

Bearing Witness to the Israel-Gaza War

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Summary

I, Lee Mordechai, a historian by profession and an Israeli citizen, bear witness in this document to the horrible current situation in Gaza as events are unfolding. The enormous amount of evidence I have seen, much of it referenced later in this document, has been enough for me to believe that Israel is currently committing genocide against the Palestinian population in Gaza. I explain why I chose to use the term below. The current war is ostensibly the Israeli reaction to the Hamas massacre of Oct. 7, 2023, a war crime and crime against humanity that was committed within the context of the longstanding conflict between Israelis and Palestinians that can be dated back to 1917 or 1948 (or other dates). In all cases, I do not believe that historical grievances and atrocities justify additional atrocities in the present. Therefore, I consider Israel’s response to Hamas’ actions on Oct. 7 utterly disproportionate and criminal.

The paragraphs of this executive summary contain the summary of much longer sections below, a paragraph for each section. Each section below includes several dozens of references that lead to the supporting evidence upon which I base my assessment. This version of the document greatly expands upon the previous version from March 15 by adding much content as well as responding to the discussion it initiated.

Over the past half year, Israel has repeatedly massacred Palestinians in Gaza, resulting in the deaths of over 33,000 Palestinians – some two thirds of whom are women and children – as of writing. Tens of thousands more have been injured and at least thousands are missing. There is ample evidence for Israel’s indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks throughout the war, as well as many examples for massacres and other killings. A long list of international institutions have harshly criticized Israel’s conduct of the war.

Israel has actively attempted to cause the death of the civilian population of Gaza. Israel has created famine in Gaza as a de facto policy and used it as a weapon of war, resulting in the deaths of dozens of civilians (mainly children) from starvation. Israel created shortages of water, medicine and electricity. Israel has also dismantled Gaza’s health system and Gaza’s civilian infrastructure. As a result, more people die from treatable conditions and difficult medical procedures such as amputations and caesareans are conducted without anesthesia.

Israeli discourse has de-humanized Palestinians to such an extent that the vast majority of Israeli Jews supports the aforementioned measures. The de-humanization was led by Israel’s highest state officials, and it continues to be supported through the state infrastructure and military. De-humanization is also widely prevalent in broader civil society. The de-humanization results in widespread abuse of, and violence towards, detained Palestinians and Gazan civilians and their property, all with few consequences. The vast majority of the de-humanizing content is shared by Israelis, and is confirmed by Palestinian testimonials of their experiences.

The evidence I have seen indicates that one of Israel’s very likely objectives is to ethnically cleanse the Gaza Strip, whether in part or in total, by removing as many Palestinians as feasibly possible. Key members in Israel’s government have made statements confirming this intent and several of Israel’s government ministries have planned or worked to facilitate such an end. Israel has already cleared significant parts of the Gaza strip by demolition and bulldozing, also attempting to destroy the fabric of Palestinian society by deliberately targeting civilian institutions such as universities,

libraries, archives, religious buildings, historical sites, farms, schools, cemeteries, museums and markets. So far more than half the buildings in the Gaza Strip were destroyed or damaged.

One of the purposes of the war, according to the Israeli government, is to release the hostages – over 130 of whom remain in Hamas’ captivity. The evidence indicates that compared to the ethnic cleansing this is a low priority for the government. To date Israel has released exactly three hostages through military operations, while killing many other hostages directly or indirectly through its actions. Moreover, on many occasions Israel has stalled the negotiations for releasing hostages or attempted to obstruct them.

The global attention to Gaza has drawn attention away from the West Bank. There, Israel’s operations through its military or settlers since the beginning of the war has resulted in the unjustified killing of over 400 Palestinians, the ethnic cleansing of at least 15 local communities, as well as a sharp increase in levels of violence, abuse and humiliation of Palestinians by both the Israeli state and Jewish settlers.

All of the above has been made possible through the strong support of most mainstream media in Israel as well as the West, primarily in the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. From the beginning of the war, Israel has waged an information campaign that emphasized the horrors of the Oct. 7 attacks with both reliable and unreliable information, discredited critical voices outside Israel, limited information flows from Gaza, and rallied the Israeli public around the war by curtailing domestic discourse. As a result, Israeli media and discourse are predominantly and uncritically pro-war. Mainstream media outlets in the US share much of this approach. In depth investigations of the Israeli smear campaign against UNRWA and the persistent doubts towards the Palestinian death counts reveal that both are cases of unfounded propaganda. All of the above legitimizes Israeli violence and actions, deflects attention away from many events in Gaza, and contributes to the dehumanization of Palestinians.

I zoom in on the second raid on the al-Shifa hospital in late March as a case study of many of the themes described above.

The evidence I have seen and describe below has been sufficient for me to believe that what Israel is currently doing to the Palestinian population in Gaza is a crime against humanity¹ that is consistent with the definition of genocide as I understand it. In an appendix, I explain my reasoning for using this term.

Professional and ethical statement (including trigger warning)

The following document represents my understanding of the war in Gaza. It was compiled by me alone. I have not received any payment for writing this document and I have written it out of a sense of commitment to human rights, my profession, and my country. The vast majority of this document is written in cold unemotional language to avoid trying to sway readers’ opinion based on emotion, a known bias. I attempted to stick to the facts, as I understand them. The document includes much difficult material, particularly with regards to violence, cruelty, dehumanization and starvation. Graphic descriptions are rare and brief. There is far more explicit content in the links available through the footnotes below, many of which are graphic and difficult to watch.

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/crimes-against-humanity.shtml>

Throughout the document I have refrained from using loaded but difficult to define terms such as Zionism, antisemitism, terror/terrorism and brutality. These are all boundary objects (a technical term used to describe terms that mean different things to different people, which are still used as shorthands in communication),² that are often weaponized in discourse by different speakers as a way to legitimize or delegitimize people, institutions or actions. I do not believe the inclusion of these terms would make this document more readable or its analysis better.

This is a working document. Although new details and facts will undoubtedly emerge in the future, since I have started compiling information in this format (4 months as of writing) the corrections have been minimal.

The document's main purpose was to state my opinion publicly out of a sense of commitment I have to human rights ideals. After the fourth version of this document in mid-March went viral on Twitter, the public support I received from readers encouraged me to write for many others worldwide and in Israel who want to understand the circumstances over these difficult days in the present and the future. A secondary purpose is to concentrate and preserve at least some of the evidence I have come across as I have been reading about the war.

My position is based on many pieces of evidence that I have collected particularly since late December 2023. In my analysis, I gave precedence to evidence provided by reputable institutions such as the United Nations and its different offices, as well as reports by several humanitarian aid and human rights organizations. I have also made use of mainstream media outlets, both in cases of factual reporting (e.g. someone saying something) and in case of investigative reporting. I have complemented these with evidence I have collected from social media from both sides.

