

UN: number of abject poor in Gaza triples

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A U.N. agency says the number of Gazans it considers "abject poor" has tripled this year, to 300,000

That's one in five Gazans.

John Ging, the head of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency in Gaza, blames the rise on the Israeli-Egyptian blockade of the seaside strip. The organization says the increase also reflects improved monitoring of refugees' conditions.

Gaza's economy has foundered under the blockade Israel and Egypt imposed after the Islamic militant Hamas movement seized control of the territory in 2007.

The U.N. provides food aid to nearly 1 million Gazans. It defines "abject poor" as those who can't feed their families, even with U.N. assistance. Ging says his agency requires more funding to fill the growing need.

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