

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Gaza: Acute malnutrition in children under five at Save the Children clinics surges 10-fold in over four months of total siege**

GAZA, 29 JULY 2025 – The number of children under-five with acute malnutrition seen at Save the Children's Gaza clinics surged 10-fold in four months, the aid agency said, as child deaths due to starvation accelerate and the global humanitarian authority on hunger crises warned that famine is unfolding in Gaza. [1]

Of the 3,533 children Save the Children screened for malnutrition during the first half of July, 259 were admitted for treatment (7%) compared to 28 (1%) in March. The number of children admitted for treatment of malnutrition in the first two weeks of July is close to the total for the whole of June, a trend the aid agency's staff working at its two primary healthcare centres described as dangerous and unprecedented. [2]

More than four in 10 pregnant and breastfeeding women - 43% - screened at Save the Children's clinics so far in July were found to be malnourished, almost three times as many as in March when the Government of Israel's imposed a total siege on Gaza. [3]

This data comes as the latest report from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), found that "the worst-case scenario of famine is currently playing out in the Gaza Strip", with more than 70,000 cases of children under five and 17,000 cases of pregnant and breastfeeding women facing acute malnutrition across the Gaza Strip. [1]

So far 147 people, including 88 children, have reportedly died is due to malnutrition and starvation since October 2023, according to the Ministry of Health. [According to the UN](#), at least 25 children died from malnutrition in July alone.

Save the Children staff said children they are supporting in child-friendly spaces are going for as long as two days with no food and fainting from a lack of energy. Mothers at mother and baby areas, designed to support caregivers of young children, arrive exhausted and in dire need of support.

Families are resorting to scavenging food from garbage. A Save the Children staff member spoke of children we assist in our child-friendly spaces outlining their wishes, saying: *"A girl said: 'I pray that a truce happens, and they let in food before we die.'"*

Aid groups - including Save the Children – have [sounded the alarm](#) for an urgent end to the siege and for the restoration of the full flow of food, clean water, medical supplies, and other aid through existing principled humanitarian UN-led channels.

**Ahmad Alhendawi, Save the Children's Regional Director for the Middle East, Eastern Europe and North Africa, said:**

*"Children in Gaza are starving to death before our eyes. We are seeing record rates of malnutrition after nearly five months of the Israeli government's total siege on the entry of assistance. This is starvation of children by design. It is unconscionable that children are collapsing from hunger, wasting away before our eyes and wishing to die while tons of life-saving food and nutritional supplies that could reverse an entirely manmade crisis, wait just across the border or even within Gaza. All available evidence indicates that the Government of Israel is using starvation as a weapon of war.*

*"These children will not die if we are allowed to do our jobs. We can treat malnutrition. But without the supplies and conditions, we are powerless to save children from a condition we are able to prevent. An entire generation of children stand on the precipice. Every day without access means more children will die, and more children face the risk of irreversible harm that fundamentally undermines their futures.*

*"The recent announcement of a so-called "pause" to allow a trickle of aid into Gaza has the potential to help but it is far from what is needed to bring Gaza's children and their families back from the brink of death.*

*"Our clinics are doing all they can to treat the children we see, but the only way we can put an end to this mass starvation is through a definitive ceasefire and re-establishment of the conditions for the humanitarian system to work at full scale and pace as it is ready to do."*

Children are always the most vulnerable to immediate and long-term impacts of food crises and, without enough to eat and the right nutritional balance, they are at high risk of becoming acutely malnourished. Malnutrition can cause stunting, impede mental and physical development, and increase the risk of contracting deadly diseases.

Save the Children has been working in Gaza for decades. We are running two primary healthcare centres in Gaza, providing essential services to children, mothers, and families, including screening and treatment for malnutrition. We are ready to scale-up lifesaving aid alongside our partners. Our teams deliver water, run child-friendly spaces and mother and baby areas where pregnant and breastfeeding women can receive support on nutrition and infant feeding and psychosocial care. We also set up temporary learning centres to help children continue their education

#### **Notes to editors:**

[1] [https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_GazaStrip\\_Alert\\_July2025.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_GazaStrip_Alert_July2025.pdf)

[2] Save the Children screened 2,640 children for malnutrition at our health centres in March, admitting 28 (1%) who were malnourished to our treatment programme. In July, as of the 17th, the aid agency screened 3,533 children and admitted 259 (7%). In June 6,297 were screened with 300 (5%) admitted.

[3] Of 747 pregnant and breastfeeding women screened in June, 323 (43%) were found to be malnourished. In March, it was 152 of 947 women screened (16%).

Screening children for acute malnutrition – which is also known as wasting - involves assessing their nutritional status by taking their weight, height, and measuring their mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) as well as looking for other indicators such as oedema or swelling. While a threat to the lives of young children, severe malnutrition can be treated, including by the use of fortified food.

**Bei Interviewanfragen wenden Sie sich bitte an den untenstehenden Kontakt.**

**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.