



MAS

**PALESTINE ECONOMIC POLICY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE (MAS)**

Food Insecurity Bulletin

Summer 2024 – Issue No.30





MAS

PALESTINE ECONOMIC POLICY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE (MAS)

FOOD INSECURITY BULLETIN

Summer 2024 – Issue No.30



PALESTINE ECONOMIC POLICY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE (MAS)

Biannual Bulletin Published by:
Palestine Economic Policy
Research Institute (MAS)

Tel: +972 (2) 298 7053/4 | Fax: +972 (2) 298 7055
info@mas.ps | www.mas.ps

Research team:

Supervision : Raja Khalidi

Assistant Researchers:

Iman Saadeh
Anmar Rafeedie

In this Issue...

Editorial	1
Highlights	3
1. Latest Developments in Food Insecurity	4
Weaponizing Starvation in Israeli Genocidal War: Food Insecurity or Actual Famine?	4
Resilience in Food Production: Cultivating Destroyed Lands and Rooftops in the Gaza Strip	6
Settler Violence and Food Insecurity	8
2. Food Prices in Palestine and Globally	11
Global Food Prices (January-June 2024)	11
Food Prices in Palestinian Markets (January-June 2024)	13
3. Literature Review	17
Factors Driving Food Insecurity in the Gaza Strip	17
Enabling Humanitarian Support	18
Future Prospects for Food Security in the Gaza Strip, the Region, and Globally	19





Editorial

The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) has been issuing the Food Security Bulletin since 2009, using its own resources to investigate the food security sector in Palestine. The Bulletin aims to support decision-makers and institutions working in the field of food security in Palestine, constituting a useful and periodic reference on the latest developments in the sector. It is issued twice a year. The Bulletin is a useful reference for monitoring trends in the sector and comparing conditions across time. The Bulletin is only one of several MAS research priorities, although as a topic, food security has received significant attention in recent years, especially through collaborative research projects with our partners, particularly the World Food Program (WFP) and the FAO.

Considering the ever so increasingly catastrophic conditions with each passing day experienced in the Gaza Strip, we have made the decision to retitle our Bulletin for this year "Food (In)Security Bulletin," as recognition of the Israeli Occupations' use of policies of weaponizing starvation in its aggression on the Gaza Strip, as well as Palestine. This special Bulletin is published for the second time since the commencement of aggression, which caused devastation to all vital aspects of life during these nine months ([Fall and Winter 2023](#)), leaving behind over 40 thousand martyrs, 97 thousand injured, and forcibly displaced nearly the entire Gazan Population. This is in addition to the direct targeting of all lifelines, such as health facilities, economic and productive activities, housing, and buildings, with approximately 87,000 buildings have been completely destroyed, while 34 hospitals are now out of service. The occupation's policy of targeting ambulance crews, doctors, and journalists continues. ¹Within this context, the Bulletin culminates the recent efforts by MAS to document and monitor the proceedings of the Israeli aggression on Palestine, its various social and economic dimensions, and its analysis, for the assess humanitarian, policy, funding, and institutional needs required to respond to its repercussions effectively.

The current aggression has surpassed all previous and current attempts to weaken the Palestinian society and its developmental channels. For the first time, the aggression appears as a theatre exposing international power dynamics that allowed Israel to bypass international forums, their resolutions, and laws. During its aggression, the occupation has introduced and utilized a recently developed policy to inflict total destruction that limits any capacity for sustaining human life or restoring it. Initial estimates reveal that the current aggression will likely leave unprecedented impacts, needing years of socioeconomic development to restore a socioeconomic life in Palestine, particularly in the Gaza Strip, a state resembling pre-aggression life – a state that is fundamentally far from being considered either developmental or self-sufficient.

In our previous issues, we have framed the state of food insecurity within concepts of weaponizing starvation and domicide, and starvation in international law, while also providing preliminary indicators to this crisis. In light of the catastrophic conditions that the Gaza Strip has been witnessing for more

¹ https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/lang_ar/1408/Default.aspx



than nine months, this Food Insecurity Bulletin sheds light on the latest humanitarian developments regarding food insecurity among Gazans. The Bulletin clarifies certain points regarding the controversy over the actual occurrence of famine, amid warnings about its eventuality. In light of the continuation of starvation, the people of the Gaza Strip refuse to surrender. Those who were able, returned to agriculture after reclaiming damaged lands or utilizing the roofs of destroyed houses and rubble to confront the famine. This Bulletin highlights some individual and institutional initiatives in this regard. As for the latest developments, MAS devotes a section to organized settler violence sponsored by the occupying state to displace Bedouin communities in Areas C and East Jerusalem under the pretext of war, and the impact of this displacement on the food security of these communities.

The second section in the Bulletin monitors developments in food prices globally and locally, greatly affected by the non-entry of commercial goods or aid. Prices were also affected, in light of trade disturbances in the Red Sea owing to Yemeni forces preventing passing ships and to the Occupying State and targeting them.

In the third section, the Bulletin reviews the scientific debate - and the latest scholarship - on Israel's policy of weaponizing starvation, and the systematic destruction of the necessities of life. Firstly, this section illustrates how the war destroyed the vital components of food security in the Gaza Strip, mostly irreversibly. The discussion is enriched by addressing a study on the weaponization of humanitarian support, and double standards in the interpretation of international laws, where a clear crime such as genocide becomes the subject of controversy and study, allowing its justification and unrecognition as a war crime. This section also reviews a study that forecasts the future of food security in Gaza and the region, especially for countries suffering from economic crises, by examining the consequences of the current aggression and expectations of rising fuel and gas prices and their impact on exporting countries. Combined with the high costs of trade, these factors will lead to a decline in achieving SDG No.2 by 2030.



Highlights

- The risk of famine remains high throughout the Gaza Strip, in light of continuing aggression and access restrictions for aid allocated to Gaza. Approximately 95% of the Gazan population faces high levels of acute food insecurity, classified as Phase 3 or higher (crisis or worse), including approximately 15% who experienced catastrophic food insecurity (IPC Phase 5).
- About 96% of the Gaza Strip's population (2.15 million people) are expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity, at least until September 2024.
- Some UN experts declared an actual famine in the Gaza Strip after the death of a number of infants and children from hunger and malnutrition.
- The few airdrops of aid proved ineffective in delivering the required quantities and involved high risks for beneficiaries, in addition to the non-availability of required goods. Available goods witnessed a dramatic rise in their prices, making them unaffordable to the public.
- Analysis presented by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), based on satellite images, indicates that more than 57 % of agricultural lands were damaged by the war (as of May 2024). 61% of affected lands are orchards, 19% are cultivated with vegetables, and 20% with grains.
- Data from B'Tselem indicates that as of April 17, 2024, 18 communities and families were displaced from Area C under the pretext of war. The total number of displaced families reached 157, totaling 1,056 individuals and 398 children.
- Global food prices, according to the FAO's Food Price Index, experienced fluctuations during the first half of 2024. Indicators show an overall rise in the Food Price Index (and food product indices) from the start to the end of the period, with the exception of sugar and cereals.
- New scientific studies established that the current war in the Gaza Strip may have unprecedented and dangerous effects on the possibility of realizing the five pillars necessary to fulfill the second Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), namely the total elimination of hunger.



