

UAWC Urgent Appeal

Support Palestinian Steadfastness



UAWC
اتحاد لجان العمل الزراعي

Gaza & West Bank, Palestine

April 6, 2023

The Israeli occupation's ongoing genocidal war on Palestine has created a humanitarian catastrophe, pushing the 2.3 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip into a state of starvation at an unparalleled rate. Its intentional destruction of food systems and core infrastructure, blockade on essential and life-saving resources, and deliberate starvation of the Palestinian people are occurring within the broader framework of Israeli settler colonialism – all of historic Palestine has been under Israeli occupation since 1948.

In addition to the ongoing genocidal war on Gaza, Israeli settler colonial expansion in the West Bank of Palestine further targets and severely disrupts Palestinian livelihoods. Israeli occupation forces and settlers frequently target agricultural lands and core infrastructure, particularly in Area C, the historic food basket of the West Bank.

Following the breakout of the Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) launched a community aid campaign "Stop Gaza Starvation" to address the immediate needs of our communities in Gaza and the West Bank. Since October 2023, the UAWC's Stop Gaza Starvation campaign has made significant strides, despite severe bombardments and challenges. UAWC has reached over 96,975 beneficiaries in the Gaza Strip with essential aid, including food parcels, hygiene and sanitary products, mattresses, blankets, and firewood. Additionally, 172,000 people received drinking water.

As conditions in the Gaza Strip and Area C of the West Bank continue to rapidly decline, UAWC releases this urgent appeal to the global community with updates from the ground, an overview of immediate needs, and an outline of UAWC's work to address these needs. UAWC calls upon the global community to support grassroots Palestinian efforts and contribute to the Stop Gaza Starvation campaign as we work to strengthen the steadfastness of our communities.



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The Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) is a grassroots Palestinian civil society organization working to support the steadfastness of Palestinian farmers, fisher people, peasants, and rural communities in both Gaza and the West Bank of Palestine. UAWC defends Palestinian sovereignty in the face of the Israeli occupation and its dispossession of Palestinian land and natural resources.

uawc-pal.org/donate-now/

StopGazaStarvation.org

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UPDATES FROM THE GROUND

Updates reflect the period between 7 October, 2023, and 6 April, 2024.

Gaza Strip

Israeli airstrikes have targeted and destroyed Gaza's core infrastructure, making it impossible for communities to sustain themselves. The humanitarian crisis created by the occupation has been further exacerbated by the Israeli-imposed illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip, which has systematically denied Palestinians access to adequate food, water, raw materials, and inputs for food production since 2007, but has totally blocked off entry of goods since October 2023. Further, it controls and limits Palestinians' access to and use of water, electricity, and fuel. This pre-existing dire situation, paired with the now total destruction of the area and deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid, has led to a rapid increase in severe food insecurity and public health crises.

Loss of Life:

- The Israeli occupation forces have committed over 2,888 massacres, resulting in a staggering toll of over 40,000 martyrs and missing individuals. 33,137 martyrs reached the hospitals and 7,000 individuals are missing, many of whom are assumed dead.
- At least 14,350 children martyrs, with 28 children killed by famine.
- At least 9,460 female martyrs.
- At least 364 martyrs from medical teams, 48 from civil defense, and 136 journalists.

Injuries and Displacement:

- The occupation has injured at least 75,815 individuals, with 73% comprising children and women.
- The genocide has left at least 17,000 children without one or both parents, exacerbating the vulnerability of already traumatized youth.
- There are 2 million individuals displaced within the Gaza Strip.

Infrastructural Destruction:

- The occupation's indiscriminate attacks have deliberately destroyed critical infrastructure and cultural heritage sites, with 168 government headquarters, 100 schools and universities, 227 mosques, and 3 churches completely destroyed.
- An additional 305 schools and universities, 294 mosques, and 200 archaeological and heritage sites have been partially or wholly targeted and damaged.
- The occupation completely destroyed 70,000 housing units and partially destroyed 290,000 housing units, rendering them unfit for living.



- The deliberate targeting of healthcare facilities has left 32 hospitals and 53 health centers out of service, severely limiting access to essential medical care.
- 159 health institutions and 126 ambulances have been targeted, impeding the delivery of life-saving services to those in need.
- The arrest of 274 health personnel and 12 journalists whose names are known underscores the systematic targeting of essential services and suppression of information, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis and impeding the flow of critical information to the international community.

