

The Impact of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict on Food and Economy in Gaza

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Abstract:

The continuous Israeli-Palestinian conflict has had a destructive impact on Gaza, resulting in a serious food crisis and economic collapse. The military operations and the following blockade resulted in more than 30000 Gazans being killed and over 1.1 million Gazans faced catastrophic hunger, which had a huge impact on the economy. As the fundamental sector of Gaza's economy, the agricultural department was attacked by Israel's military operations and impacted by the destruction of agricultural infrastructures including greenhouses, and irrigation facilities. The current situation led to a striking decrease in local food production and supply and also resulted in a complete social and economic collapse. This paper discusses the consequences of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The paper emphasizes that in order to solve the serious humanitarian crisis requires international aid and diplomatic efforts, ensuring the agricultural department can operate normally and reopening the supply routes at the same time to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Keywords: Israel-Palestinian Conflict; humanitarian crisis; blockade; agriculture department.

1. Introduction

The conflict has continued for a few months, and the hunger in Gaza has become the most serious problem. Zero Hunger aims to achieve food security and agricultural safety in specific regions and ensure that the hunger problem will not emerge. In October 2023, Israel's military operation resulted in one of the largest humanitarian crises because of the conflict between Hamas and the Israeli government. According to statistical data in 2023, over 30000 Gazans were killed by Israel's attack and as a result, more than 70000 Gazans were injured. (Picheta) [1]. Besides, the conflict that happened in Gaza led to a series of Hunger problems. According to the World Food Programme, "Over 1.1 million Gazans are now experiencing catastrophic hunger—the highest level of food insecurity" [2].

Gaza is a special region with a cruel history in the past decades, it is located northwest of the Sinai Peninsula on the Mediterranean. Since the founding of Israel, there have been complicated geopolitics and economic problems in Gaza history since the establishment of Israel's sovereignty. The resources in Gaza are limited and it also has a dense population. Based on the current situation, the factors of the hunger problem Gaza now faces include the blockade of boundaries in Gaza and the air attack from Israel's military on agricultural facilities and other infra-

structures.

This paper will discuss the reason and solution of the hunger problem now happening in Gaza, it is mainly caused by the blockade of boundaries and air attacks from Israel. The domestic GDP in Palestine has experienced a sharp decline, and most of the fundamental infrastructures in Gaza even in Palestine face catastrophic destruction which led to an inability to implement agricultural activities. In order to solve the current situation, providing humanitarian resources from international organizations and other country's governments is very important. In addition, both sides of the war between Israel and Palestine have to reach an agreement on a ceasefire, to prevent further humanitarian crises.

2. Causes of Food Shortage in Gaza

2.1 Blockade of Boundaries

The serious hunger problem currently facing Gaza is because of the blockade of the border in Gaza imposed by Israel. This means that the blockade has resulted in goods or products made by Palestine worth 35-40million USD being unable exported to Israel. The total value of goods was decreased to 1.5 million (The office of the Quartet) [3]. Because of the needs of agriculture and food supply, necessary agricultural equipment and food facing a shortage because of the blockade. For instance, the fundamental

resources or materials used for agricultural production including food seeds, irrigation systems, the materials used to build the greenhouse and the machines used for the maintenance of the agricultural infrastructure were restricted seriously.

Moreover, the main agricultural district is located in the north of Gaza is not possible to complete the agricultural production because of the increasingly strict blockade (UN) [4]. Millions of Palestinians are trapped in poverty which results in a staggering decline in GDP (UN) [4]. As time goes on, if Israel's actions in the Palestinian area especially in Gaza do not stop the blockade from Israel does not stop, the whole Palestinian area will face more and more serious problems, especially poverty and hunger problems happened in Palestine, which means hunger will become the major theme of their lives at the following decades, it will lead to graver humanitarian crisis and it may lead to the more and more Palestinian citizens lose their lives because the famine. On the one side, the agriculture departments in the north of Gaza cannot develop farming because of the blockade, farmers do not have access to the original material for farming, and humanitarian aid from other countries cannot enter Gaza, which means residents in Gaza have limited ways to gain food. This situation has seriously threatened the lives of Gaza residents. The international community and both sides of the war have to ensure that the situation will change.

2.2 Air Attack by Israel

The air attack by Israel is also the main factor in the serious hunger problem in Gaza, especially the military air attack on agricultural facilities and infrastructures in Gaza. Agricultural facilities and local infrastructures are the main attack objectives of Israel's air attack, including but not limited to greenhouse, farmland, water supply facilities and power facilities [5]. As the most important part of maintaining the agriculture department, the irrigation system and water supply system determine whether agriculture departments can operate normally, which means farmers need to try to deal with situations of the lack of water to continue their agricultural production.