Latest Developments in Food Insecurity

◆ Weaponizing Starvation in Israeli Genocidal War: Food Insecurity or Actual Famine?

Updates by international institutions indicate that the food insecurity situation in the Gaza Strip - as a result of the war - will see a continuation of starvation and famine alerts. ² A report on famine issued by the IPC - The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification - indicates that the risk of famine remains high throughout the Gaza Strip. About 95% of the population (2.13 million persons) faced high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or higher) between May 1 and June 15. Nearly 15% of the population (343,000 people) experienced catastrophic food insecurity (IPC Phase 5).

Furthermore, the report estimates that about 96% of the population will face high levels of acute food insecurity, at least until September 2024. The entire Strip is classified as a state of emergency (IPC Phase 4). More than 495,000 people (22% of the population) are expected to face catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 5). Currently, families suffer from severe food shortages, hunger, and depleted coping mechanisms.³ Another 745,000 persons (33%) are classified as living in a state of emergency (IPC Phase 4).⁴

Based on data analyzing the reality of acute food insecurity in light of the continuing war, and the restricted ability of aid to access the north of the Strip, the report concludes that famine will inevitably occur; in the northern areas, it started in May. However, it appears that the frequency of aid, according to the UN, improved slightly in March and April, which temporarily alleviated the deteriorating conditions. Estimates on the current extent of famine do not exist. It is estimated that only 10%-15% of nutritional needs (in terms of calories) entered the northern Gaza governorates in January and February 2024. The few attempted airlifts proved ineffective in delivering the required quantities and involved high risk for beneficiaries. The flow of aid has not increased as a result of the "Gaza Maritime Corridor" initiative by Cyprus, and the construction of an American maritime pier on the shore of the Strip.⁵ Therefore, if goods were available, their prices would witness a massive rise, making them unaffordable for afflicted

2 FAO. FAO sounds alarm over the high risk of famine across the whole Gaza Strip amidst humanitarian access constraints.

<https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-sounds-alarm-over-high-risk-of-famine-across-the-whole-gaza-strip-amidst-humanitarian-access-constraints/en>

3 According to the Famine Monitoring Committee, famine is a term used to describe the fifth phase of food insecurity across an entire area. Famine occurs when at least 20% of the population is in IPC Phase 5 (catastrophe), with one in three children acutely malnourished and two in 10,000 people dying, or four in 10,000 children dying every day, due to outright starvation or the interaction of malnutrition and disease. The risk of famine, as discussed by the committee, refers to the reasonable possibility that an area will enter famine during the forecast period. While this is not necessarily seen as the most likely scenario, it is generally a scenario that has a realistic chance of occurring. It complements the famine forecast for the most likely scenario by providing insights into the potential famine if the forecast develops in a worse way than expected. Ultimately, the committee provides its analysis of the reality of food insecurity, but it is not responsible for declaring famine in an area; this is the responsibility of government agencies, humanitarian organizations, and international organizations working in the humanitarian sector. Source: IPC Fact Sheet - last update March 2024.

4 GAZA STRIP: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Special Snapshot. 1 May-30 September 2023.

5 MAS. Palestine Economic Update. May 2024. <https://mas.ps/en/publications/10299.html>



people. = A very limited number of trucks carrying food aid were allowed to enter northern Gaza and other Gaza governorates. Yet, since February 5, there have been no reports of food aid (trucks) reaching Gaza city, despite the attempt made on February 18-19. On March 5, a 14-truck WFP food convoy (the first since the suspension of aid delivery on February 20) to the north was blocked. While on March 7, 11 trucks loaded with foodstuffs produced by the private sector were allowed to enter. In total, from February 5 to March 5, 10-15 food trucks were allowed into the Gaza Strip.⁶

As for the southern governorates, the escalation of the aggression, especially after the attack on Rafah on May 6 by land and sea, saw more than a million people displaced. Humanitarian aid also decreased with the closure of the Rafah and Kerem Shalom border crossings in May, which led to a significant deterioration in humanitarian conditions. Hundreds of thousands of citizens in the south are crowded into displacement camps, placing great pressure on services, and leading to a further concentration of the displaced population into areas that suffer from a significant shortage of water, sanitation, hygiene, and other essential infrastructure. This increases the risk of disease, which would have catastrophic effects on the nutritional and health status of large segments of the population. The occupation has destroyed 70% of water and sanitation facilities in the Gaza Strip by the end of May. As forced displacement continues, people's ability to adapt and withstand is diminished, given repeated attacks. More than half of the displaced population stated that they often do not have any food to eat, and about 20% spent several days and nights without receiving even a singular cooked meal.⁷

Despite the slight improvement recorded during March-April in terms of the entry of aid, there is a noticeable deterioration in dietary diversity among children aged 6-23 months, as well as pregnant and breastfeeding women during May, in comparison to April. Based on an assessment prepared by UNICEF, in May 2024, 93% of children and 96% of pregnant and breastfeeding women throughout the Gaza Strip consumed less than two food groups out of the 5-10 food groups recommended for this category.⁸

On the other hand, and regardless of the results of the IPC report, several UN experts announced on July 9, 2024, that famine had in reality spread in the Gaza Strip, given the death of a number of children from starvation and malnutrition.⁹ A six-month-old infant died on May 30, 2024, while a 13-year-old child died the following day in Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah. On June 3, 2024, a nine-year-old child died in the tent sheltering his displaced family in Al-Mawasi in Khan Yunis. The experts reported that the three children died due to malnutrition and inadequate healthcare, which, in their opinion, indicates that famine is a reality in the Gaza Strip, migrating from the north to the center and the south.¹⁰

6 The integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC] Famine Review Committee. Gaza Strip March 2024 Conclusions and Recommendations. Published 18 March 2024.

7 The integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC] Famine Review Committee. Gaza Strip March 2024 Conclusions and Recommendations. Published 18 March 2024.