Humanitarian Urgency:

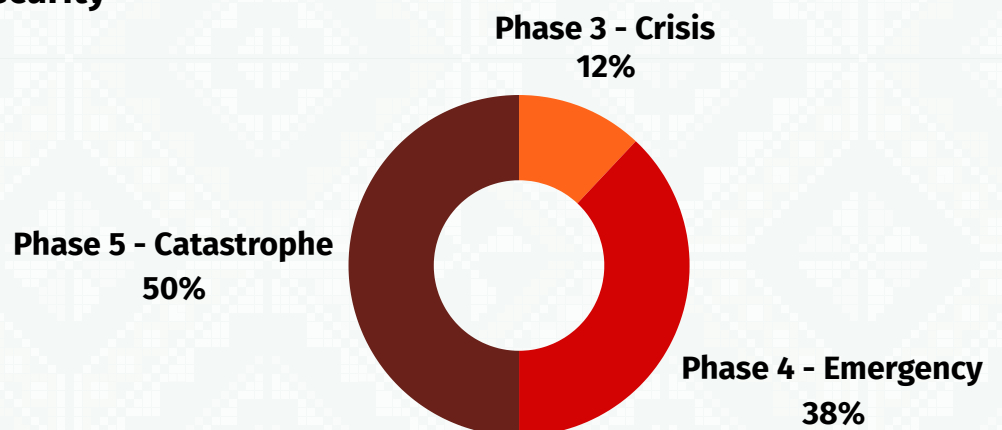
- 11,000 wounded individuals require urgent travel for life-saving treatment.
- 10,000 cancer patients facing imminent peril due to the lack of access to essential healthcare.
- 700,000 individuals are facing infectious diseases due to displacement.
- 60,000 pregnant women at risk due to the lack of adequate healthcare services.
- 350,000 chronic patients at risk due to scarcity of essential medicines.
- 8,000 cases of viral hepatitis infection due to displacement.

Starvation and Famine

- The latest analysis of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) warns that the situation in the Gaza Strip is catastrophic.
- According to the most likely scenario, both North Gaza and Gaza Governorates are classified in IPC Phase 5 (Famine) with reasonable evidence, with 70% (around 210,000 people) of the population in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe)
- The entire population in the Gaza Strip is in IPC Phase 3 or above. Half of the population is in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe)

Projected Acute Food Insecurity

16 March - 15 July



Source: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)

West Bank

Parallel to the genocide and siege on Gaza, the Israeli occupation continues to expand its settler colonial enterprise in the West Bank at an even more aggressive pace. With around 700 movement obstacles, constant violence of occupation forces, and skyrocketing settler attacks, the occupation continues to attack Palestinian livelihood in the West Bank. This has severely impacted rural communities in Area C, which is the largest and most fertile part of the West Bank. Farmers are prevented from reaching their land and cannot harvest or even do basic maintenance. Communities have had their land, infrastructure, and agricultural/herding materials destroyed or damaged by Israeli settlers or occupation forces. Land is livelihood, and being prevented access to land means that countless multi-generational households have no income. The heightened oppression of the occupation has further plunged these communities into food insecurity and financial crisis.

Occupation Violence and Expansion:

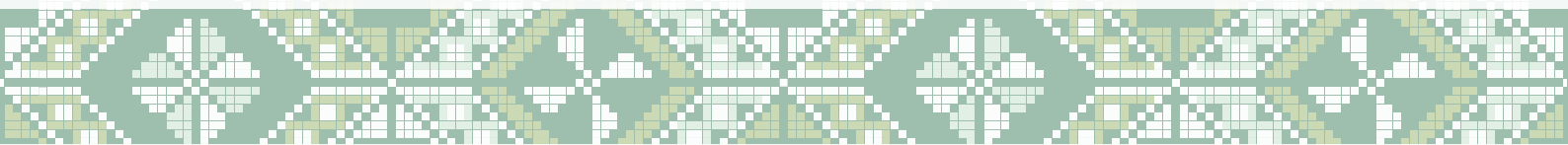
- 459 martyrs, of whom 116 are children
- At least 4760 injured, of whom at least 739 are children
- The Israeli occupation forces conduct an average of 690 operations per month, severely damaging infrastructure including roads, water and sanitation networks, residential houses, livelihood structures, and other public properties.
- At least 15 new settler outposts and 18 new settler roads built in the West Bank.

