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# Aid to Gaza suspended after Israel murders World Central Kitchen workers

written by Tamara Nassar  
April 3, 2024



Palestinians inspect the heavily damaged vehicles after the Israeli attacks target officials working at the U.S.-based organization World Central Kitchen in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza, on 2 April.

The Israeli airforce struck a convoy of aid workers overnight on Tuesday in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza, killing seven members of the U.S.-based World Central Kitchen charity.

The “team was traveling in a deconflicted zone in two armored cars branded with the WCK logo and a soft skin vehicle,” WCK [said](#).

Local media circulated footage depicting the aftermath of the strike on the vehicle. The footage reveals a hole from the missile impact piercing through a large banner

affixed to the roof, prominently displaying the organization's name and logo for identification.

*Here's the vehicle of the World Central Kitchen's four international team members who were killed by an Israeli airstrike targeting them last night in central Gaza.*  
[pic.twitter.com/2RwutNdxdY](https://pic.twitter.com/2RwutNdxdY)

— Quds News Network (@QudsNen) [April 2, 2024](https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/176811103030000000)

The aid workers killed in the attack were from Australia, Poland, Britain, and Palestine, and one was a dual citizen of the U.S. and Canada.

*Saif Issam Abu Taha, the Palestinian driver of the World Central Kitchen delegation, along with four aid workers associated with the organization, was killed in a targeted airstrike that struck their vehicle in Deir al-Balah hours ago.*  
[pic.twitter.com/en4qqe3mut](https://pic.twitter.com/en4qqe3mut)

— Quds News Network (@QudsNen) [April 2, 2024](https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/176811103030000000)

Graphic images depicting the corpses of aid workers, clad in bulletproof vests bearing the logo of World Central Kitchen, circulated on social media.

“Some of them were [just] body parts, another had their face amputated, some lost upper or lower body parts - deformations that show they were targeted by a rocket that hit their cars,” Marwan al-Hams, director of al-Najjar Hospital, said.

“They are currently being kept at Najjar Hospital until their embassies or consular representatives are present,” al-Hams added.

*All 3 UK citizens killed in Israeli attack on [@WCKitchen](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2024/04/03/aid-to-gaza-suspended-after-israel-murders-world-central-kitchen-workers/) are former military*

*special forces veterans who work for shadowy UK security/intel firm [@SolaceGlobal](#). Were they there on "security mission" or as humanitarian "volunteers"? [pic.twitter.com/7DeZIu2mPU](https://pic.twitter.com/7DeZIu2mPU)*

— Ali Abunimah (@AliAbunimah) [April 2, 2024](#)

WCK announced the immediate suspension of all its operations in the region. Ships that had already set sail from Cyprus as part of WCK's operations were reportedly turning back.

Anera, a U.S. charity providing humanitarian aid to Palestinians, also [announced](#) a pause in its operations in Gaza. It was the second-largest humanitarian aid group in the Gaza Strip after the UN Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

"The unprecedented scale of the current conflict and the disregard for international law necessitate this historic pause in our operations," the group said.

The Gaza logistics and support coordinator for the group, Mousa Shawwa, was also [killed](#) in an Israeli strike on Deir al-Balah last month.

### **"Everyone does as he pleases"**

"This happens in wartime," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said of the killings.

"We are thoroughly looking into it, are in contact with the governments [of the foreigners among the dead], and will do everything to ensure it does not happen again," he added, [according](#) to *The Jerusalem Post*.

He [said](#) that the killings were "unintended."

Israel's military chief of staff, Herzl Halevi, said that "the strike was not carried out

with the intention of harming WCK aid workers.”

He added: “It was a mistake that followed a misidentification – at night during a war in very complex conditions. It shouldn’t have happened.”

Unnamed Israeli army sources [told Haaretz](#) that the killing “stemmed from poor discipline among field commanders, not a lack of coordination between the army and aid organizations.”

An Israeli intelligence source told the newspaper that the army’s southern command “know exactly what the cause of the attack was – in Gaza, everyone does as he pleases.”

John Kirby, U.S. State Department spokesperson, said “there’s no evidence” that the Israeli army killing of the WCK staff was deliberate.