8 OCHA. Humanitarian situation update #184 Gaza Strip. <https://www.ochaopt.org/ar/content/humanitarian-situation-update-184-gaza-strip>

9 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/un-experts-declare-famine-has-spread-throughout-gaza-strip>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/un-experts-declare-famine-has-spread-throughout-gaza-strip>



◆ Resilience in Food Production: Cultivating Destroyed Lands and Rooftops in the Gaza Strip

Israel's aggression caused major destruction to agricultural lands, which provided 40% of all vegetables consumption in the Gaza Strip.¹¹ Analysis by FAO using satellite imagery reveals that more than 57% of agricultural lands were damaged by the war (as of May 2024).¹² 61% of affected lands are orchards, 19% are cultivated with vegetables, and 20% with grains.¹³

Data indicates that agricultural lands were deliberately targeted, reaching 33% of all destroyed lands in January 2024, in addition to the destruction of agricultural infrastructure such as greenhouses, water wells, and solar panels. This destruction resulted in the cessation of local production, which provided a significant portion of Gazans' food needs, in addition to incomes for agricultural workers. The FAO reports that the income of families dependent on agriculture has decreased by 72%. Serious damage was inflicted upon the Gaza city port, with most of the fishing boats destroyed. Livestock numbers are witnessing a sharp decline, as a large portion of livestock (meat and dairy) in Gaza have already been slaughtered, consumed, damaged, or lost.¹⁴

Despite this destruction of the agricultural sector, several individual, collective, and institutional initiatives have emerged, aiming to plant crops on the rubble of destroyed homes, in order to provide some seasonal vegetables for families and neighbors. Below, we highlight some of these initiatives as examples of the steadfastness of Palestinians, and as a glimmer of hope during dark times.

One of the most prominent initiatives in this field was pioneered by an agricultural engineer - Mr. Youssef Abu Rabie', who returned to farm his destroyed land in Beit Lahia, despite the dangers of Israeli shelling (the majority of agricultural lands are adjacent to the border), the scarcity of water and its high cost, and the lack of seeds and seedlings.¹⁵ With determination, he endured all difficulties and was able to restore hope to the production of food for self-sufficiency, despite the region's devastation. Abu Rabie' succeeded in planting peppers and eggplants, extracting seeds from dry crops. With his family, they reclaimed 200 dunums of destroyed land, replanting it in cooperation with local farmers, after clearing craters and traces of destruction. Although these experiences are limited, they can, assuming their continuity, meet 50% of families' needs. During an interview, the engineer pointed out that about 300 families have actually begun experimenting with home gardens. Moreover, displaced people in shelters share a common interest in collective farming to meet their needs. Abu Rabie' referred to the experience

11 <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/postar.aspx?lang=ar&ItemID=4644>

12 https://unosat.org/static/unosat_filesystem/3880/FAO-PAL-007_UNOSAT_A3_Gaza_Strip_Agricultural_DA_May2017-2024_v2.3.pdf

13 https://unosat.org/static/unosat_filesystem/3880/FAO-PAL-007_UNOSAT_A3_Gaza_Strip_Agricultural_DA_May2017-2024_v2.3.pdf

14 FAO sounds alarm over the high risk of famine across the whole Gaza Strip amidst humanitarian access constraints.

<https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-sounds-alarm-over-high-risk-of-famine-across-the-whole-gaza-strip-amidst-humanitarian-access-constraints/en>

15 <https://www.aljazeera.net/ebusiness/2024/7/25/>



يقلعون شجرة .. نزرع عشرة
THEY UPROOT A TREE .. WE REPLANT TEN





of “a housing shelter with 200 families, consisting of approximately 600 individuals, where young men took the initiative to cultivate a small area of land with eggplant and molokhiya. They succeeded in farming and eating these crops”.¹⁶

It seems that the people of the Gaza Strip have realized that reclaiming and re-cultivating lands is the only way to avoid starvation. The spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture in the Gaza Strip highlighted that agricultural lands that were reclaimed through individual and collective (youth) efforts, with the support of some international and civil-society institutions, totaled 500 dunums in the north recently. These areas produce the majority of vegetables available in local markets, even if they are available at high prices and are of low quality, due to the absence of the necessary production inputs to cultivate quality vegetables. Still, despite their importance, the official at the Ministry believes that they are insufficient to prevent famine.¹⁷

In the same context, the Arab Foundation for the Conservation of Nature responded to the calls of farmers in the Gaza Strip, supporting the rehabilitation and cultivation of 400 dunums of agricultural land within the first phase of the “Gaza Farming Revival” project. This project aims to confront the war of starvation that has plagued the Gaza Strip for months. The Foundation was able to reach about 162 farmers from the northern, central, and southern regions in the first phase, providing them with agricultural crops with high nutritional value and speedy growth. Moreover, in the central region (Deir al-Balah, Khan Yunis, and part of Rafah), the Foundation planted about 500,000 various vegetable seedlings over an area covering approximately 200 dunums. This included tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplants, hot and sweet peppers, melons, and zucchini. Approximately 170 dunums were replanted in Beit Lahia in the north of the Strip with 900 kg of molokhiya seeds, and 115,000 eggplant and sweet pepper seeds.¹⁸

◆ Settler Violence and Food Insecurity

The Israeli occupation took advantage of the media’s focus on the war in Gaza to confiscate more land in Area C of the West Bank, with the aim of expanding - or establishing - settlements. Since the onset of the recent settlement campaign, a number of human rights and non-governmental organizations in Israel issued an urgent appeal to the international community to stop the wave of state-protected settler violence aimed at forcibly displacing Palestinians in the West Bank.¹⁹

16 Musa, Raed. Survival through agriculture: This is how the people of Gaza face famine and war. 25.7.2020. <https://rb.gy/9ondgm>

17 Musa, Raed. Survival through agriculture: This is how the people of Gaza face famine and war. 25.7.2020. <https://rb.gy/9ondgm>

18 In the face of starvation, the Arab Protection of Nature, with 162 farmers, cultivates the Gaza resistance crop on 400 dunums in the Gaza Strip. July 29, 2024. <https://t.ly/fh-iR>

19 B’Tselem. Urgent appeal to the international community: Stop forced displacement in the West Bank. https://www.btselem.org/arabic/press_releases_20231029/, Last accessed 29 July 2024.