Settler Violence:

- OCHA has recorded 704 Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians that have caused damage to persons or property since 7 October.
- There have been at least: 69 Israeli settler attacks resulting in Palestinian casualties; 558 settler attacks resulting in damage to Palestinian property; and 77 settler attacks resulting in both Palestinian casualties and damage to Palestinian property
- Settler attacks have, at least: killed 17 Palestinians, injured over 400 Palestinians, damaged 9,000 trees, and vandalized 40 houses.
- Countless unrecorded settler attacks on Palestinian land, property, and persons.
- 2023 was the most violent year for settler attacks.

Forced Displacement:

- At least 1244 people, including 603 children, have been displaced due to settler violence and access restrictions. They comprise 206 Palestinian households from at least 20 herding/Bedouin communities.
- Over 900 displaced following home destruction during occupation attacks
- At least 524 displaced following Israeli occupation forces demolition their homes in Area C and East Jerusalem
- At least 105 displaced following punitive home demolition





Food Insecurity:

- The occupation prevented Palestinians from harvesting over 96,800 dunums of olive-cultivated lands during the 2023 olive harvest, which is a key economic, social, and cultural period. This has had an estimated total loss of over 1,200 metric tons of olive oil and a financial setback of USD 10 million.
- At least 163 communities in Area C do not have access to adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities.
- Herders are prevented access to grazing land, resulting in an inability to maintain their herds. Further, settlers regularly threaten or attack herders in Area C.
- The restricted Palestinian access to roads, communities, agricultural areas, urban centers, water sources, food markets, medical care, educational facilities, and necessary services.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

These are the immediate needs that UAWC's community aid campaign is addressing.

Gaza Strip

Rehabilitation of Artesian Water Wells in Northern Gaza Strip

Recognizing the acute water crisis, a major focus will be on rehabilitating artesian wells in the northern regions. This effort aims to provide thousands of people with access to vital drinking water sources, mitigating one of the most pressing survival needs.

Facilitate Return to Agriculture in Central and Southern Gaza

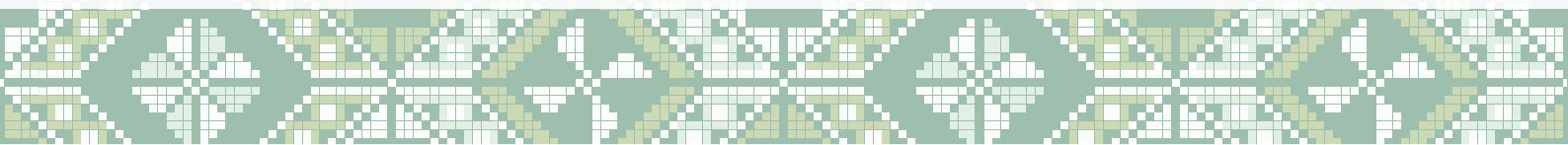
Agriculture remains a lifeline for the people of Gaza. UAWC plans to assist, encourage, and support more farmers in accessing their lands in the central and southern parts of the Gaza Strip. By cultivating vegetables, these efforts will contribute to creating a local source of food, crucial for sustaining the population under siege.

Support Health Needs of Women and Girls

The health and sanitary needs of women and girls in Gaza are of paramount concern. UAWC intends to concentrate on providing necessary health supplies and support to address these critical needs, recognizing the unique challenges faced by female populations in crises.

Rehabilitation of Bathrooms and Sanitary Facilities in Shelters

With the increasing displacement, the need for clean and accessible sanitation is more important than ever. Efforts will be made to rehabilitate bathrooms and other sanitary facilities in shelter centers, ensuring dignity and reducing the risk of disease.



Expansion and Increase of Hot Meal Distributions

The UAWC aims to expand the provision of hot meals, particularly through local public kitchens, known locally as "takayat".

Clothing Distribution

Recognizing the basic need for clothing, especially under the current dire conditions, UAWC plans to continue and increase the distribution of clothing to those most in need, ensuring that families and children have adequate apparel for the changing seasons.

West Bank

Food Supply

Area C faces the highest rates of food insecurity in the West Bank. UAWC will address this urgent need for food in the most impacted areas of Area C by providing essential food items to the affected populations.