*NSC Spokesperson John Kirby: There is no evidence that Israel deliberately struck and killed WCK aid workers in Gaza.*

*Kirby adds that to date, the US has found no instances where Israel has violated international humanitarian law in their war with Hamas.*  
[pic.twitter.com/yZThp90qln](https://pic.twitter.com/yZThp90qln)

— Moshe Schwartz (@YWNReporter) [April 2, 2024](#)

Kirby asserted that the U.S. State Department has “not found any incidents where the Israelis have violated international humanitarian law.”

### **“Targeted” attack?**

But the CEO of World Central Kitchen [described](#) it as a “targeted attack” by the

Israeli army.

The charity works and coordinates very closely with the Israeli army, as the latter itself has confirmed.

*IDF spokesperson, RAdm. Daniel Hagari, spoke with [@WCKitchen](#) founder, [@chefjoseandres](#), and expressed the IDF's deepest condolences to the entire World Central Kitchen family.*

*The work of WCK is critical. [pic.twitter.com/nRUYZVxif3](https://pic.twitter.com/nRUYZVxif3)*

*— Israel Defense Forces (@IDF) [April 2, 2024](#)*

“WCK are thought to have the closest cooperation with the Israeli army and seemed to enjoy preferential treatment for being from its perspective ‘neutral’ (ie no advocacy work),” Tania Hary, the executive director of Israeli rights group Gisha, [said](#).

The nature of the attack raises suspicions that it may have been deliberate.

“An Israeli drone fired three missiles one after the other,” unnamed “defense sources” privy to the details of the attack [told](#) the Tel Aviv newspaper *Haaretz*.

The source stated that the Israeli army conducted the attack based on “suspicion that a terrorist was traveling with the convoy,” the newspaper reported.

The Israeli army’s operation room, tasked with coordinating and securing the aid convoy’s route, supposedly “identified an armed man on the truck and suspected that he was a terrorist,” *Haaretz* reported, citing unnamed sources familiar with the details of the attack.

"Until the actions that preceded the strike, carried out by [an Elbit] Hermes 450 drone, were completed, the truck reached the warehouse with the World Central Kitchen's three cars," including the seven aid workers, *Haaretz* reported.

Minutes later, three trucks belonging to the air group left the warehouse "without the truck, on which the ostensibly armed man was located," *Haaretz* reported.

The newspaper added that the "armed man did not leave the warehouse," citing unnamed "defense sources."

Despite neither the man nor the truck he was in having left the warehouse or accompanied the convoy after its departure - which, either way, does not justify the killing of humanitarian aid workers - it remains unclear why the Israeli air force proceeded with the attack and in the manner it did.

The aid vehicles carrying the seven workers continued to move along the route approved by the Israeli army, as reported by *Haaretz* and continued to coordinate with it.

"When the convoy was driving along the approved route, the war room of the unit responsible for security of the route ordered the drone operators to attack one of the cars with a missile," *Haaretz* reported.

Some of the aid workers managed to get out of the vehicle after the missile hit it and moved to one of the other two cars.

"They continued to drive and even notified the people responsible that they were attacked, but, seconds later, another missile hit their car," *Haaretz* reported.

"The third car in the convoy approached, and the passengers began to transfer to it the wounded who had survived the second strike - in order to get them out of danger. But then a third missile struck them."

Researchers identified the locations from where the three missiles were fired:

*It is misleading to describe the [@WCKitchen](#) killing as an airstrike (singular). In actual fact 3 vehicles were targeted, with the first & last being over 2.4km apart. The IDF decided to make 3 targeted strikes, not one. Geolocation from [@m\\_osint](#) and [@ChrisOsieck](#) #Gaza [pic.twitter.com/epvtqNR4uU](https://pic.twitter.com/epvtqNR4uU)*

— Marc Owen Jones (@marcowenjones) [April 2, 2024](#)

An unnamed Israeli army source cited by *Haaretz* attempts to distance top decision-makers from the attack, implying that the decision to launch it was made in the field.

“It’s frustrating,” the source told *Haaretz*.