The olive season witnessed the martyrdom of a number of farmers due to settler targeting while harvesting their olives. The occupation's military canceled the few pre-approved days for coordinating the entrance of Palestinian farmers to their lands during the olive harvest season, restricting large numbers of families from accessing their lands. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "Since the beginning of the war and until mid-January, settlers launched more than 440 violent attacks against Palestinians, dozens of them against olive pickers. These attacks included physical attacks on olive pickers, uprooting large olive groves, destroying vineyards by breaking branches, cutting trunks with a chainsaw, burning trees, in addition to picking and stealing olives."²⁰ Moreover, according to estimates by the Palestinian Farmers Union, 50% of farmers were unable to harvest their olives last season. Many families rely on the olive harvest and the income they make from selling olive oil to secure their basic needs, including food. This disruption will likely have negative implications for the food security of these families.

This violence also includes the destruction of property and the forced displacement from communities and homes. From October 7, 2023, to July 25, 2024, 134 structures were destroyed, thereby displacing 322 individuals. In addition, 421 individuals from Bedouin communities in Areas C or East Jerusalem were displaced.²¹ Data shows that 57% of destroyed structures and residential structures, 34% were agricultural assets, while the rest included WASH facilities, healthcare services, infrastructure, and uninhabited buildings.²²

According to B'Tselem, as of April 17, 2024, 18 communities and families were displaced from Area C under the pretext of war. The total number of displaced families reached 157 families, comprising 1,056 individuals and 398 children. B'Tselem documented the displacement of these communities, in which settlers used intimidation to displace locals or deprive them of their livelihoods. For example, in Khirbet Ain al-Rashash, settlers obstructed a water tanker heading to the community by barricading the main street, which the occupation had closed more than once previously. This forced the community to herd 1,500 sheep to the lands of the village of Douma: all 85 members of the community were displaced. Another example is Khirbet al-Rathim in the southern hills of Hebron, where two families consisting of 20 individuals, half of them children, reside. On October 9, two days after the war began, a settler closed the road leading to the farmers' lands. Later, several settlers, under the protection of the occupation's military, went to the house of one of the two families and deliberately severed the water pipes and electricity cables. The family was forced to evacuate within 24 hours, and then "soldiers arrived on a tractor and demolished the house, the barn, the outdoor kitchen, electrical pipes and cables, wreaking havoc on about 100 tons of fodder." (B'Tselem) The settlers, under military protection, utilized the same violent tactics until they displaced the second family from that community.²³

20 B'Tselem. Israel used the Gaza war as a pretext to impose severe restrictions on West Bank olive harvest in 2023. <https://www.btselem.org/arabic/settler>

21 According to data from the UN-OCHA. Last accessed on 31 July 2024 <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=>

22 According to data from the UN-OCHA. Last accessed on 31 July 2024 <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=>

23 B'Tselem. Forced displacement of isolated communities and families in Area C under the guise of war. Last accessed on 29 July 2024. <https://www.btselem.org/arabic/>



The impact of settler violence extends beyond mere material losses resulting from damaged assets and property. Rather, it has long-term effects that stem mainly from the prevailing sense of danger. Settler violence thus dismantles the foundations of life, destroying or depriving citizens of their livelihoods. Traditional economies on which these communities depended, such as rearing livestock and agriculture, have undoubtedly diminished as a result of repeated attacks. Some families abandoned their livelihoods out of fear of being targeted by settlers with violence and intimidation.

Palestinians in these communities are also deprived of access to natural resources such as pastures and water sources necessary to raise their livestock and farm. Today, this form of livelihood has been lost. In light of prevailing risks, cultivation costs have increased, forcing many farmers to abandon agriculture. Naturally, this has led to a deterioration in food security due to the non-availability of food items, and the lack of income. In addition, the state of displacement and constant movement deprives families of the means to benefit from healthy eating, given the continuous non-availability of food items.

Figure 1: A map illustrating the increase in the rate of forced displacement after October 7



Source: <https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/>



Food Prices in Palestine and Globally

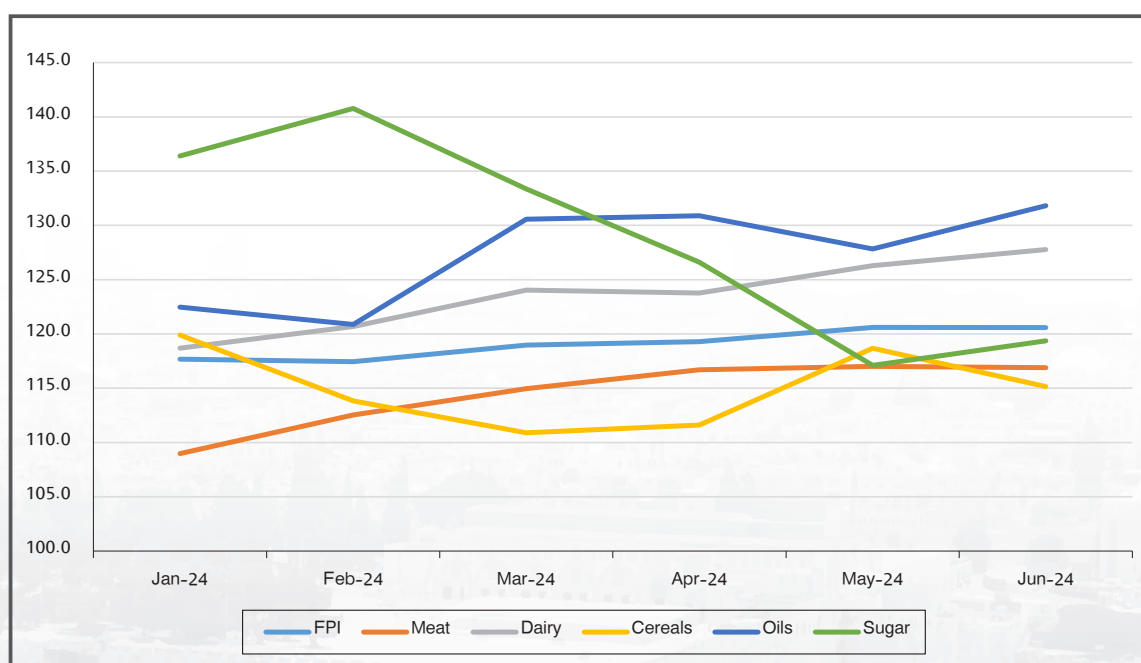
Global Food Prices (January-June 2024)

Global food prices, according to the FAO's Food Price Index, experienced fluctuations during the first half of 2024. Indices show a general increase in the overall Food Price Index and Food Product Indices between the beginning and the end of the period, with the exception of the Sugar and Cereals Indices. The Sugar Index experienced a sharp decline commencing last year, in contrast to the second half of last year, due to the decline in demand, despite the quality of the sugar harvest in Brazil, India, and Thailand. The slight decline in the Cereals index is the result of over-supply during the harvest period and competition between exporters.

