Over 1,000 Palestinians Died in Gaza Due to Israeli Blockade

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Over 1,000 Palestinians have died in the Gaza strip as a result of **Israel**'s military **blockade**, which has been ongoing for more than a decade, the strip's collective of charitable organizations has warned.

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"Out of the 1,000 or so victims of the blockade, 450 died as a result of the collapse of the health situation in Gaza, such as the lack of medical supplies and the crisis of medical referrals for outside treatment," Ahmad Kurd, the coordinator of the collective, told Al-Jazeera Sunday.

Just in the past few days five premature babies died due to lack of medical treatments available in the region, Kurd said. Meanwhile nearly 100 people died while trying to use alternate electricity. The number of workers who were killed in the fields of agriculture, fishing, and commercial tunnels has reached 350, according to the collective.

Ever since the 2007 Israel-imposed blockade on Gaza, the territory has been in crisis and has been facing food, water, and power shortages. "Gaza is a disaster area in all areas - health, environmental, social, and energy," he warned, adding that power cuts last between 18-20 hours a day.

The **Palestinian government** "must provide the needs of the Gaza Strip regarding medical supplies, social assistance, pay the salaries of government employees, and exert pressure to open the border crossings," Kurd said. "The use of candles, firewood or generators has resulted in house fires that claimed the lives of children and adults alike."

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According to the Israeli Information for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Gaza's economy is collapsing due to the blockade. Between May and August 2017, Gaza's unemployment rate stood at 44 percent, whereas during pre-blockade, in 2000, the region's unemployment rate was 18.9 percent.

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According to Haaretz, a Palestinian fisherman was killed Sunday by the **Israeli Defense Forces**, or **IDF,** after he sailed past the authorized fishing zone off the northern Gaza Strip. The IDF spokesman said the fishermen didn't respond to their call, after which they opened fire. The boat was carrying three people and the other two fishermen were detained by the IDF for interrogation.

"We are sure that the wounded are fishermen who went out to sea to make a living – and nothing else," the head of the **Gaza Fisherman's Union** told Haaretz. "The [Israeli] army is always inventing stories about crossing [out of] the fishing zone."

The union has identified the three men as Mahmoud Adel Abu Riala, 18, Ismail Salah Abu Riala, 18, and Ahed Hassan Abu Ali, 26.

In January, the Palestinian ministry of health reported that a hospital in northern Gaza, **Beit Hanoun hospital** which serves nearly 60,000 people, had to shut down owing to power shortages.