“We’re trying our hardest to accurately hit terrorists, and utilizing every thread of intelligence, and in the end the units in the field decide to launch attacks without any preparation, in cases that have nothing to do with protecting our forces.”

If anything, this only underscores the brazenness of Israel’s trigger-happy soldiers and air force, assured of a lack of consequences awaiting them over their actions.

*Just imagine those humanitarian workers who got murdered last night were Palestinians. Even if they were working in the same organization, doing exactly the same work, no one would bat an eye, no one would care. Such a disgustingly racist world.*

— B.M. (@ireallyhateyou) [April 2, 2024](#)

This was reportedly not the first time that staff from the World Central Kitchen had been on the receiving end of Israeli fire.

Just days ago, an Israeli sniper [fired at a vehicle](#) en route to a food warehouse owned by the organization in the southern area of Khan Younis.

The gunfire struck the vehicle's windshield, but the aid volunteer was not injured.

The World Central Kitchen immediately filed a complaint with the Israeli army, *Haaretz* reported, urging them to cease firing at its operatives during food delivery missions.

## **Hypocrisy**

"I am heartbroken and grieving for their families and friends and our whole WCK family," [said](#) José Andrés, the celebrity chef who heads the organization.

"The Israeli government needs to stop this indiscriminate killing. It needs to stop restricting humanitarian aid, stop killing civilians and aid workers, and stop using food as a weapon."

Andrés's statements were markedly different from his previous open support for Israel's attacks on Gaza, which came several days after Israel had launched its assault on the Strip and [openly committed to using food as a weapon](#) to punish the entire population of Gaza.

"You as a minister have to first recognize that the Hamas attack against civilians is a terrorist act," Andrés [wrote](#) on 16 October in response to Spanish minister Ione Belarra.

Belarra was denouncing Israel's genocide in Gaza and slamming Israel for "carrying out war crimes in the Gaza Strip, massive bombings, water and electricity cuts," as well as not "letting in humanitarian aid."

That did not phase Andrés then, who demanded that Belarra recognize that Israel is

“defending its citizens, then you can ask for restraint and respect for the lives of civilians in Gaza.”

The celebrity chef continued his attack on Belarra.

“Are you pro-Russia and pro-Hamas? You do not represent me or Spain. She does not deserve to be a minister.”

## **Built from the rubble**

Israel’s genocide in the Gaza Strip over the last six months has been marred by attempts to whitewash the manmade catastrophe with humanitarian gestures.

The latest face of this effort has been the World Central Kitchen, which [describes itself](#) as “first to the frontlines, providing meals in response to humanitarian, climate and community crises.”

The organization [sent its first aid shipment to Gaza](#) in mid-March.

A video with a hopeful soundtrack, posted by the group, shows smiling workers constructing a temporary pier on the shores of Gaza against the backdrop of a coastal enclave that the Israeli army has turned into vast killing fields and heaps of rubble.

*WCK’s first maritime shipment of aid reached northern Gaza. This humanitarian corridor can be used to get millions of meals to Palestinians facing starvation. [@openarms\\_fund](#) was the first boat to reach Gaza in almost 2 decades, we are working to send many more. [#ChefsForThePeople](#) [pic.twitter.com/y8AngI4SpQ](https://pic.twitter.com/y8AngI4SpQ)*

— World Central Kitchen (@WCKitchen) [March 20, 2024](#)

The footage shows workers hastily building a temporary pier to facilitate the arrival of the aid ship carrying 200 tons of food, medicine, supplies, and other essentials.

“This was the first boat to reach Gaza in almost two decades,” WCK said.

This is untrue.

Shortly after Israel imposed its siege on Gaza by land, air, and sea in 2007, international activists managed to break the maritime blockade by delivering aid via boat, defying the Israeli occupation.

Despite a few successful attempts, the Israeli navy repeatedly attacked the boats; and in the case of the [\*Mavi Marmara\*](#) in 2010, [killed and kidnapped](#) activists on it.

The only reason the World Central Kitchen has been able to deliver aid into Gaza by boat is because the genocidaires of Gaza have given them the green light and safe passage to do so.

“Every step was carried out with permission from the Israeli military,” *The New York Times* [reported](#), speaking to the charity’s director of emergency response.