Price Trends

Figure 2 illustrates the trends in The FAO's Food Price Index in the first half of 2024, as well as the five indices of a set of basic food commodities that constitute the Food Price Index, namely meat, dairy products, cereals, oils, and sugar. In the first half of 2024, the Index recorded a slight three-point increase from January to June, reaching 120.6 points in June 2024.

Figure 2: FAO FPI and Basic Food Commodities Price Indices



Source: FAO, 2024



◆ Meat Prices

The FAO's Meat Price Index recorded an increase during Q1 2024 and then stabilized in Q2. At the beginning of the year, the index stood at 109 points, declining 1.4% since December, sequentially declining for seven consecutive months as a result of excess supply from exporting countries.²⁴ However, the index subsequently recorded an increase for the first time in seven months, following the rise in the price of poultry and beef as a result of the disruption of livestock transportation with heavy rains in Australia.²⁵ Meat prices continued to rise, reaching 115 points in March,²⁶ after which it rose slightly during the following three months and then stabilized at 116.9 points. By the end of the first half of the year, the meat price index recorded a total increase of 7.2%.

◆ Dairy Products Prices

The Dairy Price Index recorded successive increases in the first six months of 2024, with the exception of a slight decline between March and April. In general, the index rose in the first half of 2024 from 118.7 points in January to 127.8 points in June 2024, continuing an increase that commenced in October 2023. This increase is due to higher global prices for butter, cheese, and whole-fat powdered milk, with high demand from buyers in Asia. Although demand for powdered milk and cheese partially slowed in April, the steady increase in imports prompted an additional rise in butter prices. Yet, this did not result in a significant change in the Index, which only decreased by 0.2 points.²⁷ Subsequent to this slight decline, the increased demand from suppliers and food services in preparation for the summer months, and renewed demand by some African countries, contributed to a rise in the Dairy Price Index. This was accompanied by pessimistic expectations concerning a decline in milk production in Western Europe.²⁸ Although these pessimistic expectations held true in the sixth month of the year, butter prices reached their highest levels in two years, prompting further increase for the Index, reaching 127.8 points at the end of June 2024.²⁹

◆ Vegetable Oil Prices

The Vegetable Oil Price Index recorded fluctuations during the first half of the year, with a total increase of about 9.3 points from January to the end of June 2024, settling at 131.8 points. This fluctuation is due to a number of reasons, the most important of which is fluctuations in the supply of vegetable oils such as palm, soy, sunflower, and rapeseed oils. The Index declined between the first and second month of the year as a result of the decline in global prices for soybean oil and as a result of expectations of a surplus in soybean seed production in South America. This is in addition to the ample opportunities to

24 <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-down-again-in-january-led-by-lower-wheat-and-maize-prices/en>

25 <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-declines-further-in-february/en>

26 <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-rises-in-march/en>

27 <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-up-marginally-in-april/en>

28 <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-inched-up-in-may-for-third-consecutive-month/en>

29 <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-stable-in-june/en#>



export sunflower and rapeseed oils, which drove their prices down. All these factors restricted a rise in the Index, despite the high price of palm oil.³⁰ The Index rose by about 10 points in March and stabilized in April after a rise in previous prices of oil primarily due to a decline in palm oil production, despite strong demand from Southeast Asia. Soybean oil prices recovered for the first time in years, with strong demand for biofuels from Brazil and the USA.³¹ Stability in the index stems from a slight decline in the prices of palm and soybean oils in April, which offset the increase in the prices of sunflower and rapeseed oils.³²

◆ Cereals Prices

The cereal Price Index continued its uninterrupted decline, returning to pre-Ukrainian war levels. It registered an average of 115 points during the first half of 2024. The Index then declined at the start of the year (119.9 points), to reach 110.9 points in March and 111.6 points in April.³³ This was the result of a retraction in global wheat exports driven by competition between the EU, Russia, and the USA, which later stabilized in April due to exporters allaying concerns about unfavorable conditions for cultivating grains.³⁴

◆ Sugar Prices

The FAO's Sugar Price Index recorded a noticeable decline in sugar prices - by 12.4% - between January and June 2024. The index rose about four points from 136.4 to 140.8 between the first and second months of the year, as a result of renewed concerns about weak production. However, the harvest seasons in Brazil, India, and Thailand exceeded expectations, pushing prices down by 15.2% overall in June 2023.³⁵

◆ Food Prices in Palestinian Markets (January-June 2024)

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) measures food prices using its own Food Price Index (FPI), which is one of the components of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). After a significant increase in the FPI (18.1%) and consumption index (24.2%) in the second half of 2023, the two indices continued with this upward trend for a full year. This can be attributed to the sharp rise in basic commodity prices as a direct result of the war on Gaza. After ending December at 138.5 points, the FPI continued its steady increase, by 17.47% in Q1 2024. This was proportionally offset by a decrease of 12.99% from March to June, due to a sharp decline in the Consumer Price Index in the Gaza Strip, settling at 150.42 points. All in all, the Index rose by 8% in the first half of this year.

30 <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-declines-further-in-february/en>

31 <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-rises-in-march/en>

32 <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-up-marginally-in-april/en>

33 <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-rises-in-march/en>

34 <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-up-marginally-in-april/en>

35 <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-stable-in-june/en>

<https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-up-marginally-in-april/en>

<https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-inched-up-in-may-for-third-consecutive-month/en>