I estimate that since the beginning of the war, I have read well over a thousand articles – academic, those written by academics or journalists, and others. In addition, I have watched thousands of videos and images, mostly by Israelis from the Gaza Strip. Many of these include deeply disturbing content – violence, cruelty, de-humanization and their results, and I included them in the document to convey and clarify the scale of this event and the frequency of the horrors that I describe. To the best of my ability, I estimate that the vast majority of the information I have included is reliable, and I have repeatedly chosen not to include information from both sides I had doubts about. I include in this document many footnotes to cite the sources I have used, so that the interested reader would be able to evaluate my account themselves. I welcome thoughtful critique and corrections.³

A few words about myself and my expertise. I grew up in Israel and am a member of Israeli civil society. I have been trained as a professional historian with degrees from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (BA) and Princeton University (PhD), and currently have a position at a leading Israeli university. My relevant professional skills include conducting thorough research, evaluating written sources and their reliability, critical thinking, and synthesizing much material into a coherent narrative. Although the present war is a new topic for me, my work on this document is very similar in nature to the professional work I conduct daily. My professional publications appear on my [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu) and [Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/) pages.

² Baggio, Jacopo A., Katrina Brown, and Denis Hellebrandt. "Boundary Object or Bridging Concept? A Citation Network Analysis of Resilience." *Ecology and Society* 20, no. 2 (2015). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26270178>.

³ This document corresponds to an update and expansion of earlier versions of my understanding of the situation in early January, late January, mid-February and mid-March 2024, following ideas and suggestions I have since received, as well as additional information that has been released since. I thank here an anonymous reader who commented on all five drafts, Merle Eisenberg who has commented on the draft of the first version, and Joshua Meyrowitz (Professor Emeritus of Communications, University of New Hampshire) who carefully and thoroughly reviewed the fourth version after its publication in preparation for the current version and also supplied several important sources. All of them have provided useful feedback and suggestions, which I have incorporated in this version. The final text follows my opinion and not necessarily theirs. Similarly, any mistakes are mine alone.

Preface

I, Lee Mordechai, a historian and an Israeli citizen, bear witness in this document, as events are unfolding, to the horrible situation in the Gaza Strip. I write my personal opinion out of a sense of double responsibility: as a citizen whose country is committing what I consider as grave crimes, and as an academic, who believes that after having dedicated my career so far to research and teaching others I am obliged to speak up against injustice, especially when it is so close. I write also because of the disappointing general silence on this issue among many international and Israeli academic institutions, especially those that are well-positioned to comment on it. The relatively few of my colleagues who have bravely spoken out have been an inspiration.⁴ I do not believe this document will convince many others to change their minds. Rather, I write this publicly to testify that during the war there were and remain Israeli voices who strongly dissented from Israel's actions.

The latest version of this document can be found on my [academia.edu](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, which have both English and Hebrew versions. Older versions appear on my Twitter page. I plan to continue to revise this document every few weeks.

On 7 October 2023, Hamas and other militants attacked Israel. In the assault about 1,150 people, most of whom were civilians, were killed. The vast majority of these were killed by Hamas and other militants, and the small remainder were killed by friendly fire in the general chaos. About 250 people, mostly Israeli civilians, were taken hostage to Gaza. These atrocities are war crimes and crimes against humanity. Many others have already written about these events in the international and Israeli media and I do not have much new to add on this matter for now. The horrible events of 7 October – themselves committed as part of a historical context that returns to the longstanding conflict between Israel and the Palestinians – initiated the current war that is the context for this document.

Despite Hamas' aforementioned atrocities, I believe Israel's response to the events of Oct. 7 over the past half year continues to be wholly disproportionate, immoral and criminal. My position on these matters represents a tiny minority in Israeli society. In polls on this issue only 1.8% (October), 7% (December), and 3.2% (January) of Jewish Israelis believed the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) was using too much firepower in Gaza.⁵ In March, 81% of Israelis believed that Israel was doing everything possible to minimize harm towards Gazan civilians (including 19% who thought Israel was doing too much),⁶ and 80% of Israeli Jews believed that Israel should not consider the suffering of Gazans as it conducted its military operation.⁷ An April poll found that only a third of Israeli Jews thought that Israel should accept the UN's Security Council demand for a ceasefire during Ramadan.⁸ As of writing, the war continues despite the fact that high-placed voices within Israel⁹ as well as the US¹⁰

⁴ I chose to write this open statement about what is happening in Gaza having been inspired by John Mearsheimer's similar statement a few months ago. <https://mearsheimer.substack.com/p/death-and-destruction-in-gaza>. Additionally important in composing the first version of this document is the comprehensive and important South African Application instituting proceedings and Request for the indication of provisional measures to the International Court of Justice, from which I have traced some of the sources of information in this document (<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20231228-app-01-00-en.pdf>).

⁵ https://social-sciences.tau.ac.il/sites/socsci.tau.ac.il/files/media_server/social/2023/Findings-November-2023-EN.pdf; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israelis-say-hamas-must-be-crushed-despite-gaza-casualties-un-rebuke-2023-12-13/>; <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/51742>; https://en-social-sciences.tau.ac.il/sites/socsci-english.tau.ac.il/files/media_server/social/peaceindex/2024-01-findings.pdf

⁶ <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001473815>

⁷ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/53443>

⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/world/europe/israel-weapons-sales-genocide.html>

⁹ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2024_q1/Article-7c6a192b2cbfd81026.htm

¹⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/27/us/politics/biden-netanyahu-israel-gaza.html>; <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/04/02/netanyahu-gaza-palestinians-war-israeli-society/>

believe that Israel's Prime Minister wants an "endless war" for his own political survival, misleading the Israeli public into believing that a complete victory is possible.¹¹

The evidence I have seen and describe below has been sufficient for me to believe that what Israel is currently doing to the Palestinian population in Gaza is a crime against humanity¹² that is consistent with the definition of genocide as I understand it.¹³ A recent (Jan. 26) International Court of Justice Order found that Israel's actions could plausibly be argued to be genocide,¹⁴ as experts have pointed out before¹⁵ and after¹⁶ the Order – including both action and intent.¹⁷ A federal judge in California ruled the Israel's actions are "plausibly" genocide.¹⁸ I discuss my specific reasoning for using this definition in an appendix to this document.

Since the situation in the Gaza Strip continued to deteriorate in February and March,¹⁹ the UN Security Council has passed a resolution demanding "an immediate ceasefire" in Gaza in late March.²⁰ This was followed by additional ICJ provisional measures three days later, calling upon Israel to ensure aid deliveries, basic services and humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza.²¹ As of writing, Israel has not changed its policy in a substantive manner since these decisions even if the rate of killing has decreased due to the general slowdown of the active fighting in the war.

