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WFP Deputy Chief Describes Unprecedented Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza



Carl Skau, Deputy Executive Director of World Food Programme (WFP) briefs media at the UN. Credit: Naomi Breuer/IPS

UNITED NATIONS, Jul 13 2025 (IPS) - Carl Skau, Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), described the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza following his recent visit, speaking at a press briefing at the UN Headquarters on July 11.

“The situation is worse than I’ve ever seen it before,” he said. Skau has visited Gaza four times since the war with Israel began.

Skau said the situation entails the desperate humanitarian needs, particularly the spreading starvation, and the fact that the WFP’s ability to respond to the crisis has “never been more constrained.”

An Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) [report](#) published in May found that half a million people were starving in the Gaza Strip. The report projected that Gaza would classify as Emergency from May 11 through the end of September 2025. According to Skau, the situation has deteriorated since the report was published.

Recent UNICEF [data](#) highlights that malnutrition is widespread, with 5,119 children between 6 months and 5 years of age admitted for treatment for acute malnutrition in the month of May, a 50 percent increase from April. Basic commodity prices have soared. On Skau’s visit, a kilo of wheat flour was priced at USD 25. Oftentimes, when people get food to eat, it is just hot soup with a few lentils or pasta.

During his visit, Skau also met with families who have been displaced multiple times in the past 10 days, some as many as 30 times since the war began. During each move, they are able to bring less with them in order to survive.

“The fact that people are now dying every day trying to get food, I think, is the starkest demonstration of how desperate the situation is,” Skau said.

He reported that conditions for the WFP team are far from ideal. They are only able to bring in a fraction of what is needed in the region, and their teams often get stuck waiting for 15-20 hours for clearances or at checkpoints. He said it is “unacceptable” for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to interfere with their deliveries. Some Israeli officials he met with on his visit agreed that the IDF must allow the UN to carry out its work in the region.

On July 11, the WFP was able to conduct a delivery through the north of the Gaza Strip for the first time in several days, which Skau said is the more orderly route to deliver food through.

But WFP vehicles do not have enough fuel or spare parts. Most of the windows of armed vehicles have been damaged, and they are only able to communicate with each other within a 20 meter range.

The staff is under immense pressure, and the WFP cannot provide the amount and variety of food an operation like this would usually require.

“Our national staff who are living in the midst of this crisis are the true heroes here, in terms of getting up every day and doing their work,” Skau said.

During the 42 days of the last ceasefire, the WFP was able to open 25 bakeries and hundreds of soup kitchens, bring in over 8,000 trucks, deliver food packages to over 1.5 million people, and stock up warehouses, which allowed them to continue operating for half of the duration of the blockade.

However, for the humanitarian situation to vastly improve, Skau said a ceasefire is “urgent.” All entry routes into Gaza need to be opened, and trucks need to be allowed to enter every day in order for the UN to deliver at the same level as before. Half of the deliveries should go to the north, he said, to stabilize the situation and bring prices down.

Currently, none of the WFP bakeries are running since owners are uncomfortable operating under the current level of desperation. The WFP is unable to provide fresh produce, which must come from the private sector. Skau did not see any markets open during this visit.

The beach in northern Gaza was covered in tents. He spoke to the women at the encampment, who are experiencing, worse than ever before, a “disheartening” experience.

“They’re telling their kids not to play [to conserve energy], and they speak about the frustration and the anger their husbands and their sons

have,” he said. “They were talking about going and standing in queues to these soup kitchens, coming back, sometimes, with nothing.”

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