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## Israel and Hamas. Father Faltas (Custody of the Holy Land): “The people of Gaza face hunger on two fronts”

“The fact that people are dying of hunger in Gaza in 2024, as in other countries of the world, is outrageous. Hundreds of trucks are stationed at the border, but they are prevented or restricted entry. The people of Gaza are starving on two fronts because humanitarian aid is not being delivered, it is being withheld, and they are dying while waiting in line for a piece of bread”. Father **Ibrahim Faltas**, Vicar of the Custody of the Holy Land, does not mince his words when commenting to SIR on the death of 112 Palestinians and 800 wounded in Gaza City yesterday while trying to access food from a convoy of 38 aid trucks. **Conflicting versions.** In a first reconstruction, Israeli army sources confirmed that their troops opened fire on the crowd because they thought it “posed a threat” - the Palestinians allegedly got too close to the tanks - only to eventually deny that they had fired, “neither from above nor from the ground”, as repeated by Israeli army spokesman **Daniel Hagari** during a press conference. The death of the Palestinians was therefore claimed to have been caused by the crowd and the trucks that ran them over as they tried to resume their march. This version is confirmed by a video released by the Israeli army. In contrast, Palestinian medical sources reported that dozens of bodies with gunshot wounds had been brought to the few hospitals still operating in Gaza City. **War Bulletin.** “The numbers of the war bulletin are increasing every day. There have been a hundred thousand dead and wounded so far, and we can't understand why this massacre can't be stopped,” said Father Faltas, who has been involved for some time in bringing wounded children from Gaza to Italy for medical treatment. “Hundreds of people who were looking for food to avoid starvation and water to avoid thirst have been killed and wounded in a violent and unjustified attack. Violence has been raging in the Holy Land for almost 150 days, and hopes of a ceasefire announced for Monday were ruled out by US President Biden after yesterday's attack, which he described as “a tragic and alarming incident”. A number of world and European leaders, including Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, said they were shocked and dismayed by the shocking death of 112 people and the wounding of 800.

Evil has no justification

and under no circumstances can it be justified when it targets the lives of the defenceless and the weak”. The Vicar of the Custody recalled the dramatic living conditions of the civilian population of Gaza, “which lacks everything: food, water, electricity and medicines for hospitals, safe shelters. It is impossible to guarantee treatment and care for all kinds of diseases, even the most common. Babies are dying in incubators, patients who need constant medical care are dying, those who could at least have some respite in the last days of their lives are suffering”.

“People in Gaza are dying waiting in line for a piece of bread.

**Everyone is to blame.** “I wonder,” concludes Father Ibrahim, “why this incessant and relentless massacre cannot be stopped. I ask myself how it is possible for a human being to inflict violence on other defenceless human beings, weakened by hunger, on children tired and frightened by five months of war”. “Who will be held responsible for this evil before God and before history? We are all to blame. Those who attack the vulnerable and the hungry are to be held responsible, and yet we are all to blame if we fail to stop this evil and allow the contempt for life to continue. We are all to blame for the atrocity of war.”

Daniele Rocchi