Compensation for Losses

Most of the over 700 Israeli settler attacks on Palestinians have occurred in Area C, and have specifically targeted the livelihoods of agricultural, herding, and rural communities. With damaged or destroyed infrastructure, these communities are unable to sustain themselves due to the immense material damage to their land, property, and herds. These farmers have received no compensation for these damages, and as such have been unable to rebuild. UAWC will offer compensation – either in cash or in kind – to farmers for the livestock and equipment stolen or destroyed by settlers. These efforts will include a focus on restoring solar power capabilities.

Emergency Employment

There is a massive unemployment crisis, particularly for those living in Area C. Due to the widespread economic slump, there are no other jobs available, and the market has shrunk. People cannot afford to purchase goods, and those selling cannot live off of their earnings. There is a dual need here: both providing jobs and repairing or building infrastructure in Area C. As such, UAWC – following community-specific needs-assessments – will implement projects that employ community-members to address infrastructural needs. These needs – depending on funds and the community – may include land rehabilitation, agricultural roads, water pools, wells, public facilities, etc. These projects will also create job opportunities in the agricultural sector and related fields to support unemployed workers, focusing on land rehabilitation and rural infrastructure development. This area is two-fold: it both provides immediate access to employment and income while simultaneously building the framework for further stability through infrastructural development.



CAMPAIGN TRAJECTORY

The continuous direct targeting of humanitarian aid by the Israeli occupation not only exacerbates the crisis but also violates international laws and norms regarding the protection of civilians and aid workers in war zones. These developments highlight the critical importance of the international community's role in ensuring the safe passage of aid and holding accountable those who violate such principles. In facing these adversities, UAWC calls for an urgent and substantial increase in international support.

Despite overwhelming challenges, UAWC remains steadfast in our mission to deliver aid to our communities. This campaign is more than just a relief effort; it is an unwavering commitment to humanity and the survival of the Palestinian people and identity under the most extreme conditions. We are not only fighting against starvation but also against the systematic destruction of a people's ability to sustain themselves. This work is for our right to life and livelihood; access to basic human needs; and dignity in the face of an unprecedented humanitarian disaster. The courage and resilience of the UAWC team in Gaza and the Palestinian people amidst such adversity are a poignant reminder of Palestinian strength, as well as the urgent need for global solidarity and action.

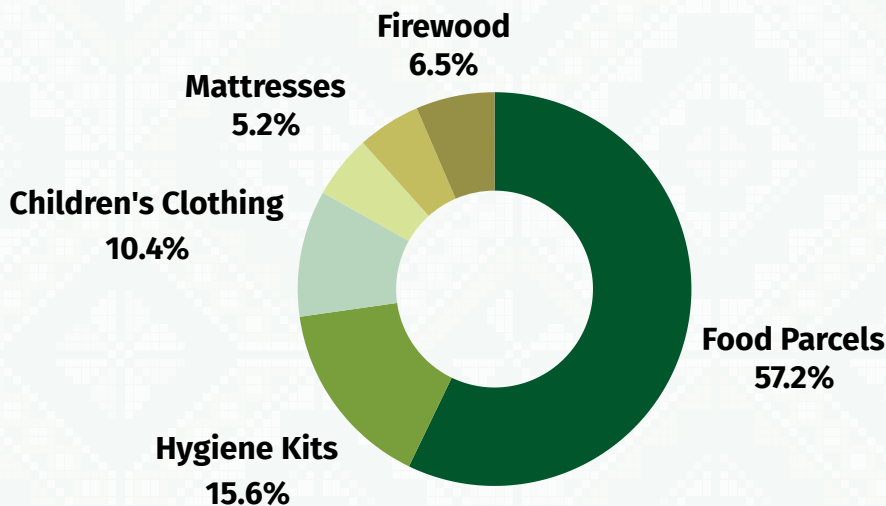
Achievements

| Item | Amount |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Drinking Water | 172,000 |
| Food Parcels | 44,000 |
| Hygiene Kits | 12,000 |
| Children's Clothing | 8,000 |
| Mattresses | 4,000 |
| Firewood | 4976 |
| Total | 268,976 |