Israel's conduct during the war has repeatedly and systematically destroyed existing laws and norms that aimed to regulate "civilized" warfare in recent decades.²² As discussed throughout this document, the UN Security Council has demanded an immediate ceasefire: Israel refused. The ICJ has obligated Israel to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid: Israel refused. International humanitarian law states that it is illegal to use the starvation of civilian populations as a form of warfare: Israel has been doing this for months. Indiscriminate bombing is similarly illegal yet practiced by Israel since the beginning of the war. Bombing hospitals is illegitimate – and yet Israel bombed every hospital in Gaza (as well as assassinated patients in a West Bank hospital). Embassies are supposed to be off-limits, and yet Israel bombed a foreign embassy (Iran) in a different country (Syria).²³ The widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure is illegal: Israel continues to do so today. The widespread use of AI is extremely controversial (has not been regulated yet)²⁴: Israel did so matter-of-factly, while almost completely trusting the results of an automatic system for identifying targets.

¹¹ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/Article-1085677>

¹² <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/crimes-against-humanity.shtml>

¹³ <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

¹⁴ <https://www.ici-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://time.com/6334409/is-whats-happening-gaza-genocide-experts/>; Segal, Raz, and Luigi Daniele. 2024. "Gaza as Twilight of Israel Exceptionalism: Holocaust and Genocide Studies from Unprecedented Crisis to Unprecedented Change." *Journal of Genocide Research*, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2024.2325804>.

¹⁶ <https://www.iustsecurity.org/91457/top-experts-views-of-intl-court-of-justice-ruling-on-israel-gaza-operations-south-africa-v-israel-genocide-convention-case/>

¹⁷ <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

¹⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/01/genocide-gaza-israel-california-court>. The court dismissed the case as the issue was outside its jurisdiction, since the plaintiffs were asking the court to rule on US foreign policy.

¹⁹ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/how-israel-defied-ici-provisional-measures>;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/11/israeli-human-rights-groups-ici-gaza-aid-ruling>

²⁰ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147931>

²¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1148096>

²² Originally based on: <https://twitter.com/tparsi/status/1774872023098888465>

²³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/02/world/middleeast/iran-israel-damascus-strike.html>

²⁴ <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2488606/world>

Context

The Gaza Strip is a tiny piece of land, consisting of some 365 square kilometers, less than half the size of New York City and less than a quarter the size of London. Its population is about 2.3 million, making it one of the most densely populated areas on the planet.²⁵ About 70% of the population descend from refugees who fled Mandatory Palestine to Gaza during the 1948 war (“Nakba”).²⁶ Israel controls Gaza’s borders, communications, electricity, water and even population registry.²⁷ The United Nations, human rights organizations, government ministries (including in the US and the UK) and legal scholars all saw Gaza as an occupied territory under the control of Israel even before the war.²⁸ These features as well as Gaza’s geography and demography exacerbate the crisis I outline below. Israel, already before the current war, has been described as an apartheid state by leading human rights organizations following serious and well documented reports (Human Rights Watch,²⁹ Amnesty International,³⁰ and B'Tselem³¹). This has facilitated many of the policies and actions I discuss below.

The massacre of Palestinians

Numbers and ratios

As of April 15, Israel has killed over 33,797 Gazans – 1.5 percent of the total population of Gaza.³² This death toll is conservative and will almost certainly increase.³³ The number is accepted by Israeli officials (see discussion below).³⁴ The number does not include thousands to tens of thousands of missing people, many still buried under the rubble.³⁵ It also does not include any individuals whose death was not reported to Gaza’s overwhelmed health ministry. According to the available public data between 58 and 72% of the deaths in Gaza are of women and children.³⁶ As of mid April, some 14,500 children had already been killed.³⁷ 76,465 people (about 3 percent of Gaza’s population) have

²⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-87>

²⁶ https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/gaza_thematic_6_0.pdf

²⁷ <https://features.gisha.org/gaza-up-close/>

²⁸ Sanger, Andrew (2011). "The Contemporary Law of Blockade and the Gaza Freedom Flotilla". In M.N. Schmit, Louise Arimatsu; Tim McCormack (eds.). *Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law 2010*. Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law. Vol. 13. Springer Science & Business Media. pp. 429-431. Also <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/gaza-israel-occupied-international-law/>

²⁹ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

³⁰ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/>

³¹ <https://www.btselem.org/topic/apartheid>

³² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

³³ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/%D7%A1%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%99-%D7%94%D7%94%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%92%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%91%D7%A2%D7%96%D7%94-%D7%9B%D7%A0%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%94-%D7%92%D7%91%D7%95%D7%94%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%A4%D7%99-%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%95/>

³⁴ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israels-netanyahu-says-he-will-defy-bidens-red-line-and-invade-rafah/> (at least 26,000 Palestinians killed as of early March); <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/us/politics/netanyahu-schumer-israel.html> (28,000 Palestinians in late March); <https://www.mekomit.co.il/%D7%94%D7%A6%D7%91%D7%90-%D7%91%D7%93%D7%A7-%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%90-%D7%A9%D7%93%D7%99%D7%95%D7%95%D7%97%D7%99-%D7%94%D7%94%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%92%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%91%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%93-%D7%94%D7%91/>

³⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/08/the-numbers-that-reveal-the-extent-of-the-destruction-in-gaza> ;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/08/relatives-anguish-tens-of-thousands-missing-in-gaza-war> ;

<https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6264>

³⁶ <https://t.me/MOHMediaGaza/5224> ; the Ministry of Health claims 72% of deaths are of women and children. It counts deaths through identifying corpses (17,624 in this report) and because connections with the North are broken, uses “reliable media sources” (unspecified) for the others (14,602 in this report). The 58% number derives from the distribution of actual deaths counted. The Ministry does not explain the discrepancy.

³⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

been injured.³⁸ A poll among Palestinians in southern Gaza in late March found that 60% of respondents lost a member of their family during the war.³⁹

Israeli spokespersons themselves have estimated that two civilians have died for each Hamas militant, and stated that it is a justified ratio.⁴⁰ In reality, the ratio is likely worse and civilian deaths could reach 80% and even more of the total death count.⁴¹ According to the key investigative report on the subject, Israel knows well the amount of civilians that will be hit by its attacks and proceeds to bomb buildings with little oversight, often through employing an artificial intelligence system (“The Gospel”). The number of acceptable civilians harmed by strikes against military targets (“collateral damage”) increased from dozens of civilians to hundreds of civilians.⁴² In some cases Israel assassinated a Hamas commander by bombing of a densely populated area that killed over a hundred civilians and wounded hundreds more.⁴³

International responses

The rate of civilian deaths is shocking, particularly as it continues in real time and visual evidence for it is readily available online. The UN Secretary General has stated that “We are witnessing a killing of civilians that is unparalleled and unprecedented in any conflict [in recent years]”.⁴⁴ The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reiterated that there is no safe space in Gaza.⁴⁵ A website documenting cases of civilian harm using open source information has gathered preliminary information about 3,000 incidents (over 350 have already been published), which is more than during the entirety of the war against ISIS, and concluded that “this is a conflict that is far more deadly for civilians than pretty much any other conflict we’ve seen in modern history”.⁴⁶ Although the International Court of Justice Order that called upon Israel to take “all measures in its power” to prevent the killing of Palestinians on 26 Jan., as of writing Israel has continued to kill an average of almost 100 Palestinians a day.⁴⁷ A panel of UN experts stated in February that arms exports to Israel are illegal and must stop immediately,⁴⁸ while a Dutch court ordered a halt to export F-35 jet parts to Israel.⁴⁹ In March, Canada declared it will stop selling arms to Israel because of its conduct of war in Gaza,⁵⁰ and the UK’s Foreign Office received legal advice that Israel has broken international humanitarian law yet has refrained so far from making this information public to avoid acting upon

³⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

³⁹ <http://pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/Poll%2091%20English%20press%20release%2020%20March%202024.pdf> (p. 6).

⁴⁰ <https://cnn.com/2023/12/05/middleeast/israel-hamas-military-civilian-ratio-killed-intl-hnk/index.html>

⁴¹ This article suggests that Israel killed only 1-2,000 Hamas fighters by late November, at a time where mortality in Gaza was reported to be over 14,500. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/26/idf-messaging-suggests-gaza-truce-unlikely-to-last-much-beyond-tuesday>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-47>. Also some ~65% of the dead were women and children (see above), and it is likely that some of the men who were killed were not militants. This Wall Street Journal article states that Israel estimates that more than a third of the deaths have been militants, but that US intelligence officials seem to believe the actual ratio is considerably less: <https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/u-s-and-israels-unprecedented-intelligence-sharing-draws-criticism-a85979b4>. Anecdotally, the testimony of doctors returning from Gaza further indicates the majority of children among the injured (70-75% elementary school age or younger) as well as the low number of military age males (a handful according to one); both doctors believed none of the people they treated were militants: https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/11/surgeons_in_gaza. The reliability of the Gaza death count is discussed in depth below.

⁴² <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/>;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/01/the-gospel-how-israel-uses-ai-to-select-bombing-targets>; also

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/israel/myth-israels-moral-army>

⁴³ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/12/28/world/middleeast/jabaliya-gaza-strike-israel.html>

⁴⁴ https://twitter.com/UN_News_Centre/status/1726609880986083685

⁴⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-82>

⁴⁶ <https://airwars.org/conflict/israel-and-gaza-2023/>; <https://twitter.com/ShaykhSulaiman/status/1776263272800354451>

⁴⁷ On Jan. 26 the death toll was 26,083. As of writing, the death toll was 33,797. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-103>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-153>

⁴⁸ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/arms-exports-israel-must-stop-immediately-un-experts>

⁴⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/dutch-court-orders-halt-export-f-35-jet-parts-israel-2024-02-12/>

⁵⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-19/tv-article/0000018e-584f-d88e-a39e-7dfc4580000>

it.⁵¹ In April the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution calling for Israel to be held accountable for possible war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip,⁵² and backed a call for an arms embargo on Israel.⁵³ Those countries that still sell arms to Israel (especially the US, as well as Germany and the UK) are under pressure to stop sales as well.⁵⁴

Indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks

Immediately at the beginning of the war, the Minister of Defense told soldiers that he released all restraints in conducting the war,⁵⁵ while the IDF spokesperson stated that the IDF was “focused on what causes maximum damage” rather than accuracy.⁵⁶ Already in late October, US officials knew that Israel was regularly bombing buildings without solid intelligence that they were legitimate military targets.⁵⁷ About 40-45% of the air-to-ground munitions Israel dropped on Gaza by December were unguided.⁵⁸ When targeting junior militants marked by the IDF’s AI system, the army preferred to use such “dumb” bombs rather than precision bombs because of their lower cost, despite their more significant collateral damage. One IDF source claimed to have authorized the bombing of “hundreds” of private homes in such a manner. Frequently, the target was not even home when the bombing happened, so that entire families were killed for no reason.⁵⁹ As of December, Israel dropped 29,000 weapons on Gaza – for comparison, the US military dropped 3,678 munitions on Iraq from 2004 to 2010.⁶⁰

During the first six weeks of the war, Israel used 2,000 pound bombs in areas it designated safe for civilians in at least 208 occasions.⁶¹ Especially during the beginning of the war, Israel used irregular shipments of 155mm shells that included shells dating to the 1950s, increasing the risk of missing the target and misfiring.⁶² In February, Amnesty International closely investigated four attacks that killed at least 95 civilians. All took place in the southern governate that was supposed to be safe at the time, and Amnesty found no indication that the buildings were legitimate military objectives or that people in the buildings were military targets.⁶³ A similar report by Human Rights Watch in April investigated an attack of four aerial munitions over 10 seconds without warning that killed at least 106 civilians, including 54 children (“among the deadliest single incidents for civilians” in the war). The identities of all civilians have been confirmed. The NGO found no evidence for a military target in the vicinity of the building during the attack, and Israeli authorities provided no justification for it.⁶⁴ In addition, Israel has commonly used quadcopters to fire on civilians, with dozens of documented cases of purposefully killing civilians, as documented by a human rights group and

⁵¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/30/uk-government-lawyers-say-israel-is-breaking-international-law-claims-top-tory-in-leaked-recording>

⁵² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/05/un-human-rights-council-israel-gaza-biden-netanyahu>

⁵³ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148261>

⁵⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/world/europe/israel-weapons-sales-genocide.html>

⁵⁵ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/gallant-israel-moving-to-full-offense-gaza-will-never-go-back-to-what-it-once-was/> ;

<https://www.foxnews.com/world/israels-defense-minister-removes-every-restriction-idf-prepares-ground-assault-gaza> ;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ryxikl7z6>

⁵⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/10/right-now-it-is-one-day-at-a-time-life-on-israels-frontline-with-gaza>

⁵⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/18/biden-israel-gaza-rafah-palestinians/>

⁵⁸ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/13/politics/intelligence-assessment-dumb-bombs-israel-gaza/index.html>

⁵⁹ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542>

⁶¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/21/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-bomb-investigation.html> . For an example:

