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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



**ISRAEL'S USE OF STARVATION AS A WEAPON OF WAR HAS PUSHED GAZA TO
BREAKING POINT**

Gaza is in the grip of starvation as nearly 2 months of Israel's total closure has left markets empty, children malnourished and famine conditions spreading. The humanitarian response is now at a critical breaking point unless supplies are urgently allowed in.

Israel's illegal and immoral shutdown of all supply routes into Gaza is a deliberate campaign to starve civilians, and Islamic Relief staff on the ground say the situation is now the worst we have ever seen there. Many children go whole days without eating while aid trucks packed with food are cruelly blocked from entering just a few miles away.

Meat, fruit, eggs and dairy products are now almost impossible to find, while the scarcity of vegetables means that prices are up to 15 times more expensive than before the crisis, at a time when few people have jobs or access to cash.

Almost 18 months of Israeli attacks have destroyed Gaza's ability to feed itself, with most agricultural land, greenhouses and fishing boats destroyed and most cattle killed. This has left all civilians in Gaza reliant on humanitarian aid, but no one has been allowed to enter since 2 March.

A recent survey of 43 aid agencies in Gaza found that 95% have been forced to reduce or suspend activities due to the total closure and the relentless indiscriminate bombing that has killed more than 51,000 people and targeted hospitals and shelters. Our staff hear horrific daily accounts of families burnt to death in their tents and children maimed by the bombing.

Islamic Relief staff and partners are doing everything we possibly can to keep aid flowing, but our own response has been severely impacted. It is becoming increasingly difficult to keep providing food as supplies run out.

Over the past week we have been working with the UN World Food Programme (WFP) to distribute high energy biscuits, date bars and vegetable oil to more than 7,000 people a day, but it is nowhere near enough and no substitute for nutritious meals.

Islamic Relief also continues to provide other life-saving assistance. We are carrying out daily cleaning of more than 60 shelters for displaced families, to help stop the spread of diseases in the overcrowded and desperate conditions.

Hundreds of thousands of people have yet again been forced from their homes by Israeli military orders in recent weeks, herded into ever-shrinking areas where there is no clean water, no functioning sanitation and no safety. Israel has now declared almost 70% of Gaza as inaccessible to civilians, through a combination of forced displacement orders and military no-go zones.

People affected by malnutrition and disease are unable to access decent healthcare and treatment as the Israeli closure also blocks all medical supplies from entering. Fuel is also blocked, forcing generators needed for life-saving operations to shut down.

There must be a renewed and lasting ceasefire. Starving civilians and denying them humanitarian aid is a clear violation of international law, but the world continues to turn a blind eye. The international community's lack of action makes them complicit in Israel's use of starvation as a weapon of war.

Statements of concern are meaningless without genuine action, such as ending arms sales. Governments must put real political and economic pressure on Israel to abide by international law, reopen crossings and allow humanitarian aid and commercial supplies into Gaza without any further delay.

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About Islamic Relief

Islamic Relief is an international humanitarian organization founded in 1984 in response to the famine in East Africa. The headquarters of Islamic Relief is located in Birmingham, United Kingdom. Islamic Relief operates in over 40 countries and has assisted more than 145 million people. Today, Islamic Relief Worldwide among one of the largest charity and development organizations in the world.

About Islamic Relief Malaysia

Islamic Relief Malaysia was operated since 2004, which aspires to continue Islamic Relief humanitarian assistance in the Asia-Pacific region. Islamic Relief Malaysia serves as a fundraising and project implementer for international and local projects.

Kindly visit the Islamic Relief Malaysia website, www.islamic-relief.org.my for more information.

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