

Gaza needs immediate relief with restoration of local food production

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The ceasefire is the first step in delivering emergency relief and rebuilding local food production in the Gaza Strip, where more than 2 million people urgently need assistance due to the collapse of agricultural output, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

"The ceasefire provides a critical opportunity to address the catastrophic food crisis in Gaza by enabling emergency aid delivery and initiating early recovery efforts. But this is just the beginning of a long recovery journey from the devastation. We will need sustained peace and access to meet the immense needs and ensure no one in Gaza is left behind," said FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol.

Bechdol said FAO is committed to ensuring long-term food security. In the meantime, immediate recovery efforts will prioritise rebuilding agrifood infrastructure, such as greenhouses, wells and solar systems, and scaling up the delivery of critical agricultural inputs to restore local food production.

"These complementary actions to strengthen resilience represent a bridge between short-term activities and longer-term development interventions to help communities rebuild and recover from crises, restore hope, and uphold the Right to Food," Bechdol said.

The 15-month conflict has led to severe food insecurity for the entire population of the Gaza Strip, with communities on the brink of starvation.

The latest geospatial assessment carried out by FAO and the United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) between October and December 2024 reveals that the extent of the damage to Gaza's agricultural land has reached unprecedented levels.

According to the assessment, 75 per cent of fields once used to grow crops and olive tree orchards have been damaged or destroyed.Â Over two-thirds of agricultural wells (1,531 in total) are no longer functional, crippling irrigation. Livestock losses are at 96 per cent, milk production has nearly halted, and only 1 per cent of poultry remains alive. The fishing sector is also on the brink of collapse, further worsening food insecurity.