<https://www.cnn.com/videos/world/2024/02/23/gaza-atrocities-investigation-warehouse-attack-karadsheh-pkg-vpx.cnn>

⁶² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-20/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-5677-dc6f-adff-df77a73d0000>

⁶³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/02/israel-opt-new-evidence-of-unlawful-israeli-attacks-in-gaza-causing-mass-civilian-casualties-amid-real-risk-of-genocide/>

⁶⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/04/gaza-israeli-strike-killing-106-civilians-apparent-war-crime>

witnessed by doctors.⁶⁵ A former UN's Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights stated that the Israeli attack on Gaza has probably the highest kill rate of any military killing anybody since the Rwandan Genocide of 1994.⁶⁶ Several doctors returning from volunteering in Gaza stated that the situation there is unprecedented, for example, "As humanitarian surgeons we thought we had seen all manner of cruelty in the world, but neither one of us has ever experienced anything like what we found when we arrived in Gaza."⁶⁷

Israel has used artificial intelligence (AI)-based programs to generate massive kill lists for assassination. The "Lavender" system is designed to mark all suspected operatives in Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, including low-ranking ones, as potential bombing targets.⁶⁸ As many as 37,000 Gazans were marked as suspected militants by the automated system at the beginning of the war, including children under the age of 17.⁶⁹ An IDF source claimed they would devote only "20 seconds" to each target before authorizing a bombing, despite a high rate of errors in the system (~10%). The IDF systematically attacked targets at their homes, often at night with their whole families present, after tracking them with another AI system named "Where's Daddy?". In the first weeks of the war, it was permissible to kill up to 15 or 20 civilians (as opposed to 0 in the past) for every junior Hamas operative. When targeting senior officials the killing of more than 100 and up to 300 civilians was authorized.⁷⁰ Experts in international humanitarian law expressed alarm at these ratios.⁷¹ For comparison, when the US assassinated Bin Laden the authorized number of civilians was 30 while the number was 0 for most low-level commanders in the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁷² This mass-generation of targets was stopped later partly due to American pressure.⁷³

Mortality and impacts on groups in Palestinian society

Since the beginning of the operation, Israel has killed an average of about 75 children per day.⁷⁴ This number is greater than the number of children killed in conflict zones around the world over the past three years combined, and is far greater than the rate of children killed in other 21st century wars.⁷⁵ In the first month of the war (October) alone, the number of killed Gazan children was over 10 times more than the number of children killed in the entire first year of the Russia-Ukraine war.⁷⁶ As UNICEF's Executive Director put it, Gaza is "the most dangerous place in the world to be a

⁶⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-israel-systematically-uses-quadcopters-kill-palestinians-close-distance-enar>; <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2023/12/04/how-israel-is-using-drones-in-gaza>; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-israeli-quadcopters-hi-tech-weapon-menacing-palestinian-civilians>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/02/gaza-palestinian-children-killed-idf-israel-war>; For general use of quadcopters see: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C3mt9tEM2db/>; <https://www.instagram.com/dr.ahmed.moghrabi/p/C2rPxBJgz-q/>

⁶⁶ <https://twitter.com/OwenJones84/status/1760286175699272027>; <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/14/gaza-war-israel-civilian-deaths-urban-warfare-hamas/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/surgeons-cruelty-israel-gaza>

⁶⁸ As a result of the pervasive dehumanization of Palestinians (see below), Israel has treated the results of the AI Lavender system as orders, without any requirement to independently check whether the person was a militant. As IDF sources explained, the software analyzes information about the entire 2.3 million residents of Gaza, giving almost every individual a 1-100 rating based on how likely they are to be militants. In the beginning of the war the IDF chose to follow the machine's statistical mechanism instead of using human decision-making. <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>; <https://www.geektime.co.il/idf-fights-hamas-with-ai-and-data-science/>

⁶⁹ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

⁷⁰ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/03/israel-gaza-ai-database-hamas-airstrikes>

⁷¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/03/israel-gaza-ai-database-hamas-airstrikes>

⁷² <https://www.defensedaily.com/pentagon-removed-non-combatant-casualty-cut-off-value-doctrine-2018/pentagon/>

⁷³ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

⁷⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

⁷⁵ <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/gaza-3195-children-killed-three-weeks-surpasses-annual-number-children-killed-conflict-zones>

⁷⁶ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/5903/Number-of-Gazan-children-killed-in-under-a-month-is-10-times-higher-than-that-of-Ukrainian-children-killed-in-entire-first-year-of-Russia%E2%80%99s-ongoing-war.>

child”.⁷⁷ UNICEF estimated in early February that at least 17,000 children are unaccompanied or separated from their parents.⁷⁸ Children deaths are prominent in videos from Gaza, often filmed by their own families.⁷⁹ In late February, the head of MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières) stated in front of the UN Security Council that children as young as five told members of the organization that they would prefer to die than to continue to experience the displacement, fear and witnessing of the killing of their family members.⁸⁰ A Gazan journalist wrote an open letter to Israeli society in which he narrated a case of a 6 year old boy who lay down to sleep under a truck and turned blue from the cold. When a passer-by woke him up and asked him what was he doing, the boy responded that he wanted the truck to drive over him in the morning because his entire family had been killed. The boy died the same day from hypothermia.⁸¹ A doctor returning from volunteering in a Gaza hospital said that 70-75% of the people he operated on were elementary school age or younger.⁸²

140 journalists and media workers have been killed, more than the entirety of journalists killed in World War II, and at a rate higher than any other conflict over the past century.⁸³ The Committee to Protect Journalists stated that there was a pattern of journalists in Gaza receiving threats, and subsequently their family members being killed. One journalist, for example, said that he received multiple calls from IDF officers who demanded that he stop his coverage and leave North Gaza, as well as voice messages that disclosed his location.⁸⁴ For context, the IDF has killed at least 20 journalists in the 22 years preceding the current war. Despite numerous probes of the IDF into these cases, no one has ever been charged or held responsible for these deaths.⁸⁵

As of April 15, 244 UN and aid workers have been killed.⁸⁶ More than 100 university professors, including several leading Palestinian academics, have been killed.⁸⁷ 490 health workers have been killed.⁸⁸ Israel’s attacks on hospitals have killed hundreds of Palestinians. More have died by lack of supplies⁸⁹ or forced evacuations, including four premature babies in intensive care after the IDF forced the nurse taking care of them to leave when IDF soldiers reached the hospital. The babies were left in their beds and later found during the ceasefire in late November in a state of

⁷⁷ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/press-releases/statement-by-unicef-executive-director-catherine-russell-on-the-resumption-of-fighting-in-gaza/>