Israel has blocked the import and export of supplies, goods and persons in and out of the Gaza Strip for 17 years – an act of collective punishment for the 2.3 million Palestinians in the tiny territory.

*On the day Israel bombed a foreign embassy in a third country, it also killed @WCKitchen humanitarian workers. Israel is crossing every possible red line, still with full impunity.*

*Sanctions now.*

*Indictments now.*

— *Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur oPt (@FranceskAlbs) April 2, 2024*

## Eliminating and replacing UNRWA

Israel's aim has been to eliminate and replace UNRWA in its role as the established provider and coordinator of aid distribution within the Gaza Strip.

In January, Israel baselessly accused a handful of UNRWA employees of participating in the 7 October military operation. These allegations were based on confessions that were [likely obtained under torture](#) of Palestinian detainees.

*So after 7 [@WCKitchen](#) workers were murdered by "Israel," Genocide [@JoeBiden](#) personally phoned [@chefjoseandres](#) to express condolences. "Israel" has murdered 150 [@UNRWA](#) workers and not only has Biden never called the head of UNRWA (as far as we know), he cut off US funding. [pic.twitter.com/FgmCOsRIXP](https://pic.twitter.com/FgmCOsRIXP)*

— Ali Abunimah (@AliAbunimah) [April 2, 2024](#)

This prompted donor countries, including the U.S., the agency's largest funder, to [suspend](#) \$440 million in aid.

In recent weeks, several countries – including Australia, Sweden and Canada – [announced](#) that they have resumed financial contributions to UNRWA.

## No self-determination

World Central Kitchen was part of the plan for a “maritime corridor” to the coastal enclave announced by U.S. President Joe Biden last month.

Countries that have consistently supported Israel's genocide of Palestinians in Gaza or have refused to call for a ceasefire have been [on board](#) for this “maritime corridor” plan.

Israel, the engineer of the Gaza famine, was the first to endorse the idea of establishing a maritime corridor to address a crisis it initiated and is now worsening.

On Tuesday, Israeli military spokesperson Daniel Hagari even [called](#) the work of World Central Kitchen “critical.”

But there remains no technical reason why aid trucks should not be able to enter Gaza by land. It is the most efficient, cost-effective and safe method of delivering aid to Gaza, and aid trucks remain stuck at the Rafah crossing with Egypt, unable to enter Gaza because Israel won’t allow them in.

Washington refuses to use any of its enormous leverage to compel Tel Aviv to do so, or to end the siege on Gaza altogether.

The construction of a temporary pier and the dropping of aid packages from the sky are political gestures aimed at maneuvering and establishing political realities on the ground.

To this end, humanitarian aid airdrops, [facilitated by the Jordanian air force](#), have evolved into publicity stunts for governments that have aided, abetted and defended Israel’s slaughter and campaign of destruction in Gaza.

These governments seek to whitewash their active roles in the genocide, maintaining support - and impeding efforts to stop - Israel’s killing machine.

The goal is to reshape the narrative of what is undeniably a war against civilians by shifting the focus from its political roots to “solving” a vague humanitarian crisis that Israel started and is worsening through its war on UNRWA.

This depoliticization serves to obscure the true nature of the genocide and the [impending famine](#), reducing it to a series of tragic and unexplained instances of starvation and death within a “war-torn” landscape.

All the while, Western countries are helping Israel systematically destroy UNRWA, which is the entity most capable of effectively organizing humanitarian aid on a mass scale in Gaza.

Not only does this absolve Israel of its obligation to halt the slaughter and deliberate starvation of Palestinians, but it also renders Palestinians dependent on international aid and emergency relief - which is obstructed by the same army that supposedly coordinates with, and now kills, those responsible for its delivery.

Creating an environment in which Palestinians depend on aid prevents them from exercising the self-determination necessary to govern themselves.

Stripping away that self-determination has been a central, discernible tenet of Israel's genocide in Gaza.

Source: [Electronic Intifada](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2024/04/03/aid-to-gaza-suspended-after-israel-murders-world-central-kitchen-workers/)



<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2024/04/03/aid-to-gaza-suspended-after-israel-murders-world-central-kitchen-workers/>