



GAZA UPDATE: SIX MONTHS ON



Residents of Khan Younis return to find their homes in ruins

PRESSURE has grown on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as the war in Gaza passes another milestone.

It's now six months since Hamas, the terrorist group that controls Gaza, invaded Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking more than 250 as hostages. In response to the 7 October attack, Israel has attacked Gaza with missiles and its army has fought in its cities in an effort to get rid of Hamas. A reported 33,000 people in Gaza have died.



Mr Netanyahu is under pressure

Next assault planned

Now, Israel's army is getting set for its next assault in Gaza, on the city of Rafah, where 1.5 million civilians are sheltering. World leaders have urged Israel strongly against the plan.

Mr Netanyahu is facing pressure internationally but also in Israel, too.

Last weekend, tens of thousands of Israelis gathered to rally against their prime minister, chanting for an election to replace him and to demand a deal with Hamas to free the remaining hostages.

Mr Netanyahu said: "We are constantly working to achieve our goals – first and foremost, the release of all our hostages, and achieving a complete victory over Hamas. This victory requires entry into Rafah and the elimination of the terrorist battalions there. It will happen."

Civilians in danger

Israel has been criticised for failing to protect the lives of innocent people in Gaza, who are believed to be on the brink of famine. Oxfam says that, since January, people in the north of Gaza have lived on an average of 250 calories per day. The NHS says women need 2,000 calories a day and men need 2,500 a day to maintain their weight.

Efforts to deliver food to them has been hampered by blocked routes and reports of a string of tragic incidents.

On 1 April, late at night, Israeli drones fired missiles at a convoy of three cars belonging to World Central Kitchen, a charity that's delivering food parcels around Gaza. Seven aid workers were killed, including three British citizens.

The response from the UK and USA

The anti-war group Campaign Against Arms Trade claims that the drones that fired the missiles at the convoy were powered by engines made in the UK. There have been calls for Israel's allies, like the UK and the USA, to stop supplying weapons to Israel.

More than 200 aid workers have been killed in Gaza so far. Last week, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Israel must allow more aid into Gaza and protect aid workers. He added: "If we don't see the changes that we need to see, there'll be changes in our policy."

Since then, Israel has opened more routes for aid to enter Gaza and withdrawn most of its troops from areas in the south of the territory, including the city of Khan Younis.

Read more on the conflict at [first.news/IsraelGaza](https://www.first.news/IsraelGaza).

Saturday night takeaways keep on coming!

A STUDY suggests that, since the pandemic, the UK has become hooked on takeaways.

New data by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) reveals where our calories are coming from – whether it's from food cooked at home, or food bought from outside the home, from restaurants, coffee shops, pubs or takeaways.

Takeaways exploded in popularity during the Covid-19 pandemic, when restaurants were closed and we all had to stay indoors.

The IFS found that, before the pandemic, the average UK adult consumed 270 calories a week from takeaways. That hit a peak of 470 calories a week during lockdowns.

In early 2022, long after restaurants had reopened, the average adult was still consuming about 400 calories a week from takeaways.

It shows that takeaways remained more popular than they were before the pandemic – and that our calorie intake from less-healthy food remained high.



Success for NHS vaccine drive



Have you had yours?

THE NHS is celebrating a massive rise in children coming forward for vaccinations.

The MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps, and rubella. There have been almost 1,000 confirmed cases of measles in England since the start of last October.

In January, the NHS began sending emails, letters and texts to more than a million parents and carers, urging them to book their child in for an MMR

job if they've missed one of their two recommended doses.

Following that, 75,499 vaccinations were given to young people aged between five and 25 in the first three months of this year. That's four times as many as the 18,433 that were delivered in the same period in 2023.

Dr Thomas Waite, England's Deputy Chief Medical Officer, said: "The MMR vaccine is a life-saver... it's really positive that uptake has increased."

EDITOR'S COMMENT



Nicky Cox MBE

LOTS of people were looking up into the sky to see the solar eclipse this week.

But do you often wonder what's out there – like I do. Well, that's what space exploration is all about (front page). It also helps us understand Earth better, creates cool inventions like GPS, inspires us to dream big, and may lead us to find other planets with life. By studying other planets, we can understand more about our own environment and how to take care of it better. So, space exploration isn't just about exploring outer space – it's about exploring the possibilities of the future and making our world a better place.



Kiss

NO, not that kind of kiss – the American heavy rock band, Kiss!

They were huge in the 1970s and, as well as their hit music, they were famous for their face paint and costumes.

They've just sold their brand, image and rights to their songs to an investor in Sweden for around \$300 million (£237 million). Happy retirement, guys. Mwah!



Peru's president



POLICE raided Peru President Dina Boluarte's private home in an investigation into her watches.

It follows a discovery by a news group called La Encerrona that she owns at least 14 luxury watches. Police want to know how she got them – did she buy them, or were they gifts in exchange for special favours from someone?

Boluarte says everything she owns is a result of her hard work, and denies all the allegations.



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