

Food as a weapon of war on Gaza

Israel's assassination of seven aid workers in Gaza on 1st April was a tragedy for those killed and their families. But it was no accident.

The vehicles were all clearly marked on top with the logos of "World Central Kitchen". As the team escaped from one car to another, three successive missile strikes from a Hermes 450 drone (**Elbit Systems**) killed them all.

The aid agency had coordinated their journey with the military. The drone operators could have called off the strikes at any point, even after the missiles were launched. They continued the triple attack, claiming that a member of Hamas was in the convoy. In reality, the military operates on the basis that:

- anyone they choose to regard as a Hamas militant is a legitimate target for assassination, no matter what they are doing at the time.
- no matter who else is killed.
- even if they are aid workers.

There is much more to this story, before and after the event.

Famine and UNRWA

The IPC, a global coalition which monitors food insecurity, estimates that northern Gaza and Gaza City can expect famine by May, with 210,000 people facing catastrophe. The southern areas of Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah already face food emergency. These areas face the risk of famine if, for example, a ground invasion of Rafah goes ahead.



World Central Kitchen vehicle after missile attack

The only agency able to deliver enough food to avert famine is UNRWA. Their lorries are lined up across the border in Egypt, but Israel has ended all cooperation with them. Instead, Israel has welcomed inexperienced aid agencies and a US plan to deliver food by sea.

For years, Israel has planned to get rid of UNRWA which was established in 1950 specifically to support Palestinian refugees. Now, with famine looming, the US Congress has cut funding to UNRWA until next year.

Unexpected consequences

The prospect of famine and the deaths of 33,000 Gazans including 13,000 children and another 8,000 missing did not interrupt the flow of US and UK weapons to Israel.

But the assassination of seven aid workers has provoked a diplomatic storm, with 3 Supreme Court judges, 600 lawyers and some MPs calling to end UK weapons exports. **Elbit** has had 95 UK licences for military exports to Israel since 2008. Then there's **BAE** (supplies 15% of each F-35, active at the University of Liverpool, has £8.8m from the Merseyside Pension Fund MPF); **Raytheon** (bunker buster bombs, Sidewinder missiles, F-35 components, active at the University, has £628k from the MPF) and loads more.

Selecting Targets by AI

Israeli targets are now chosen by Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Israeli +972 magazine has revealed. The statistical system is only 90% accurate in its own terms, but it has identified 37,000 people who may be killed at any time, even at home with their families.