

Report: New study exposes UN's skewed portrayal of 'intentional starvation' in Gaza

INSS research reveals significant discrepancies in UN agencies' data, a misrepresentation that has led to severe consequences for Israel. "The fact that there are hungry people in Gaza does not indicate that there is famine in Gaza."

By Ariel Kahana / July 4, 2024

A groundbreaking study has cast doubt on the United Nations' portrayal of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, revealing substantial discrepancies in reported aid figures and challenging the narrative of widespread famine. The research, conducted by the **Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)** and first published in *Israel Hayom*, exposes a pattern of selective data reporting that has potentially misled international opinion and legal proceedings against Israel.

The United Nations and its affiliated agencies operating in Gaza have come under scrutiny for presenting distorted and potentially biased reports on humanitarian aid entering the region since the onset of the conflict. This misrepresentation, according to a new study by the INSS, has played a significant role in fueling accusations of "intentional starvation" against Israel in both international discourse and legal arenas such as The Hague.

Dr. Tammy Caner, the lead researcher, conducted a comparative analysis of aid volume data published by Israel against figures released by UN agencies, including UNRWA, OCHA, and IPC. The investigation uncovered a startling discrepancy: approximately 10,000 aid trucks that entered Gaza during the conflict months were omitted from UN reports. While UN figures cite about 28,000 trucks, the Israeli Defense Forces' District Coordination and Liaison (DCL) reports a significantly higher number of 38,000.

This substantial data gap stems from several factors. UN representatives failed to account for trucks entering through the Erez crossing, air shipments, and deliveries via the US naval pier. Moreover, aid received by international organizations other than UNRWA and trucks delayed within Gaza due to internal issues were excluded from UN reports.

"The data omits considerable aid, including essential supplies like gas and fuel," Caner notes. "In April alone, the UN reported a daily average of 169 aid trucks, while the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories cited 219. May's records show UNRWA missing over 1,000 aid trucks from UN agencies compared to Israeli records."

Turning a blind eye

The study further notes that the UN disregards the fact that Hamas attacks the crossings through which aid is brought in and forcibly takes control of convoys. "The UN presents data on the delay of aid missions in a way that portrays Israel as solely responsible for the difficulties. The reports omit crucial facts about Hamas' control over convoy routes and distribution points, which requires aid organizations in the Gaza Strip to coordinate their activities with it. They also fail to mention incidents of looting of aid trucks, storage facilities, and distribution points by Hamas and criminal gangs. There is no mention of Hamas attacking civilian and humanitarian infrastructure, including aid convoys and routes, Hamas' rocket fire on border crossings that necessitated their closure, and the closure of the Rafah crossing by Egyptian orders."

Additionally, Israel is accused of closing crossings following Hamas attacks, without mentioning that it opened three additional land border crossings to facilitate the entry of aid to the northern and central parts of the Strip.

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Perhaps most alarmingly, the study questions the accuracy of UN agencies' famine forecasts for Gaza. "Predictions suggested over 20,000 starvation deaths by now, yet as of early June, only a few dozen such cases have been documented," Caner reports. This discrepancy raises serious questions about the methodology and reliability of these projections.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. The international community's reliance on these potentially flawed UN reports has led to severe consequences for Israel, including legal actions and accusations of war crimes. "The fact that there are hungry people in Gaza does not indicate that there is famine in Gaza, certainly not that there is intentional starvation of the population. The distorted picture created by the UN has fueled legal proceedings against Israel in international courts, including allegations of genocide," Caner concludes. "It's crucial that judicial bodies examine all available data, including Israel's reports, to form a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the situation in Gaza."

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