The agricultural system controls the lifeblood of Gaza, but this sector is also vulnerable because it is easily attacked by military operations. Once the agricultural system is destroyed, the food supply and the lives of residents will be under threat immediately, causing food consumption in Gaza to rely on food imports. Besides, the fundamental infrastructures in Gaza not only limit about water supply system but also include the electricity system, Agricultural machinery, agricultural equipment and Road transportation system are also important factors of the agriculture department in Gaza. The air strike or a ground offensive

from Israel has already destroyed the basic infrastructures that ensure the operation of the infrastructure sectors. The residents in Gaza will face more and more serious current situations to get food under the limited food provision.

3. Consequences of Food Shortage and Supplies

In Gaza, the serious hunger problem has a direct relationship with the recession of the economy. According to the United Nations "During the period 2006–2022, the GDP per capita of Gaza shrank by 27 per cent, from \$1,994 in 2006 to \$1,257 in 2022, more than 40% of the agriculture sector was destroyed is the main consequences of heightened conflict" [6]. "Around 201,000 jobs were lost in Gaza, accounting for around two-thirds of total employment" [7]. The society of Gaza now faces a shortage of the labour force because of the humanitarian crisis including famine, starvation, and malnutrition, which led to there being no people working in the society, and the society can not run normally. The lack of productivity has already become the largest challenge in society. Malnutrition led by famine means a sharp decline in production efficiency and production quality when the labour engages in the labour market. In addition, another important problem that arises from a serious problem is staggering unemployment. Based on social conditions, most of the families are unable to afford the costs of living. Even with food, the quantity of the food is not enough to support the consumption of Gaza's families, which means they can't get enough nutrients, which will lead to a lot of health problems. It means society's food security is in a stable situation.

The lack of agricultural sectors and infrastructures results in Gaza can only maintain social order through imports. According to the Cradle, Israel's air attack and ground attack on Gaza have destroyed the main infrastructures [8]. According to the World Bank, "The cost of damage to critical infrastructure in Gaza is estimated at around \$18.5 billion, which is equivalent to 97% of the combined GDP of the West Bank and Gaza in 2022" [9]. Some researchers do the investigation in Gaza, where almost 7000 greenhouses used for agriculture were destroyed (Washington Post) [10]. According to the Washington Post, over 50% of water supply facilities in Gaza were destroyed [10]. In fact, agricultural production in Gaza is severely limited, and the lack of greenhouses could put the region into a serious food crisis. The inability of agricultural production means Gazans rely on imported food and humanitarian aid to survive.

4. Measures for the Relief of Famine

Based on the current situation, the ceasefire negotiations of both sides of the war are able to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. With the intervention of Egyptian representatives, the representatives of Palestine and Israel are working on a ceasefire negotiation (BBC) [11]. Whether or not a ceasefire forms an agreement is an important condition for Gazans to escape from fame, once the ceasefire is formed, the infrastructure and food imports can be protected. To prevent further deterioration in Gaza, both sides of the Government were required to stay calm and try to stop hostilities, allow international organizations intervene in the negotiation and allow international organizations access to humanitarian aid unlimitedly.

In order to remission the food pressure in Gaza, humanitarian aid supplies around the world need to be allowed to enter Gaza. At present, the most effective way to transport humanitarian aid supplies is by land, especially on the border between Gaza and Israel. Almost 400 to 500 trucks could enter Gaza per day when the situation in Gaza was still relatively stable (British Red Cross) [12]. This means opening the borders between Israel and Gaza and allowing the materials to enter Gaza are more and more important right now. Besides, the international community needs to renewed attention to the current situation in Gaza and keep track of the situation to prevent further crises from happening. In addition, each individuals have to realize the importance of the situation in Gaza, and also condemn the military operation or political operation that may result in the humanitarian crisis. The crisis Gaza faces right now is indeed a global crisis if it is not resolved appropriately, the risk of geopolitics and international impacts will spread across the region in the following decades, and this will be a challenge to the world order. It requires governments and non-government organisations to stay calm and restraint, maintain the order of the world by working together, and avoid further humanitarian crises.

5. Conclusion

Given the current situation, the serious food shortage in Gaza is essentially the severe consequence of the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine. In essence, the process of this war involves Israel's blockade of the border of Gaza and other Palestinian areas based on strategic considerations and the air attack targeting the agricultural departments. Each of the acts from Israel has essentially caused the economy to collapse and the death of local residents. The local residents in Gaza have very limited ways to acquire food and the necessities of life to survive, exacerbating their suffering.

Furthermore, Israel and Palestine, situated at the geo-

graphic centre of the Middle East, both play an extreme role in impacting the geopolitics of surrounding regions and even impact the whole of Europe and Asia. Peace in this region has had a decisive impact on the stability, and it will also impact the other countries concerned with the potential war and political risks. Based on the current situation, different countries need to take action and take decisive steps to provide assistance facilitate peace talks. It is also crucial for both parties to find a comprehensive solution to address the series of humanitarian crises that the residents in Gaza have faced at the time, especially for the food shortage problem.

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