

PRESS RELEASE

Gaza: Critical aid supplies to keep children alive blocked as Israel takes over final land crossing

Gaza, 7 May 2024 – The takeover by Israeli forces of the Rafah crossing and the closure of the Kerem Shalom crossing are blocking the last remaining entry points for aid and lifelines for children in Gaza, says Save the Children.

The closures will have catastrophic consequences for children and families, said the aid agency, crippling the already restricted aid response, and putting thousands more children's lives at risk. The denial of humanitarian assistance is a Grave Violation against children, according to the UN Security Council's 1999 Resolution on Children in Armed Conflict, and illegal under international humanitarian law.

Since the war started following the attacks on Israel on 7 October, Rafah has been the primary entry point for aid and fuel entering Gaza, with other land crossings only partially or sporadically functioning. Even when open, it has been almost impossible for humanitarian organizations to deliver aid to families. Save the Children's recent food delivery to families in northern Gaza took six weeks of negotiation and planning and four attempts – demonstrating the impossible conditions aid agencies have been facing. Starvation must never be used as a weapon of war and is prohibited under international humanitarian law.

[No aid](#) has entered Gaza through the Rafah crossing since Sunday 5 May, meaning aid agencies are no longer able to get new supplies and assistance into Gaza. Kerem Shalom has also remained closed for aid distribution since Sunday evening.

Gaza's Ministry of Health said in a press conference on Tuesday that the closure of the Rafah crossing prevented the entry of trucks carrying medicine and medical equipment, and of fuel needed for hospitals. They also said that wounded and sick civilians who were supposed to travel today have been prevented from leaving.

Israeli forces must halt operations in Rafah and open all available land crossings to allow aid to enter, Save the Children said.

Xavier Joubert, Save the Children's Country Director in the occupied Palestinian territory, said:

«It was hard to believe that things could get worse given the restrictions already in place - but here we are. Today marks seven months since the beginning of this brutal war, but also one of the darkest days, as the last airway for the aid response is choked before our eyes. Blocking aid puts children's lives at risk. This assault on Rafah is fatal – the increase in airstrikes seen so far has already claimed dozens of young lives. Beyond the direct casualties, one million children's lives will hang in the balance.

All crossing points into Gaza must be opened immediately to full capacity, and rehabilitated if needed, so that aid groups have safe, unimpeded access to deliver aid to children and families who need it, wherever they are. Without access, the aid response will quickly grind to a halt, wiping out Palestinian children's chances of survival.

There is still time to stop a ground incursion in Rafah. The international community must use all pressure possible to uphold their responsibilities under the Geneva Conventions and prevent the more serious crimes against civilians and against children.»

Save the Children is calling for an immediate, definitive ceasefire to save and protect the lives of children in Gaza, and for the warring parties to adhere to International Humanitarian Law, for Israel to uphold the International Court of Justice ruling and refrain from actions which undermine the provisional measures indicated by the ICJ. The international community remains bound by their obligations under IHL, and the ICJ ruling, to ensure Palestinians are protected.

Save the Children has been providing essential services and support to Palestinian children impacted by the ongoing occupation since 1953. Save the Children is taking steps to support and protect its staff and continue helping children and families across Gaza. Save the Children is constantly monitoring the situation in Rafah to see if and when it will continue its operations.

Bei Interviewanfragen wenden Sie sich bitte an den untenstehenden Kontakt.

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Save the Children Schweiz

Jedes Kind verdient eine Zukunft – ob in der Schweiz oder auf der ganzen Welt. Mit dieser Überzeugung unterstützt der Verein Save the Children Schweiz seit 2006 kompromisslos und unermüdlich die am stärksten benachteiligten Kinder. In der Schweiz verwurzelt, ist Save the Children seit 1919 die weltweit führende Kinderrechtsorganisation. Dank unserer lokalen Verankerung in 120 Ländern kennen wir die Situation vor Ort, passen unsere Projekte entsprechend an und können im Notfall unverzüglich helfen. Wir verändern nachhaltig und positiv das Leben von Kindern, besonders in Krisen, auf der Flucht oder in Slums. In der Schweiz setzen wir uns seit 2015 für geflüchtete Kinder ein und verfügen über grosse Expertise im Bereich Asyl und Migration.