⁷⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/stories-loss-and-grief-least-17000-children-are-estimated-be-unaccompanied-or>

⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1760724513581584472>; <https://twitter.com/CensoredNws/status/1761662724331774349>; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1762531665958547626>; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1779765891745378434>

⁸⁰ <https://www.msf.org/msf-briefing-gaza-un-security-council>

⁸¹ <https://twitter.com/AGvanyahu/status/176310277423659018/photo/1>

⁸² https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/11/surgeons_in_gaza

⁸³ <https://cpj.org/2024/01/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/>; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/9/how-deadly-is-the-israel-gaza-war-for-journalists>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>; see investigative report of the killing of two journalists, casting doubt on the IDF’s explanations here:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/19/gaza-journalists-killed-israel-al-jazeera-footage/>; a somewhat lower count (but with personal details) here: <https://www.ifi.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/palestine-at-least-ninety-nine-journalists-and-media-workers-killed-in-gaza>

⁸⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/21/israel-idf-accused-targeting-journalists-gaza>; <https://cpj.org/2024/03/attacks-arrests-threats-censorship-the-high-risks-of-reporting-the-israel-hamas-war/>

⁸⁵ https://cpj.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/CPJ-Special-Report-May-2023_Deadly-Pattern.pdf

⁸⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

⁸⁷ <https://www.ici-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20231228-app-01-00-en.pdf> (#90);

<https://twitter.com/Timesofgaza/status/1744041205938409756>; <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1743662116614070495>; <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1745135460270096699>; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6108/Israel-kills-dozens-of-academics-destroys-every-university-in-the-Gaza-Strip>; list with names at <https://twitter.com/sawporg/status/1755224105249333643>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760047560025317563>

⁸⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>; list with names (up to March 11) at <https://twitter.com/HCWWatch/status/1767666330252009517>.

⁸⁹ <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-80-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-Jerusalem>

decomposition as nobody cared for them.⁹⁰ The number of Palestinian deaths has led to digging graves and mass graves everywhere, including in formerly built areas and parks.⁹¹

Massacres, rules of engagement and examples

Palestinian lives are incredibly cheap. Based on sources inside the IDF, an investigative report has pointed out that dead Palestinians are defined as “[Hamas] terrorists” based not on what they did but on where they were killed.⁹² Palestinians who were killed in an area near IDF forces, “the combat zone”, were often de facto shot on sight even if unarmed. A considerable number of these people were likely looking for food and other supplies after months of fighting.⁹³ A video reveals how starving Gazans who rushed to collect airdropped aid were shot by IDF soldiers, with at least one of them shot dead.⁹⁴ A senior official in Israel’s security apparatus as well as IDF officers pointed out that there were no fixed rules of engagement and that different commanders developed their own rules in the field.⁹⁵

There are many examples from Gaza for the results of IDF policy. In one case, a car with six civilians was attacked, killing four. A 15 year old girl called the Palestinian Red Crescent from the car, but was apparently killed during the conversation. Her cousin, a 6 year old girl, called again and stayed on the line, terrified and surrounded by her dead family members, for 3 hours. The Palestinian Red Crescent sent two paramedics to retrieve her, informing the IDF of their movement. All connections with the girl and the paramedics were lost, and 12 days later the girl’s decomposing corpse was found in the car, while the paramedics were killed nearby when an IDF tank destroyed their ambulance.⁹⁶ In another case, IDF troops entered a family home and killed the two parents in sight of their children (aged 11, 9 and 5; the youngest, with cerebral palsy, lost his eye to a grenade the soldiers threw).⁹⁷ In a different case, the IDF sent a handcuffed prisoner to deliver a message to evacuate a hospital in Khan Younis, then shot him as he tried to walk outside the gate.⁹⁸ The IDF subsequently bombed the hospital.⁹⁹ A detained Gazan had his hands zip-tied before driven over by an Israeli tank, potentially while he was still alive. An image of his mutilated corpse was shared on an Israeli telegram channel with a post stating that “You are going to love this!!!”.¹⁰⁰ A human rights organization documented other occasions in which Israeli soldiers have deliberately driven over dozens of Palestinian civilians while they were alive.¹⁰¹ In another case, an IDF soldier shot and killed a Palestinian man with special needs in front of his mother in a Gaza hospital after the man shouted in fear and did not keep quiet

⁹⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/03/gaza-premature-babies-dead-nasr/>

⁹¹ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1759600702886748387> ;

<https://twitter.com/omarsuleiman504/status/1769735691808743563>

⁹² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-31/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-9035-d9a4-a7bf-dc7d839e0000>

⁹³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-31/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-9035-d9a4-a7bf-dc7d839e0000> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9fa0-dbea-abde-bfe55d9e0000>

⁹⁴ <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1775960365630624249>

⁹⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-31/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-9035-d9a4-a7bf-dc7d839e0000> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9fa0-dbea-abde-bfe55d9e0000>

⁹⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/10/im-so-scared-please-come-hind-rajab-six-found-dead-in-gaza-12-days-after-cry-for-help>; https://www.democracynow.org/2024/2/16/gaza_hind_rajab_palestine_red_crescent;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/10/world/middleeast/hind-rajab-gaza.html>; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/10/body-of-6-year-old-killed-in-deliberate-israeli-fire-found-after-12-days>

⁹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RDxQapOtUg>

⁹⁸ <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/14/gaza-nasser-hospital-evacuation-israel-prisoner/> ; <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/israel-amas-war-gaza-nasser-hospital-man-shot-dead-evacuation-warning-rcna139978>

⁹⁹ https://twitter.com/Ahmad_tibi/status/1758038092353503495

¹⁰⁰ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1763469843070697726>; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-israel-palestinian-ran-over-tank-images-suggest>

¹⁰¹ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6202>; see also driving over Palestinian corpses: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-soldier-boasted-running-over-dead-palestinian-man-tank> ; <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1771841529868358142> ; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1776064706639179811>

as the soldier commanded.¹⁰² A different soldier killed an unarmed 73-year old Palestinian who signaled to him not to shoot. In response, the soldier's commander said "He signaled 'no no [with his hands]' and you took him down? Excellent".¹⁰³ In a different case, a video filmed from an IDF drone shows the IDF killing four clearly unarmed Palestinians from afar as they walked in daylight amidst the rubble in Khan Younis.¹⁰⁴ An Israeli soldier shared a video showing the killing of five other Palestinians walking in the rubble in North Gaza.¹⁰⁵ A different video showed IDF soldiers shooting two unarmed Palestinian men before burying them in rubble with a bulldozer.¹⁰⁶ Several doctors returning from Gaza have asserted that IDF snipers have shot at children, causing "single bullet wounds to the head or chest" that killed some of them.¹⁰⁷ When the IDF evacuated a Gazan family by force from their building, forcing them to leave their grandmother, a 94-year-old woman suffering from Alzheimer's and unable to walk or speak, behind. The building was burned. Her charred remains were apparently found on her bed in the burned building.¹⁰⁸ There are many similar stories of IDF soldiers purposefully killing civilians.¹⁰⁹