Item Distribution



Challenges and Resource Scarcity

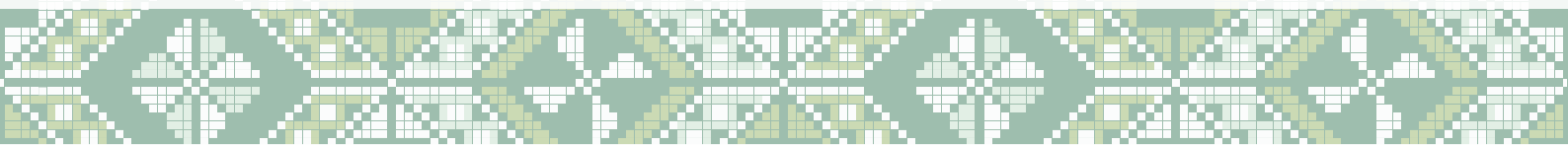
Due to the Israeli blockade and its weaponization of starvation, available resources in the Gaza Strip are scarce. The few items that are available are exorbitantly priced. For instance, the cost of a carton of eggs has soared to \$30, and a single chicken exceeds \$25, while a 25kg bag of flour reached a staggering \$1,000 in the northern areas of the Gaza Strip. Faced with these dire circumstances, UAWC has relied on local farmers who have returned to agriculture, producing quantities of vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, potatoes, lentils, oil, and peas. Despite the continuous bombardment in certain areas, a significant number of farmers in regions not under active bombardment have managed to resume their work in the fields. Furthermore, the UAWC has established connections with several suppliers who have succeeded in importing some food items from Egypt. However, the issue remains that these imported goods are sold at extremely high prices, exacerbating the already challenging situation by making it near impossible for many families to afford to purchase food. In addition, families do not have the facilities to cook, as the majority are displaced and do not have access to a kitchen.



In response to these constraints, UAWC has focused on distributing hot meals through public kitchens, known locally as "takayat," which are central cooking facilities. UAWC supplies these kitchens with meat and rice, enabling them to cook and distribute hot meals in public spaces to hundreds of families. This effort not only addresses the immediate nutritional needs but also fosters a sense of community and support among the besieged residents of Gaza.

The provision of water is managed through the restoration of several wells, partially repaired in the southern and central regions of the Gaza Strip. This initiative has become a critical component of the UAWC's efforts to address the severe water crisis exacerbated by the blockade and ongoing war. By rehabilitating these water sources, UAWC ensures that thousands of residents have access to essential clean drinking water, mitigating one of the most pressing needs of the population under siege. This effort not only highlights adaptability and resilience in the face of adversity but also underscores the vital importance of water as a resource for survival in the Gaza Strip.

UAWC is a grassroots Palestinian organization, and all of our staff – both in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank – are Palestinian. This means that we are all members of the communities in which we work. The entirety of our team in Gaza have been forcibly displaced by the ongoing genocidal war, and all have lost loved ones. In the beginning of the war, the Israeli occupation massacred one of our colleagues and her family as they were on a designated evacuation route. Three of our offices have been bombed, and internal communication is a major challenge. Our team is working under unimaginable danger to distribute support to our communities. In the face of all of this, however, UAWC remains committed to supporting the steadfastness of our communities.





Moving forward

This urgent appeal calls upon the international community to contribute to UAWC's efforts to support the steadfastness of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and Area C of the West Bank. By donating to UAWC's Stop Gaza Starvation campaign, you are supporting Palestinian community-based aid efforts, and fighting against starvation.



As we continue supporting the steadfastness of our communities in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank of Palestine, UAWC continues to advocate for an immediate and permanent ceasefire to end the Israeli genocide of Gaza, and a guarantee of unconditional access to adequate humanitarian aid. It is critical that all states and international institutions undertake any and all action possible, including sanctions and arms embargos, to bring an immediate end to the genocide and the obstruction of humanitarian, life sustaining, and life-saving supplies to Palestinians in Gaza.



As we address the immediate and urgent needs of our people, we maintain that ceasefire and aid are just the beginning. We refuse a return to the status quo of occupation. Justice requires a dismantling of systems of oppression: an end to the siege on Gaza and an end to the Israeli settler colonial occupation of Palestine.

We invite you to join us in this mission. Stand for justice and stand with Palestine.



DONATE

uawc-pal.org/donate-now/StopGazaStarvation.org