

175th Session of the FAO Council

Item 5: The situation in Gaza related to food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

The escalation of the conflict and hostilities in the Gaza Strip since early October 2023 has resulted in a humanitarian crisis of vast proportions, with the entire population of 2.2 million people (100 percent) assessed to be in high levels of acute food insecurity. The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report showed that 84 percent of households in the North, 57 percent in Deir Al-Balah and Khan Younis, and 56 percent in Rafah experienced very severe hunger conditions. Nearly all households in the Gaza Strip have engaged in extreme coping strategies, including virtually all households skipping meals every day and adults reducing meals so that children can eat. In nearly two-thirds of households in the North and one-third in the South, people went entire days and nights without eating at least 10 times in last 30 days.

Most of the Gaza Strip population is internally displaced due to the continued operations, destruction of shelters, Israeli military evacuation orders, and the lack of access to food, basic services and humanitarian assistance. Many were displaced multiple times in search of safety.

The IPC report also highlights that more than 40 percent of all croplands have been damaged, including 41 percent of irrigated land, 43 percent of orchards and 42 percent of rainfed land. Lack of access to land and destruction of crops are compounded by a lack of availability of essential agriculture inputs (fuel, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc.). About 70 percent of livestock has been lost, while fisheries production is largely halted due to the damage caused to boats and the lack of fuel and safe access to fishing areas.

Moreover, the intake of protein-rich foods like meat and dairy products, as well as fruits and vegetables, is negligible. Between one third and half of Gazan households report being aware of people who were compelled to consume wild or raw inedible food to cope with the severe hunger.

Prolonged and extreme food consumption gaps increase nutritional risks substantially, especially among vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and elderly people. The Nutrition Vulnerability and Situation Analysis, recently conducted by the Global Nutrition Cluster, found that 81 percent of households lack safe and clean water, with average daily household access to water reportedly less than 1 litre per person per day (against a minimum standard of 15 litres per person per day).

Furthermore, a possible escalation of tensions in the Red Sea could carry broad trade and economic consequences at regional and global scale. The Red Sea shipping disruptions, especially if combined with additional chokepoints elsewhere, could affect the functioning of world markets and global supply chains, with an impact on food availability and prices. Although so far relatively contained, ongoing geopolitical risks could place an upward pressure on future energy prices as well.

FAO has conducted several geospatial assessments in collaboration with the United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT), alongside Palestinian institutions, to evaluate agricultural sector damages in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These assessments aim to provide a detailed analysis of how mobility restrictions and conflict escalation have impacted FAO beneficiaries, including both farmers and herders.

Under the Occupied Palestinian Territory Flash Appeal, FAO is requesting funding of USD 40 million to address the immediate needs of 70 660 vulnerable farmers and livestock holders in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. FAO's immediate plan is to provide barley fodder, water tanks, animal shelter, veterinary kits, and other inputs to small ruminants, cattle, and poultry holders. Inputs are planned to be procured and transported to distribution points/warehouses, subject to the approval of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT - Israel) of the entry of goods into Gaza.

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