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U.S. Envoy Promises New Gaza Aid Plan Following Deadly Incidents at Food Distribution Sites

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President Donald Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, has pledged to improve food aid delivery in Gaza after visiting a U.S.-backed distribution centre amid international concern over the rising number of civilian deaths near aid sites. The United Nations (U.N.) reports that more than 1,300 Palestinians have died near food distribution areas since late May, most attributed to Israeli military operations.

Witkoff spent over five hours in Gaza on Friday, touring a facility operated by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF). He stated that the visit aimed to provide Trump with a clearer understanding of the humanitarian crisis and help craft a new strategy for delivering food and medical aid. "We want to get people fed," Trump told Axios, stressing the urgency of the effort.

The GHF, which has provided more than 100 million meals, has become a key distributor of U.S.-backed aid since Israel eased its aid blockade in May. Its operations have largely replaced the U.N.-led system and now serve as a major channel for American support in the region.

However, safety at these aid sites remains a serious concern. The U.N. human rights office in the Palestinian territories reported 1,373 Palestinians killed since 27 May while seeking aid—859 near GHF sites and 514 along international convoy routes. Most of these deaths have been linked to Israeli military activity.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) issued a report accusing Israeli forces of targeting civilians and using starvation as a method of warfare. Belkis Wille, HRW's associate crisis and conflict director, said civilians were being "gunned down almost every day" while trying to collect food. She also criticised what she described as a "militarised aid distribution system" supported by the U.S., contributing to the violence.

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) responded that troops are positioned near GHF sites to support safe distribution and reduce conflict with civilians. The military also accused Hamas of interfering with aid and confirmed it is reviewing the reports of casualties.

Witkoff's visit followed meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who

reaffirmed his government's intention to dismantle Hamas and recover hostages taken during the 7 October 2023 attack. That incident, involving Hamas militants in southern Israel, left 1,219 people dead and led to the ongoing conflict.

Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry claims over 60,000 Palestinians have died in the war, though figures remain unverified due to limited media access. Humanitarian organisations continue to report rising civilian casualties and worsening conditions.

Hamas also released a video showing Israeli hostage Evyatar David in a weakened state, underscoring the human toll. As U.S. involvement increases, the focus now shifts to whether the Trump-aligned team will expand GHF support or introduce a new aid delivery framework.