



## Borrell Openly Blames Israel for Gaza Famine

### Description

**WORLD : The European Union's top foreign affairs official on Monday said that after more than five months of Israel's blocking of humanitarian aid and bombardment of Gaza, the U.S.-backed government has pushed the enclave into famine.**

Josep Borrell, the E.U.'s high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, demanded that Western governments clearly state the reason that at least two of Gaza's five governorates have now been identified by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification global initiative (IPC) as experiencing famine "with reasonable evidence."

"In Gaza we are no longer on the brink of famine; we are in a state of famine, affecting thousands of people," Borrell said in Brussels at a meeting on humanitarian aid for the besieged enclave. "This is unacceptable. Starvation is used as a weapon of war."

"By whom? Let's dare to say by whom. By the one that prevents humanitarian support entering into Gaza," he said, adding that "Israel is provoking famine."

Borrell's remarks signify that the E.U. has now accepted that "that Israel is starving Gaza," said journalist Owen Jones, with "straightforward genocidal intent."

The IPC, which was established in 2004 by the United Nations and international humanitarian groups, said Monday that since the analysis it conducted in December — in which it warned of famine by May if a cessation of hostilities did not take place — the conditions needed to prevent such a catastrophe have not been met.

Famine in Gaza's northern governorates is now projected to take hold between mid-March and May, the IPC said.

“According to the most likely scenario, both North Gaza and Gaza Governorates are classified in IPC Phase 5 (famine) with reasonable evidence, with 70 percent (around 210,000 people) of the population in IPC Phase 5 (catastrophe),” said the initiative.

**The group uses the famine classification when at least one of three conditions has been observed:**

At least 20 percent of households have an extreme lack of food;

At least 30 percent of children suffer from acute malnutrition; and At least two adults or four children for every 10,000 people die daily from starvation or from disease linked to malnutrition.

At least 27 children in Gaza have died of malnutrition in recent weeks, according to local authorities, as Israel has attacked civilians seeking humanitarian aid numerous times and has blocked deliveries.

The E.U. said Monday that just 100 tonnes of aid per day are reaching Gaza, compared with 500 tonnes that entered the enclave daily before Israel’s current bombardment.

The entire population of 2.2 million people is now facing high levels of “acute food insecurity,” according to the IPC.

Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, head of the pediatric department at Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza, told Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) that the facility is seeing the daily effects of Israel’s blocking of aid.

“Amid the famine in the north, there are many cases of elderly people and especially children showing symptoms of dehydration and malnutrition,” said the doctor.

“Twenty-five to 30 children are admitted to the hospital on a daily basis, with half of them suffering from dehydration and malnutrition. One child, 2 months old, died today because of dehydration and malnutrition. Other children are on the same trajectory unless the situation is addressed soon.”

Meanwhile, he said, medical workers themselves are “suffering from physical weakness and extreme exhaustion” as they try to treat people injured in relentless bombings and gunfire.

“As a medical team managing the hospital, we have not been able to secure even one meal,” said Abu Safiya. “Our staff are worn out working 24/7 without food.”

Borrell pointed to recent comments by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in which Scholz warned: “We cannot stand by and watch Palestinians starve.”

“This famine is not a natural disaster. It is not a flaw. It is not an earthquake. It is entirely man-made,” said Borrell.

“Chancellor Scholz is saying Europeans cannot sit and watch Palestinian starving, when on the other side of the border there is food for months accumulated in stocks, while on the other side of the road there are people dying of hunger.”

Rose Caldwell, CEO of children’s rights group Plan International, added that the “entirely man-made catastrophe should be a source of shame for the international community.”

“After months of unimaginable trauma and indiscriminate bombing, the children of Gaza are now facing the horror of starvation and the threat of imminent famine,” said Caldwell.

**“There can be no excuses:** preventing access for humanitarian aid is a clear violation of international humanitarian law. The starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is illegal and immoral.”

The IPC has classified only two other humanitarian crises as famines: one in Somalia, which killed 490,000 people in 2011, and one in South Sudan, which killed 80,000 people in 2017.

At least 31,726 Palestinians have been killed by the Israel Defense Forces since it began its bombardment.

“Before the war, Gaza was the greatest open air prison,” said Borrell. “Today it is the greatest open air graveyard.”

Melanie Ward, CEO of MAP, noted that the organization warned in January that its physicians were seeing evidence of severe malnutrition in children.

“World leaders have fiddled at the edges rather than take decisive action which addresses the cause of this starvation,” said Ward.

“Now world leaders must insist that Israel immediately opens all land crossings into Gaza, particularly the Karni and Erez crossings, and allows safe and unfettered access for aid and aid workers.”

“Children in Gaza are being starved at the fastest rate the world has ever known,” she added, “and their survival depends on more food, fuel, and water entering Gaza immediately, as well as a lasting cease-fire.”

**By Julia Conley**

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