and join her to breastfeed her. Three months later, I became pregnant again, but the famine is still ongoing due to the siege imposed on northern Gaza. There are no vegetables, fruits, or meat, and if available, they were scarce and expensive. As a result of malnutrition, I developed anemia, as well as several intestinal infections and constant dizziness. After three months of pregnancy, I lost the baby due to malnutrition. The doctor told me that if proper nutrition or supplements had been available, the baby could have fully developed, and there might have been a chance for survival. There is no pain greater than the pain of a mother who has lost her child, let alone losing two, especially when they were her first joy. There are no words to express this deep sorrow that will never go away.”³⁰

2.3 Repercussions of Policy of Starvation on Women in northern Gaza, Being the Breadwinners of their Families..

During war, many women in northern Gaza have lost their family's primary breadwinner, inducing stress and other psychological consequences on women for having to take the new responsibility and challenge of feeding their families amid limited available job opportunities and little they make barely covers their families' expenses. As some traditional gender roles consider men the breadwinner in their families, so women find difficulty in adapting this new role. These traditional gender-based roles restrict women's access to available resources, as compared to men, making women-headed households are among the hardest hit by hunger.³¹

Ms. Raghda Hijazi (41), stated to PCHR's staff, “The war has torn our family apart, as IOF forced my husband to go to southern Gaza Strip after forcing him to return from the West Bank, where he was working. I remained in the north with my children, trying so hard to find a job, but at no avail, especially that I live in a conservative society that does not treat women the same as men. I started making and selling hot drinks, but the income was not enough to secure food for my children. They often cried from hunger, and I had nothing to offer. Then, the prices of raw materials increased, forcing me to stop working and rely on humanitarian aid. I feel a great sense of responsibility yet so helpless in the face of my children's hunger.”³²

Ms. Thikrayat Al-Masuabi (42) also stated to PCHR's staff, “The war did not allow me to mourn the death of my husband. I had to immediately take on the responsibility of feeding my children, despite

³⁰ PCHR's staff received this testimony at Jabalia Elementary School for Boys in Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza on 06 August 2024.

³¹ UN Women: Jemimah Njuki and Carla Kraft Op-ed: How UN conflict drives hunger for women and girls in 22 March 2024: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/op-ed/2024/03/op-ed-how-conflict-drives-hunger-for-women-and-girls>

³² PCHR's staff received this testimony at Al-Jarjawi School in Al-Sahaba area in Gaza City on 20 June 2024.

the society's tendency to undermine me and my inability to compete with men for aid. We often survive on one meal a day if we can find one. My children cry and fall asleep hungry, and I spend nights crying because I am helpless and heart-wrenched, as their tears of hunger feel like a knife cutting through me, even though I always prioritized them over myself. So far, I have lost 30 kilograms of weight.”³³

Recommendations:

In light of the above, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) expresses its deep concerns about the food insecurity getting worse and reaching unprecedented levels in northern Gaza, and its multi-faceted impact on women. Therefore, PCHR:

- Calls upon the international community to exert pressure on Israel to stop the crime of genocide, and enforce a ceasefire to prevent the start of a real famine in northern Gaza, and compel Israel, the occupying power, to comply with the International Court of Justice (ICJ)'s ruling ordering provisional measures on 26 January 2024 which states: The State of Israel shall, pursuant to point (4) (c) above, in relation to Palestinians, desist from, and take all measures within its power including the rescinding of relevant orders, of restrictions and/or of prohibitions to prevent:
 - (a) the expulsion and forced displacement from their homes;
 - (b) the deprivation of:
 1. access to adequate food and water.
 2. access to humanitarian assistance, including access to adequate fuel, shelter, clothes, hygiene and sanitation.
 3. medical supplies and assistance.
 - (c) the destruction of Palestinian life in Gaza.³⁴

In addition to ICJ's ruling issued on 24 May 2024 ordering that, “The State of Israel shall take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.”³⁵

³³ PCHR's staff received this testimony at Al-Jarjawi School in Al-Sahaba area in Gaza City on 23 June 2024.

³⁴ Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip; South Africa vs. Israel on 24 January 2024 (Page:26):

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

³⁵ Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip; South Africa vs. Israel in 24 May 2024 (Page: 4):

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240524-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

- Warns against IOF's continued use of hunger as a method of warfare aimed at forcing thousands of civilians from northern Gaza to evacuate again southward under the pressure of hunger and dire living conditions, with harsh consequences for women's food security. Displacement isolates women from their societal support networks and forces them to leave behind their food reserves, exacerbating their food insecurity and making it even more difficult to meet their basic needs.
- Calls for continued international pressure to ensure that the IOF facilitate sustainable and unrestricted humanitarian access of goods, but not at the expense of humanitarian aid, in a manner that fully meets the needs of women and girls in the Strip, including supplementary foods and necessary nutritional supplements, especially for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Demands the IOF to stop its insidious campaigns against UNRWA and to facilitate the Agency's activities in Gaza, as well as to restore its allocated financial support.
- Urges the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, to highlight the specific impact of the policy of starvation as a method of war on women and girls, and to exert pressure on governments and international organizations to take tangible steps to prevent Israeli violations against women and girls in the Gaza Strip.