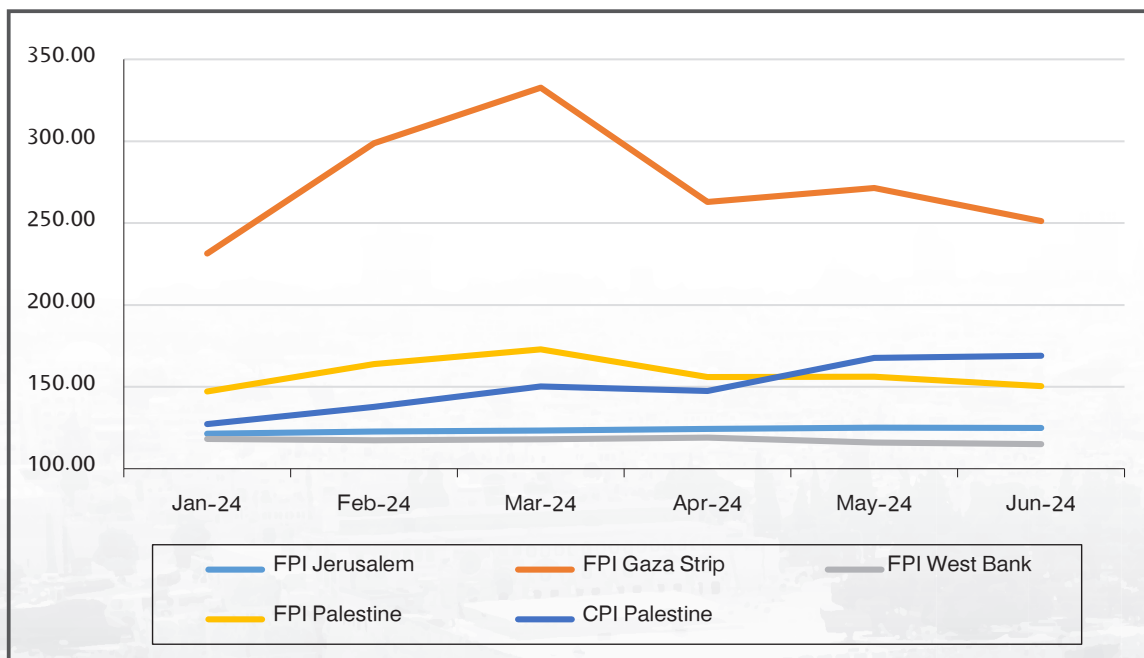


The Cost-of-Living Index (CPI) increased by a larger percentage between January and June, as a result of the noticeable and continuous rise in food prices in the Gaza Strip. The Index rose by 32.8% during the first half of the year, following a 24.4% rise in the second half of the previous year. By the end of 2023, the Index recorded 168.99 points. The Index averaged 149.85 points for the first half of 2024, rising from 139.6 points (an increase of 56.9%) since the outbreak of war. This rise can be attributed to the unprecedented and sustained rise in food prices in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Jerusalem. Even when compared to the first three months of the war, the FPI averaged about 153 points - it had been at 119 points for the three months (115 points overall average for the second half of 2023).

◆ Food Prices by Region

The war continues to impact food prices in the Gaza Strip for the ninth month. This is evidenced by assessing the FPI and CPI during the first six months of 2024 compared to the corresponding period in 2023. Prices increased in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem to varying degrees. The Gaza Strip was the most affected by a clearly high cost of living, as Figure 2 above shows. The prices of basic commodities, including bread, fresh meat, fuel, vegetable oils, dried vegetables, and flour rose at varying rates, while some commodities, such as fresh poultry, were not available in Gazan markets.

Figure 3: Palestine Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Food Price Index (FPI) by Region



Source: PCBS, 2024



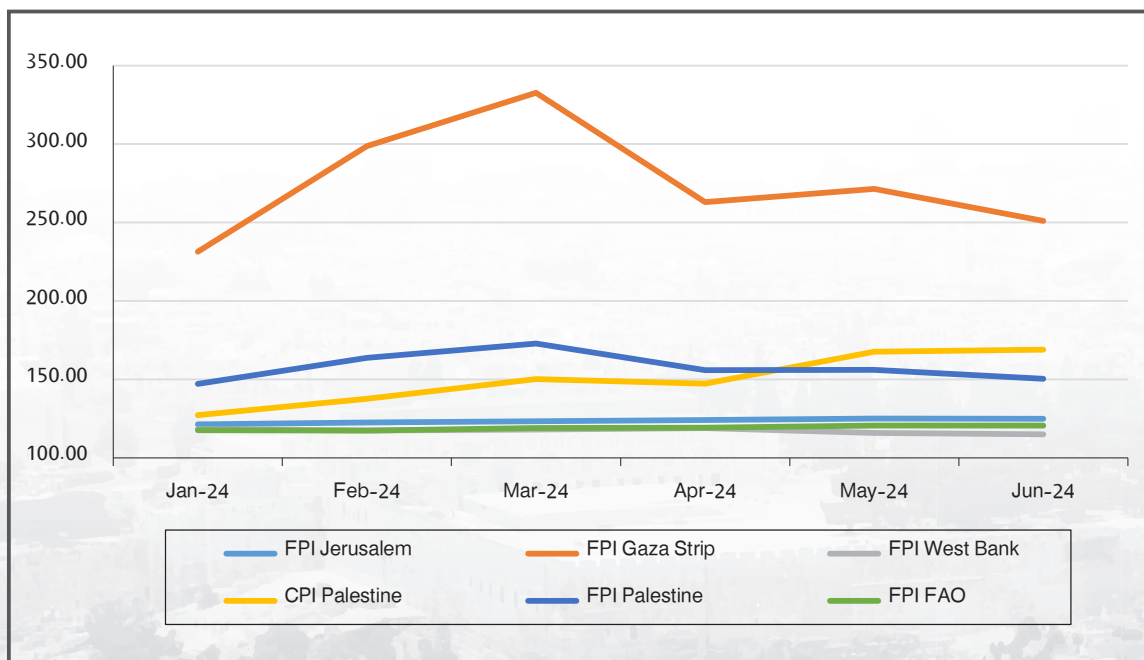


The CPI in the Gaza Strip recorded 231.41 points in January 2024, or an increase of 16.7% compared to December 2023. During the first half of 2024, the CPI rose by 8.5%, settling at 251.14 points. In contrast, price changes in the West Bank and Jerusalem were less pronounced. Their CPIs (in the first half of 2024) increased by 2.9% in Jerusalem and decreased by 2.7% in the West Bank. The West Bank's CPI stabilized at the end of June at 115 points, while in Jerusalem it stabilized at 124.9 points. The CPI averaged during the first half of 2024 at 117.28 points and 123.59 points respectively. When compared to the corresponding months of the previous year, the CPI rose by 168.4 points in the Gaza Strip and by 10 points in Jerusalem, while the West Bank was the least affected, rising by about two points only.

◆ The PCBS's FPI compared to the FAO's

This section compares the Palestinian FPI with the FAO Food Price Index, while noting the difficulties in making this comparison, given that the FPI in Palestine is mostly comprised of locally produced foodstuffs with limited impact on global food prices. For comparative purposes, 2018 was adopted as the base year for the FAO's index, instead of 2014-16, to match the base year for the latest census. In the period between January and June 2024, global food prices rose slightly by 2.4%, with the FAO's index settling at 120.6 points in the middle of the year, leveling off at 119.1 points for the first half of 2024. The same applies to the Palestinian FPI, which rose by a similar rate of 2.2% during the same period, reaching 150.42 points at the end of June 2024. This sharp difference, as shown in Figure 3, can be explained by the sharp rise in prices in the Gaza Strip in the first half of the year, as a result of the war.

