



Genocide Emergency
The Israel Defense Force Is Murdering Civilians Seeking Food in Gaza
July 1, 2025

Since 27 May 2025, the Israel Defense Force has [killed over 410 Palestinians](#) who were seeking food at distribution sites organized by Israel and the USA. These were not accidental deaths. They were intentional. Israeli forces were [ordered](#) by their commanders to open fire on unarmed civilians. The daily shootings show that these murders were Israeli government policy. These murders were war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide.

Numerous videos show Israeli forces intentionally opening fire on unarmed civilians. View the footage [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). These killings were not “collateral damage” from combat. They were murders.

Victims tried to reach four food distribution centers run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), a joint venture of Israeli government and U.S. contractors. GHF was established following three months of an Israeli blockade of food and fuel to Gaza. The people seeking food were starving. Save the Children says more than half of those killed were [children](#). Many children were shot in the head. Palestinians must choose between [starvation or being shot by Israeli snipers](#).

Genocide Watch and more than a dozen other human rights groups have [condemned](#) these killings as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) described the GHF’s distribution sites as [‘slaughter masquerading as humanitarian aid.’](#)

Israel is forcing Palestinians seeking food to walk through war zones controlled by Israeli Defense Forces. Humanitarian relief groups and the U.N. remain in Gaza. But Israel will not allow them to distribute food directly to the people, as they did successfully before the Israeli blockade. Israel [blocks or denies](#) permission for their life-saving aid missions.

Israel launched its war in Gaza in retaliation for the Hamas murders of 1200 Israelis and taking of 250 hostages on October 7, 2023. A rigorous study in The Lancet estimates that [64,000 Palestinians have been killed](#) by bombing, shelling, shooting and other direct attacks during the ensuing war.

Intentionally directing military attacks against a civilian population is a war crime under [Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions](#) and [Article 8\(2\)\(b\)\(i\) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court \(ICC\)](#). Israel is a party to the Geneva Conventions. Palestine is a party to both the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute of the ICC.

Israel’s blockade of food to Palestinians is a [war crime](#), the crime against humanity of extermination under [ICC Article \(7\)\(2\)\(b\)](#), and an act of genocide under [Article 2\(c\) of the Genocide Convention](#) and [Article 6 \(c\) of the ICC Statute](#) (“deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.”)

Israel’s crimes fall under the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, and courts of countries with universal jurisdiction for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. They are also crimes under the laws of Israel. Israel has military courts that should try those responsible for these war crimes.

These crimes were publicized openly every day and were surely ordered or assented to by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and by Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz. For their command responsibility, both men should be charged, arrested, and tried by Israeli courts, the International Criminal Court, and courts in countries with universal jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation must be replaced by the U.N. and NGOs to distribute food aid directly.
- Israel must permit the U.N., humanitarian groups, and journalists to operate freely throughout Gaza.
- Israel must conduct a genuine investigation into these murders and prosecute those responsible.
- Israeli officers who ordered these murders must be identified, arrested, and tried by Israeli military courts.
- Israeli leaders’ war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide must be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court. All states must assist the ICC in investigating and prosecuting these crimes.
- States should become intervening parties in South Africa’s case against Israel for violation of the Genocide Convention in the International Court of Justice.