Cases in which the IDF kills civilians almost never make the news in Israel and the United States. An exception happened in early April, when the IDF killed 7 workers of an international NGO (all foreign citizens) within their clearly marked vehicles operating in full coordination with the IDF.¹¹⁰ A source from the IDF stated that a drone attacked the convoy of three vehicles because a Hamas person was thought to be in it (later investigation stated this was uncertain and the person simply appeared armed).¹¹¹ After the first vehicle was bombed, some NGO workers left their vehicle and evacuated to a second vehicle, immediately notifying the IDF. Despite this, the second vehicle was bombed as well, and the survivors evacuated it to a third vehicle that was also bombed, killing them all.¹¹² The images of the bombed vehicles were geo-located and the distance between the first and third bombing was 2.4 kilometers (1.5 miles).¹¹³ This exception (alongside a few others I document here) suggests that in many similar occasions the IDF killed civilians with little oversight or consequences. About a week later, a UNICEF truck bringing humanitarian aid was hit by IDF fire (directed at nearby civilians) as well.¹¹⁴

In one particularly notable event, the "flour massacre", at least 115 civilians were killed and over 700 were injured as they attempted to get food from a convoy of lorries bringing in humanitarian aid.¹¹⁵ Palestinians claimed that the IDF shot them,¹¹⁶ while the IDF claimed that most casualties died because of overcrowding and the general mayhem in which the lorries run over the civilians.¹¹⁷ In both cases, the IDF, according to the rules of war as an occupying power, is legally responsible for

¹⁰² <https://www.itv.com/news/2024-03-01/he-didnt-understand-disabled-man-shot-dead-in-gaza-hospital-by-idf>

¹⁰³ <https://twitter.com/MatanGolanPhoto/status/1766586400558739508> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Dp95bN81Ww>

¹⁰⁴ <https://twitter.com/GozukaraFurkan/status/1770919234278740269>

¹⁰⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1770919159800402148>

¹⁰⁶ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1773065074162213322>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/02/gaza-palestinian-children-killed-idf-israel-war> ; <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2024-02-16/rafah-gaza-hospitals-surgery-israel-bombing-ground-offensive-children> ; <https://www.rsn.org/001/not-a-normal-war-doctors-say-children-have-been-targeted-by-israeli-snipers-in-gaza.html> ; https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/11/surgeons_in_gaza

¹⁰⁸ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1770897340364095722> ; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-israeli-army-forces-family-leave-94-year-old-grandmother-behind> ; <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1777521805420269651>

¹⁰⁹ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1761163980947558806> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771589516920238241> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772925436231598415>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9e1e-d764-adff-9edf9cd00000>

¹¹¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-05/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-aca8-d906-a5cf-aebcb1100000>

¹¹² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9e1e-d764-adff-9edf9cd00000>

¹¹³ <https://twitter.com/marcowenijones/status/1775125251149500706>

¹¹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sl3XydVerm8>

¹¹⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/08/middleeast/gaza-flour-massacre-idf-report-intl/index.html>

¹¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/NaksBilal/status/1763188564823576868> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1763174751042695313> ; https://twitter.com/kaneez_e_zahrah/status/1763176424012230952 ;

¹¹⁷ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/08/middleeast/gaza-flour-massacre-idf-report-intl/index.html>

the deaths of civilians. UN experts and human rights organizations,¹¹⁸ as well as the media,¹¹⁹ largely confirmed the Palestinian version of the story, partially because the IDF did not provide evidence to support their claims (an IDF video supposedly showing the event was clearly edited several times; the IDF refused to publish the full video) and testimonials from Gazans who experienced the massacre. The director of the al-Awda hospital claimed that the vast majority of injuries who came to receive treatment after the event (142 of 176) suffered from gunshot wounds.¹²⁰ A CNN investigation found inconsistencies with, and cast further doubts on, the IDF's version and leaned towards accepting the Palestinian version.¹²¹ According to UN experts as well as online sources and videos, Palestinians seeking food were shot on many occasions on the days before and after the "flour massacre".¹²² Israel's National Security Minister nonetheless praised the IDF soldiers for their conduct during the event.¹²³ International law stipulates that Israel is required to supply food and water in the areas where it is an occupying power.¹²⁴ Notably in this context, Israel and the United States were the only two countries who voted against declaring food as a human right in the United Nations in 2021.¹²⁵

An NGO documented more than 120 random mass graves of Palestinians across the Gaza Strip.¹²⁶ Other corpses have been interred in improvised burials within built areas,¹²⁷ with additional decomposed corpses¹²⁸ and skeletons on the streets.¹²⁹ Reports have "documented dozens of cases of field executions carried out by the Israeli army".¹³⁰ In one such event, on 19 Dec. IDF troops are said to have executed at least 19 unarmed Palestinian men in front of their family members.¹³¹ In another, over 30 Palestinian corpses were found in black plastic bags, blindfolded and handcuffed.¹³² Few of these cases have even been covered in Israeli media.¹³³

¹¹⁸ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/29/dozens-killed-injured-by-israeli-fire-in-gaza-while-collecting-food-aid>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68445973> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/29/gaza-aid-trucks-death-toll-explainer> ; https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/03/09/gaza-new-accounts-of-the-flour-massacre_6601904_4.html ; <https://www.972mag.com/gaza-aid-convoy-massacre-testimonies/>

¹¹⁹ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6200> ; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6200/In-press-conference.-Euro-Med-confirms-Israeli-27s-full-involvement-in-Gaza-flour-massacre> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/05/un-experts-condemn-israeli-massacre-of-palestinians-collecting-flour>

¹²⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1763221018103996559> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68445973>

¹²¹ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/09/middleeast/gaza-food-aid-convoy-deaths-eyewitness-intl-investigation-cmd>

¹²² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/03/un-experts-condemn-flour-massacre-urge-israel-end-campaign-starvation-gaza>; https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/03/09/gaza-new-accounts-of-the-flour-massacre_6601904_4.html ; <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1763651267237216587>

¹²³ <https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1763196768458604583> . For the IDF's own investigation, see: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/b1dmqv6t>; for a critique, see: <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/132587/>

¹²⁴ <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/occupied-territory/>

¹²⁵ <https://press.un.org/en/2021/gashc4336.doc.htm>

¹²⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/pictures/all-cemeteries-are-full-palestinians-buried-mass-grave-gaza-2023-11-22/> ; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6264>