Figure 4: FAO and Palestine Food Price Index (FPI) and the Consumer Price Index (CPI)



Source: PCBS (2024), and FAO (2024)



Literature Review

The population of the Gaza Strip suffered from high levels of food insecurity for years before the current war, as a result of the Israeli occupation's blockade of the Strip since 2007. However, the current aggression has exacerbated the food insecurity crisis for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. It is expected to have a far-reaching impact on key indicators for food security, namely: availability of food on the supply side; economic and physical access to food; food utilization and the nutritional status of individuals in relation to their diets; food diversity, safety and equal access to it. Another factor relates to the stability and sustainability of the indicators outlined above, namely the availability and consumption of sufficient food intake for a lifetime, and food decision-making.³⁶ Since the commencement of the war, Israel declared its intention to create a food security crisis by imposing a complete blockade. All crossings were closed, and the entry of water, food, and fuel was prohibited.³⁷ After nine months, studies and reports indicate that the food insecurity crisis in the Gaza Strip reached its peak during this decade. This is due to several factors that have been identified in the past months in a group of reports and studies issued on the food insecurity crisis, outlined in this section.

◆ Factors Driving Food Insecurity in the Gaza Strip

Ground military operations and bombing led to the destruction of all food-related inputs and supply chains, as well as the infrastructure necessary for food production, destroying agricultural lands, bakeries, mills, and popular markets.³⁸ The war also affected the availability of food by disrupting food and non-food imports necessary to ensure food security, such as fuel, water, agricultural inputs, and cleaning-cooking equipment.³⁹ A recent research paper utilized the framing of the scholar Michel Foucault's discourse on biopolitics, indicating that "the same foundations that Foucault described as essential to the state's control over the life of its residents – sanitation, healthcare, nutrition, and housing – are now being used for the purpose of destroying Gaza's ability to support human life."⁴⁰

Mr. Muhammad Bahiji and others frame the situation created by the Israeli aggression and previously through the imposition of the blockade, within the global scholarship of deliberately creating chaos as a defensive tool in the event of war in order to weaken the other party psychologically and physically, limiting their ability to resist.⁴¹ We can find numerous examples in the case of the Gaza Strip when reviewing the literature on the current war... The structure of relief and foreign aid that works to manage the crisis and mitigate its severity, and on which all residents of the Gaza Strip currently depend, has

36 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-update/what-is-food-security>

Frontiers | From acute food insecurity to famine: how the 2023/2024 war on Gaza has dramatically set back sustainable development goal 2 to end hunger

37 https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/defense-minister-announces-complete-siege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/

38 Frontiers | From acute food insecurity to famine: how the 2023/2024 war on Gaza has dramatically set back sustainable development goal 2 to end hunger

39 Frontiers | From acute food insecurity to famine: how the 2023/2024 war on Gaza has dramatically set back sustainable development goal 2 to end hunger

40 [A "Tragic Humanitarian Crisis": Israel's Weaponization of Starvation and the Question of Intent \(tandfonline.com\)](https://www.tandfonline.com)

41 <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohamed-Buheji/publication/378805151>



been systematically weakened, by closing the crossings or delaying the entry of trucks. This led to the damage of a large quantity of aid, in addition to the direct targeting of relief operations in the Gaza Strip, by striking storage and distribution centers and their workers.⁴² Moreover, Palestinians were directly targeted while receiving aid on several occasions.

The end result is a decline in the individuals' economic ability to purchase food (economic inaccessibility). Food items are unavailable given demand-side social and economic crises.⁴³ Even in cases of the availability of certain food items, the severe economic decline and the loss of almost all sources of income (given the destruction of the majority of economic establishments) is accompanied by individuals losing their assets and income-generating activities after displacement, making them especially vulnerable to food insecurity.⁴⁴ Most importantly, the scarcity of food supply combined with an increase in demand means that prices soared, accompanied by a clear decline in the purchasing power of individuals. The displacement process also affected local food production (agriculture and related economic activities).⁴⁵

Accordingly, the state of food insecurity that Israel created during the war appears yet another attempt to destroy all that is necessary to sustain human life in the Gaza Strip. Maximum domination is best achieved by creating a state of chaos, as mentioned previously. Herein, the researcher Jessica White recalls the incident of aid being dropped from planes by countries such as the USA as "an exceptional scene of great powers falling from the sky to evade the siege imposed by their ally, which they continue to arm". This confirms the intention of the occupation and its allies to control Palestinian society in the Gaza Strip, through blockade and other simulated crises such as food insecurity.⁴⁶

◆ Enabling Humanitarian Support

According to new research on weaponizing starvation, a researcher acknowledges that international law, including universal human rights laws, is engineered to allow their exploitation to justify the use of violence.⁴⁷ This includes using starvation as a weapon. As a result, genocide becomes legal; legitimized through permissive interpretations of international humanitarian law, despite the fact that one of the most prominent features of this war is the Israeli leadership's declaration of their intention to pursue genocide.⁴⁸

By reviewing statements made by politicians and ministers in Israel and U.S. officials during the war on Iraq, and in light of the South African case at the International Court of Justice, the researcher

42 <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohamed-Buheji/publication/378805151>

Frontiers | From acute food insecurity to famine: how the 2023/2024 war on Gaza has dramatically set back sustainable development goal 2 to end hunger [hlpe-fsn-issues-papers_conflicts-and-fsn.pdf \(fao.org\)](https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/6c05a0cb-d1b8-463e-be54-42c67468e1ee/content)

43 Frontiers | From acute food insecurity to famine: how the 2023/2024 war on Gaza has dramatically set back sustainable development goal 2 to end hunger

44 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/6c05a0cb-d1b8-463e-be54-42c67468e1ee/content>

45 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/6c05a0cb-d1b8-463e-be54-42c67468e1ee/content>

46 A "Tragic Humanitarian Crisis": Israel's Weaponization of Starvation and the Question of Intent (tandfonline.com)

47 The Silent Slow Killer of Famine: Humanitarian Management and Permanent Security: Journal of Genocide Research

48 It's not just Israel in the dock over genocide, it's everyone who looked away | Nimer Sultany | The Guardian



Jessica White identified methods where military decisions and statements are formulated to mitigate legal prohibitions on starving civilians. In her research, published in the *Journal of Genocide Research*, such methods are justified as a military necessity, described as an unfortunate consequence of military measures against combatants.⁴⁹ White reviews the most prominent cases in which the food supply chain that guarantees human life in the Gaza Strip was targeted. This included, but was not limited to, the destruction of bakeries, commercial stores, agricultural lands, water tanks, water treatment infrastructure, fishing boats, power generators, and solar panels.⁵⁰

The humanitarian management system has thus become an integral part of the collective violence that characterizes the process through which Israel seeks to achieve its security.⁵¹ Another researcher describes international law as a tool through which imperial hegemony is reproduced in its present form, acknowledging that international human law has made the process of "humanizing violence" possible, instead of reducing it.⁵² It indicates that Israel portrays its actions in the Gaza Strip as legitimate by citing the example of the USA, which weaponized starvation during its previous wars.

