

Gaza is starving says United Nations director

[D theday.co.uk/gaza-is-starving-says-united-nations-director-4](https://www.theday.co.uk/gaza-is-starving-says-united-nations-director-4) 29 May 2024



Famine: "We have never ever seen anything like this anywhere on the planet" said Janti Soeripto of Save the Children.

Is America responsible? Food shortages in Gaza have reached crisis point, but there is strong disagreement about who is to blame for supplies not getting through.

What's happening?

"This is the wonderful thing we call 'bread'", said the post on social media: "a mixture of feed for rabbits, donkeys and pigeons. There is nothing good about it except that it fills our stomachs."

That was in February. Now the situation in Gaza is much worse. According to Cindy McCain, the head of the UN World Food Programme, "There is famine — full-blown famine — in the north, and it's moving its way south."

Since December, the UN says, almost every family has been skipping meals every day.

In markets, prices have rocketed. A kilogram of flour that used to cost 30p can now sell for up to £10.

Find out more

Aid workers blame Israel for preventing vital supplies from getting through. Last week over 2,000 lorries were waiting to cross from Egypt.

The lorries are kept at checkpoints for hours and are searched for anything that might be useful to Hamas. Tent poles have been among the things confiscated.

Egypt has also been criticised for failing to create a proper supply channel. The US has built a temporary pier to bring supplies in by sea, but this has been damaged by bad weather.

Even if all the supplies people need arrived tomorrow, experts warn that many people would die of **malnutrition**.

Joe Biden has said that the US will withhold weapons from Israel if it mounts a large-scale attack on Rafah. But the White House insists that has not happened yet.

Is America responsible?

Some say

Yes! It is the one country that can make a real difference, because Israel depends so heavily on it. If Biden said he was going to withdraw all support, Israel would have to allow proper supplies through.

Others think

No! Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, believes that refusing to listen to Biden makes him look like a strong leader. Nothing will stop him deliberately making life difficult for people in Gaza.

Six steps to discovery

Some people say

1. Connect

"Full bellies breed gentle manners. The pinch of famine makes monsters."

Hilary Mantel (1952 – 2022), English novelist

What do you think?

How do you feel about this story? - Would you like to be an aid worker?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: What do people in Gaza normally eat?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain and another thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - You are asked to go on a protest march to the US Embassy. Think about what you would say.

5. Express

What do others believe? - What would be the hardest food to go without? Take it in turns to say.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Imagine you are asked to help draw attention to the crisis. What would you do?

Glossary

Malnutrition - Poor nutrition — caused by not having enough to eat or not having the right foods.