

Doctors and Aid Workers Can Save Gaza's Starving Children—If Israel and the US Let Us

Yes, Mr. President, the images are real. If you won't press Israel to let all humanitarian aid in, these children will die.

Dr. John Kahler, Common Dreams*

Last week, while on a visit to the United Kingdom, U.S. President Donald Trump said that he had seen distressing pictures on TV of children starving in Gaza. "Some of these kids are—that's real starvation stuff... I see it, and you can't fake that."

No, you can't, Mr. President. Children—and adults—really are starving in Gaza. I should know.

I am a pediatrician and cofounder of the international medical aid organization MedGlobal, headquartered in the U.S. MedGlobal provides medical care in crisis zones around the world, and we have been operating in Gaza since 2019. Prior to October 2023, we were active in Gaza City with programs that aimed to train healthcare providers as well as build the capacity of hospitals by donating supplies and equipment. After October 7, our staff was displaced to Rafah where they embedded with the World Health Organization (WHO) Emergency Medical Response. We opened a large Primary Health Care Center as well as several Medical Access Points.

In January and March 2024, we partnered with the WHO Health Cluster in Rafah to open the first Nutrition Stabilization Center in Gaza. This was to be the first of four that would serve all of Gaza. With the escalation of violence and tightening of the blockade, we anticipated the need for these sites for an anticipated population of malnourished children. We began to set up these centers at a time when the Integrated Food Scarcity Phase Classification was already at level 3 of 5. Level 3 indicates a "crisis situation" during which households must deplete essential livelihood assets to obtain food.

President Trump needs to understand—children are starving right now, and we don't need any magical thinking or untested new ideas to save them. We simply need the Israeli blockade to end.

Our nutrition center was stocked by the WHO and UNICEF, and had neither fences nor boundaries. Even over a year ago, we anticipated the situation could get much worse—but we never could have imagined the unimaginable, that the world would stand by as all food was cut off to millions of people, as Gaza descended toward mass starvation and the deaths of starving children.

Now that unimaginable nightmare is here. Last week my MedGlobal colleagues at our treatment center saw five children

die in two days of malnutrition and complications. The immediate cause of this crisis is clear. Dozens of NGOs and United Nations agencies, including my organization MedGlobal, agree that the



Two-year-old Yezen Abu Ful, who lives in the Al-Shati Camp, worsens due to severe food shortages caused by the blockade and Israeli attacks, in Gaza City, on July 13, 2025. (Photo: Ahmed Jihad Ibrahim Al-arini/Anadolu via Getty Images)

Israeli blockade is preventing adequate supplies of food aid from entering and being delivered to those most in need.

Even during the sporadic and chaotic "humanitarian pauses," the numbers of trucks permitted to enter Gaza are woefully insufficient to feed the population and save those who are

suffering from severe malnutrition. It remains too dangerous to try and retrieve, prepare, and distribute the food that does manage to get in. There is no scarcity of food. The food supplies are ready, just a few short miles away across the Gaza border—readily available but not accessible.

President Trump needs to understand—children are starving right now, and we don't need any magical thinking or untested new ideas to save them. We simply need the Israeli blockade to end, and for U.N. agencies and organizations like mine to be allowed to do their jobs—to bring in the food and supplies, and to provide them immediately to those who need them.

NGOs and the U.N. have proven effective in efficient delivery of large-scale aid. Even Israeli military officials have admitted after long investigations that Hamas isn't and hasn't been stealing significant amounts of food or other aid.

Any measure short of a legitimate Gaza-wide orderly distribution of food and other essential aid will simply lead to the chaos about which POTUS remarked.

Yes, Mr. President, the images are real. If you won't press Israel to let all humanitarian aid in, these children will die. The next pictures you may see will be those of mass graves.

The good news, if there is any, is this: The solution is simple. Nothing new needs to be created. There are knowledgeable, experienced, and trusted aid organizations already on the ground in Gaza anxiously waiting for the opportunity to prepare and distribute this life saving aid. The Israeli authorities need to let us do our jobs.

President Trump, please help us to save these children's lives. Time is running out. For too many, it already has.

BIO: Dr. John Kahler is a retired pediatrician and the cofounder of MedGlobal.

* Our work is licensed under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0). Feel free to republish and share widely.