◆ Future Prospects for Food Security in the Gaza Strip, the Region, and Globally

While the war is entering its ninth month without a clear horizon for its end or accurate predictions on its future impact, some studies have started to make preliminary predictions concerning food security in the Gaza Strip and the region as a result. The most prominent forecast for the coming period is the spread of famine across all governorates in the Gaza Strip, at any given moment.⁵³ This assumes that the war will continue, and Israel will also continue to obstruct the entry of aid into the Strip while targeting the relief sector.⁵⁴

In their study on the impact of the Gaza war on achieving SDG No.2 (eliminating hunger by 2030), Hassoun and others point out that the consequences of this war negate the possibility of achieving this goal.⁵⁵ After reviewing a wide range of governmental and non-governmental literature and publications, this study finds that the current aggression on the Gaza Strip may have an unprecedented impact on the possibility of achieving the five pillars necessary to fulfill SDG No.2.⁵⁶ The authors conclude that the economic and environmental devastation caused by the war will lead to a sharp decline in agricultural productivity and loss of income for small-scale farmers. Environmental destruction to natural resources

49 [A "Tragic Humanitarian Crisis": Israel's Weaponization of Starvation and the Question of Intent \(tandfonline.com\)](#)

50 [A "Tragic Humanitarian Crisis": Israel's Weaponization of Starvation and the Question of Intent \(tandfonline.com\)](#)

51 [The Silent Slow Killer of Famine: Humanitarian Management and Permanent Security: Journal of Genocide Research: Vol 0, No 0 - Get Access \(tandfonline.com\)](#)

52 [A "Tragic Humanitarian Crisis": Israel's Weaponization of Starvation and the Question of Intent \(tandfonline.com\)](#)

53 <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ipc-famine-third-review-report-25jun24/>

54 [A "Tragic Humanitarian Crisis": Israel's Weaponization of Starvation and the Question of Intent \(tandfonline.com\)](#)

55 [Frontiers | From acute food insecurity to famine: how the 2023/2024 war on Gaza has dramatically set back sustainable development goal 2 to end hunger](#)

56 The five goals are: 2.1. End hunger and ensure everyone has access to enough food throughout the year, 2.2. Ending all forms of malnutrition, 2.3. Doubling agricultural productivity and income of small-scale food producers, 2.4. Ensuring sustainable food production systems, 2.5. Preserving the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants, domesticated animals, livestock, and related wild species. For more on the five pillars, see:

<https://sdg-ar-psaqatar.opendata.arcgis.com/pages/g-02>



and the ecological system in particular will lead to the destruction of natural habitats for numerous plants and animals, leading to a loss in biodiversity and genetic diversity.⁵⁷ The report issued by the Committee on World Food Security indicates that the effects of food insecurity extend over long periods even if a state of “famine” is not formally declared. For example, food insecurity and malnutrition (as a result of war) will have long-lasting consequences on health, production, well-being, and social integration for years after the end of the war, with the impact likely being irreversible.⁵⁸

Hassoun and others stress the necessity of developing more comprehensive and sustainable mechanisms and solutions to address the root causes of food insecurity, despite the efforts of international organizations to manage the crisis and mitigate its severity.⁵⁹ The World Committee on Food Security emphasizes the need to address the food security crisis across three stages. The (first) recovery phase includes increasing individuals’ access to healthy and affordable nutrition, involving the local community in the recovery process, and rescuing and restoring the destroyed environment in a way that stimulates the restoration of biodiversity, purifying the land and water from harmful chemicals. This helps to achieve sustainable and self-sufficient food security. The second phase (the medium-term) focuses on rebuilding supply chains and infrastructure such as water, sanitation, and energy. It includes building systems and services that provide social protection (cash and in-kind assistance) while securing support to rebuild supply chains. For the third (long-term) phase, the Committee recommends strengthening the Global Famine Fund, establishing a new fund to respond to urgent conflicts, and reforming the international aid system to enhance rapid response to structural problems that lead to wars.⁶⁰

The war’s impact goes beyond the issue of food security in the Gaza Strip, casting a shadow over the state of food security globally. This impact appears clearly at the regional level, as gas exports may be affected in both Egypt and Jordan, given the war’s impact on supply chains and fluctuations in global oil and gas prices.⁶¹ Additionally, disturbances in shipping from Saudi Arabia via the Red Sea may spark a crisis in the energy sector, which may lead to a rise in interest rates, while trying to contain inflation.⁶² The disruption of global trade routes in the Red Sea may lead to increased shipping costs and navigation times, leading to a state of uncertainty regarding the availability of basic commodities, further raising global food prices, especially for countries that depend on importing basic foodstuffs.⁶³ The ESCWA and the UNDP warned that the war might affect neighboring countries, specifically those facing socio-economic crises at the local level.⁶⁴ At the global level, given the Gaza war, its regional impact, and a number of other factors, the FAO concludes that achieving SDG No.2 has become difficult.⁶⁵

57 [Frontiers | From acute food insecurity to famine: how the 2023/2024 war on Gaza has dramatically set back sustainable development goal 2 to end hunger](#)

58 [hlpe-fsn-issues-papers_conflicts-and-fsn.pdf \(fao.org\)](#)

59 [Frontiers | From acute food insecurity to famine: how the 2023/2024 war on Gaza has dramatically set back sustainable development goal 2 to end hunger](#)

60 [hlpe-fsn-issues-papers_conflicts-and-fsn.pdf \(fao.org\)](#)

61 [Frontiers | From acute food insecurity to famine: how the 2023/2024 war on Gaza has dramatically set back sustainable development goal 2 to end hunger](#)

62 [Frontiers | From acute food insecurity to famine: how the 2023/2024 war on Gaza has dramatically set back sustainable development goal 2 to end hunger](#)

63 [GRFC2024-focus-gaza.pdf \(fsinplatform.org\)](#)

64 [GRFC2024-focus-gaza.pdf \(fsinplatform.org\)](#)

65 [Frontiers | From acute food insecurity to famine: how the 2023/2024 war on Gaza has dramatically set back sustainable development goal 2 to end hunger](#)



Biannual Bulletin Published by:
Palestine Economic Policy
Research Institute (MAS)

Tel: +972 (2) 298 7053/4 | Fax: +972 (2) 298 7055
info@mas.ps | www.mas.ps

