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## UN WARNS MYANMAR IS NEARING ‘FULL-BLOWN DISASTER’: RAKHINE BECOMES INCREASINGLY DESPERATE FOR FOOD



With starvation fears intensifying in Myanmar’s Rakhine state, the UN’s World Food Program is warning of a looming “full-blown disaster.” Years of conflict, especially since the 2021 military coup, have cratered the economy and left humanitarian agencies scrambling to keep up with surging needs.

But conditions in Rakhine—a region now largely cut off by military blockades and fighting—are particularly grim,

the BBC reports. Aid workers report people are becoming more desperate as food becomes more scarce.

In April, a Rohingya father in a Sittwe displacement camp fatally poisoned himself and his family’s meal, while in June, a Rakhine family reportedly met the same end. Suicide among the displaced, including an elderly couple last week, has also been linked to hunger and financial ruin. Some Rohingya men not

conscripted to fight in the army are volunteering to serve, forgoing pay on the condition that their families are fed, per a Washington Post editorial. Some women go from refugee camp to refugee camp, begging for food or engaging in sex work.

Many people who have fled across the border to Bangladesh have the same struggles in camps there.

Farmers have abandoned their crops, fishing is off-limits, and prices have soared, leaving them to survive on boiled taro roots. Meanwhile, international agencies can’t access most areas due to the fighting and blockades.

After a steep drop in global funding—down 60% from last year—the WFP can now reach just one in five of Myanmar’s most food-insecure people, per the BBC.

■ Source: newser.com

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■ Repatriating Rohingyas to Myanmar would be beneficial for everyone, said National Security Adviser and Chief Adviser’s Special Envoy Khalilur Rahman.



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# US SUSPENDS VISAS FOR GAZA RESIDENTS AFTER RIGHT-WING SOCIAL MEDIA STORM



The United States has announced that it is halting all visitor visas for people from Gaza pending a “a full and thorough” review, a day after social media posts about Palestinian refugees prompted furious reactions from right-wingers.

The Department of State’s move on Saturday came a day after far-right activist and Trump ally Laura Loomer posted on X that Palestinians “who claim to be refugees from Gaza” entered the US via San Francisco and Houston this month.

“How is allowing for Islamic immigrants to come into the US America First policy?” she said on X in a later post, going on to report further

Palestinian arrivals in Missouri and claiming that “several US Senators and members of Congress” had texted her to express their fury.

Republican lawmakers speaking publicly included Chip Roy of Texas, who said he would inquire about the matter, and Randy Fine of Florida, who described the alleged arrivals as a “national security risk”.

By Saturday, the State Department announced it was stopping visas for “individuals from Gaza” while it conducted “a full and thorough review of the process and procedures used to issue a small number of temporary medical-humanitarian visas in recent days”. It did not provide

a figure. The US issued 640 visas to holders of the Palestinian Authority travel document in May, according to the Reuters news agency. B1/B2 visitor visas permit Palestinians to seek medical treatment in the US.

‘Dangerous and inhumane decision’

Aid groups have urged the US to reverse its “dangerous and inhumane decision”.

The Palestine Children’s Relief Fund (PCRF) said the new restrictions will prevent children in urgent need of medical treatment from travelling to the US.

“This will have a devastating and irreversible impact on our ability to bring injured and critically ill children from Gaza to the US for lifesaving medical treatment,” the group warned.

Tareq Hailat, director of Global Patient Affairs at the PCRF, urged Washington to reverse its decision. “This is extremely devastating news,” he told Al Jazeera. “The impact of this decision will be devastating.

■ Source: Al Jazeera and news agencies