



[Israel Continues to Block and Attack Aid Convoys After Vowing to Ease Restrictions on Food and Water](#)

This week, Israel has continued to block and attack aid convoys after recently vowing to ease restrictions on food and water entering Gaza. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) trucks were hit by Israeli gunfire as they attempted to deliver supplies to children in the northern part of the territory. This took place despite the fact that the convoy was cleared for entry. Last Saturday, the United Nations stated that Israel had authorized the opening of nearly two dozen bakeries and a waterline in the northern part of Gaza, as well as additional aid routes. Several months ago, Israel claimed that it placed no restrictions on food, water, and other much-needed supplies entering Gaza, even going so far as to accuse reputable news outlets of publishing “fake” articles for documenting clear evidence of their impeding of humanitarian aid. Yet now, unsurprisingly, in the aftermath of the universal outrage regarding last week’s Israeli strikes on a World Central Kitchen convoy in Gaza which killed seven humanitarian aid workers, Israel had supposedly agreed to ease restrictions and increase the flow of humanitarian aid – in a development which proves that it was deliberately hindering this all along. While Israel claims that it is boosting aid to Gaza, the United Nations and relief agencies have said that little has actually changed. The new Israeli measures were reported to have come following a tense phone conversation between Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and U.S. President Biden, with the latter threatening to condition U.S. support on Israel taking concrete actions to protect humanitarian aid workers and civilians. U.S. Secretary of State Blinken also signaled that the Biden administration was prepared to alter its approach, remarking that “If we don’t see the changes that we need to see, there’ll be changes in policy.” Since the onset of the War on Gaza, various entities have highlighted how the dire humanitarian crisis there is of Israel’s making, brought about by their limiting of land entry points for aid, arbitrary inspection process, and the undermining and targeting of humanitarian groups.

Organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have outlined the multitude of ways in which Israel has impeded humanitarian aid efforts. Since October, Israeli authorities have imposed major restrictions on food, water, electricity, fuel, and medical supplies into Gaza. They have closed border crossings and obstructed the delivery of aid to the enclave’s more than 2 million people, nearly half of whom are children. Thus, for months, humanitarian groups and organizations have been repeatedly calling for the opening of additional routes in order to allow for the delivery of aid into Gaza. Food convoys and other humanitarian aid operations have not only been routinely blocked, but subjected to heinous attacks as well, as took place in the high-profile incident last week involving World Central Kitchen. This is far from an isolated occurrence, and on the contrary, there have been an array of Israeli attacks, including against UN food convoys and civilians seeking humanitarian aid supplies. On top of these attacks, trucks and convoys transporting food and other humanitarian relief are regularly subjected to arbitrary inspections whereby items are refused without justifiable reason. There have been numerous cases in which contents of humanitarian aid convoys have been cleared in advance by Israeli officials, only to be later turned away after inspection or even attacked.

Humanitarian officials have pointed out that after deliberately hindering aid and tightening its vicious blockade on Gaza over the past six months, Israel bears responsibility for the devastating humanitarian crisis there and does not warrant being commended for allegedly taking minimal steps now at the behest of increased pressure to do so from the United States and others. As one Amnesty International official put it, “Opening additional aid routes

sooner could have stopped hundreds of thousands of people from enduring appalling levels of hunger.” Instead, Israel has weaponized access to food, water, and other humanitarian aid. This abhorrent behavior has led food insecurity experts to express utter shock at the rate in which the hunger and malnutrition crisis has spread throughout Gaza during the past six months. What is particularly troubling and upsetting is the fact that unlike other humanitarian crises that can often times be caused by natural phenomena like severe drought or extreme weather, the conditions in Gaza are wholly man-made and could have been prevented.

For months, international aid institutions and rights advocates have been trying to underscore that humanitarian assistance has been consistently and arbitrarily restricted by Israeli authorities. With attacks against aid groups such as World Central Kitchen and others, Israel is also exhibiting a blatant disregard for norms of international humanitarian law and deterring these vital organizations from operating in Gaza for understandable fear of their safety. Israel’s unlawful conduct goes beyond one single incident, and there is a glaring pattern of efforts to hinder humanitarian aid – whether that be through intentional direct attacks on convoys or the impeding of them via an unjust inspection process and the obstruction of routes.