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Israeli Army Says 'Lessons Learned' From Army Fire Incidents on Gaza Aid-seekers After Haaretz Exposé

The IDF said it has passed its takeaways from the investigation to its troops amid global outrage and calls for an independent probe, while a senior U.S. senator stated that American taxpayers 'shouldn't be paying for this outrage'

Israeli tanks taking position next to a Gaza Humanitarian Foundation aid distribution center in the southern Gaza Strip in May.Credit: Abdel Kareem Hana/AP

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The Israeli military says "lessons learned" from investigations into incidents at Gaza aid sites have been passed down to troops, following a Haaretz exposé featuring soldier testimonies saying they were ordered to fire at unarmed civilians.

The IDF has denied allegations that it ordered troops to fire on aid-seekers, amid widespread reactions in Israel and abroad and growing calls for an independent investigation into the deaths.

Read the Haaretz exposé featuring IDF soldiers' accounts of live fire at humanitarian aid sites.

- **Israel turned Gaza's aid centers into death traps. The killing has to stop**
- **Testimonies: IDF responsible for lethal shootings near U.S.-led aid site in Gaza**
- **Is Netanyahu capable of ending Israel's pointless war in Gaza?**

The IDF Spokesperson's Unit stated on Friday, "Contrary to the claims in the report, there is no order within the IDF to deliberately shoot at civilians in general, and those

who have come to the aid distribution sites specifically," after the Haaretz exposé was published on Friday.

"Following events in which there were reports of harm to [Gazans] who arrived at distribution sites, in-depth investigations were carried out, and guidelines were given to forces in the field following the lessons learned," it added.

In a statement released following publication of the exposé, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz rejected the claims, which they called "blood libels."

On Saturday, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation urged Israel to investigate the reports, calling the allegations "too grave to ignore."

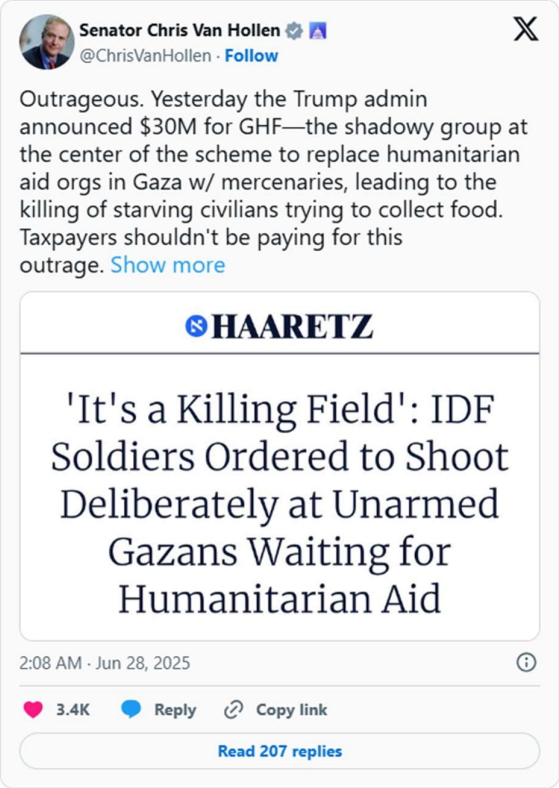
They denied that there have been instances of the IDF firing on unarmed Palestinians in its facilities or their vicinity, and accused the international media of "inaccurate reporting." At the same time, GHF Interim Director John Acree said that Israel must publish the transparent results of their investigation into the allegations, and that "We have requested the IDF to do more to ensure our passages are kept safe for aid-seekers."

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.Credit: Brenden McDermid/Reuters

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said on Friday that "Israeli military operations have created a humanitarian crisis of horrific proportions, more dire today than at any point in this long and brutal crisis." Any operation that brings civilians into militarized areas is "inherently unsafe," he added. "It's killing people. It's time for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza, the immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages, and full, safe and sustained humanitarian access."

Chris Van Hollen, a Democratic Senator from Maryland who is the ranking member of the Senate panel on U.S. aid policy, posted the exposé to X, writing, "Outrageous. Yesterday the Trump admin announced $30M for GHF – the shadowy group at the center of the scheme to replace humanitarian aid orgs in Gaza w/ mercenaries, leading to the

killing of starving civilians trying to collect food. Taxpayers shouldn't be paying for this outrage."



Israeli lawmaker Ofer Cassif of the Arab-Jewish Hadash party said that the report bucked the trend of "the spiral of silence in the Israeli media," adding, "The horrors are beginning to come to light, and with them the struggle against them will only grow. Denial and suppression will not prevail."

Knesset Member Gilad Kariv of the Democrats party responded to the expose, stating it is clear that "people are being killed even while following IDF orders." He added that the Gaza war is "undermining Israel's values and damaging its image as a country," and concluded that "every Israeli with a conscience must call for an end to this war."

According to the Haaretz exposé, commanders ordered troops to shoot at crowds that had gathered at Gaza Humanitarian Foundation aid centers to drive them away or disperse them, even though it was clear they posed no threat.

Thousands – and at times tens of thousands – of Gazans arrive daily to collect food from these sites. According to the Hamas-run Health Ministry in Gaza, 549 people have been killed near aid centers and in areas where residents were waiting for UN food trucks since May 27. Over 4,000 have been wounded, but the exact number of those killed or wounded by IDF fire remains unclear.

Even before the aid distribution began, experts in humanitarian relief, conflict zones, and geography warned Israel about the GHF food distribution plan. Israeli researcher Prof. Yaakov Garb of Ben-Gurion University analyzed the layout of the aid compounds in

a June 1 report and concluded they posed a risk of "recurrent episodes of chaos and violence." He noted that "The current location and operating principle of the aid compounds are a built-in recipe for friction and ongoing failure."

Palestinians gather at an aid distribution point set up by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), near the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, earlier this week.Credit: AFP/EYAD BABA

Three of the GHF's four aid distribution compounds, Garb said, were built south of the so-called Morag corridor, separating Khan Yunis and Rafah. "It's a desert of rubble in a no-go zone near IDF positions. When I saw the internal layout of the distribution sites and compared it to how aid facilities are designed around the world, it was a complete inversion of the recommended model. You need shade, water, toilets and communication with the crowd. None of that exists there."

When distribution began, Garb noticed piles of garbage in satellite images of the sites. "That's another sign of failure – people aren't taking the boxes home. They open them on the spot, take what they need, and toss the cardboard. I saw the chaos from 400 kilometers above."

According to him, recent changes to the aid compounds – such as the removal of distribution tables and parts of the fencing – will only intensify the chaos. "It reminds me most of how you feed dangerous animals. You toss the food in a pile, retreat, and let them in from afar. I went to a friend of mine with a PhD in wildlife studies, and he told me: 'I'm ashamed of this country. I feel like throwing up. If I had to design this for animals, I'd still have done a better job.'"

Reuters contributed to this report.