¹²⁷ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1769304583325483266>

¹²⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Poydd3EG_-8 ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761369042596647177> ;

<https://twitter.com/OnlinePalEng/status/1773440806411546953>

¹²⁹ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1772664508210655331>

¹³⁰ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6058/Euro-Med-Monitor-sends-UN-rapporteurs,-ICC-Prosecutor-primary-report-documenting-dozens-of-field-execution-cases-in-Gaza>; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-survivors-recount-harrowing-israeli-field-executions> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1745259688801816854> ; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/5944/Israeli-army-executes-an-elderly-Palestinian-after-using-him-in-propaganda-campaign-about-its-%E2%80%98safe-corridor%E2%80%99-in-Gaza>

¹³¹ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unlawful-killings-in-gaza-city-ohchr-press-release/> ;

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/20/palestinians-accuse-israeli-forces-of-executing-19-civilians-in-gaza>

¹³² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/1/palestinians-demand-international-inquiry-after-mass-grave-found-in-gaza>

¹³³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra13792905>; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syv8bslop>

In a January poll, two thirds of Israelis preferred to continue the war in its current form of excessive bombardment and violence.¹³⁴ In a poll from February, about three quarters of Israeli Jews supported the continuation of the military operation to Rafah.¹³⁵

Causing the deaths of civilian populations

Israel has placed a stranglehold on the Palestinian population of Gaza since the beginning of the war.¹³⁶ The absence of supplies in Gaza – a siege – has been the stated policy of top Israeli officials since the beginning of the war.¹³⁷ Israel’s military operation have destroyed much of the local infrastructure for food production in Gaza (agricultural lands, greenhouses, fishing boats and food production facilities such as bakeries and manufacturing)¹³⁸ as well as severely degrading, destroying or putting out of use much of the water infrastructure (wells, reservoirs and desalination plants).¹³⁹ Throughout the war, only some 100-150 full truckloads are allowed in daily,¹⁴⁰ out of about 300 that are necessary for humanitarian needs (supply of food and water).¹⁴¹

Israel has weaponized humanitarian aid to Gaza, limiting its entrance to Gaza based on political reasoning which is often opaque.¹⁴² Trucks that attempt to enter the Strip encounter multiple problems as they try to do so, including attacks by the IDF.¹⁴³ The list of items that are forbidden in the Gaza strip remains unclear six months into the war, but has included chocolate croissants, animal feed, nail clippers, toys in wooden boxes, and crutches.¹⁴⁴ The UN’s humanitarian coordinator explained in April some of the ways in which Israel was impeding aid. For example, Israel requires all aid trucks enter Gaza half full, and demands a complete separation between Egyptian truck drivers (who cross into Gaza, then unload and leave) and Palestinian truck drivers (who wait for the Egyptians to leave, come with trucks, load them, and deliver aid to UN warehouses). Food convoys to the North of the Strip – where the population is undergoing famine – are three times as likely to be denied than other humanitarian convoys with other types of material.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁴ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/52071>

¹³⁵ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/53276>

¹³⁶ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

¹³⁷ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/defense-minister-announces-complete-siege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/ ; <https://twitter.com/KnessetT/status/1716502486331113922>

¹³⁸ E.g. <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inflicting-unprecedented-suffering-and-destruction-seven-ways-the-government-of-621591/>, p. 9;

https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Feb_July2024_Special_Brief.pdf

¹³⁹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/flash-analysis-report-over-two-months-attacks-food-security-gaza-december-2023>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-167>

¹⁴⁰

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrjoiZTVkYmEwNmMtZWYxNy00ODhLLWI2ZjctNjIzMzQ5OGQxNzY5IiwidCI6IjI2MmY2YTQxLTIwZTktdE0MCM04ZDNiLWZkZjVlZWNiNDE1NyIsImMiOiI9&pageName=ReportSection3306863add46319dc574> ; the discrepancy with the Israeli numbers is probably the result of the Israeli numbers counting trucks entering, but also demanding that these trucks be only half full.

¹⁴¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147342>; <https://www.wfp.org/news/famine-imminent-northern-gaza-new-report-warns> . For comparison, before the war, some 500 trucks entered Gaza daily with various supplies – about 200 truckloads of gas as well as 300 truckloads of commodities and food. In 2022, an average of 73 truckloads with food entered Gaza daily (as well as 24 truckloads with products such as livestock and animal feed). <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/crossings>

¹⁴² For example, under political pressure Israel eased its siege in early April: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-says-israel-approved-reopening-of-20-bakeries-water-pipeline-in-northern-gaza/> ; <https://twitter.com/HossamShabat/status/1779526925980995661>

¹⁴³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-175>

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/remarks-media-secretary-general> ; <https://edition.cnn.com/audio/podcasts/tug-of-war/episodes/0e6112dc-ae58-11ee-8bd1-6f9c6607fa1d> ; <https://jewishcurrents.org/israel-policy-starvation-gaza-aid> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/20/world/middleeast/gaza-aid-delivery.html> ; <https://www.wfp.org/news/famine-imminent-northern-gaza-new-report-warns> ; <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/11/israel-aid-gaza-banned-blocked/>

¹⁴⁵ <https://twitter.com/ChronicBabak/status/1778616402280059360> ; <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1x/k1xkc2nwpw>

In late March about 7,000 trucks were waiting on the Egyptian side of the border to bring supplies into the Strip because of Israel’s inefficient process of inspections (the average wait time is 20 days).¹⁴⁶ In the first two weeks of March, for example, only half of the planned humanitarian missions to northern Gaza took place. The other half were denied by the IDF or postponed.¹⁴⁷

Beginning in February, Israel began to weaponize also the distribution of aid. In the first months of the war, Gaza’s civilian police was responsible for the internal distribution of aid, including through tasks such as guarding warehouses, accompanying convoys, and overseeing the actual distribution of aid. Israel’s underlying policy is to not differentiate between Hamas’ armed military wing and Hamas as the non-state actor governing Gaza – both are seen by Israel as the same terrorist organization. As a IDF officer stated “Hamas police is Hamas... and we won’t allow Hamas to control the humanitarian assistance”.¹⁴⁸ In February, Israeli attacked several police cars, then dropped flyers that showed a destroyed police car with a message stating that Israel will not allow Hamas’ security apparatus to continue working.¹⁴⁹ In response, police withdrew from this role. Ten days later, the UN aid delivery The World Food Program stopped aid delivery because of the collapse of civil order, followed by UNRWA.¹⁵⁰ Both the US and the UN asked Israel to stop targeting the police to avoid “a total breakdown of law and order”.¹⁵¹ Israel refused, and tested its own approach – to rule Gaza through prominent local families that could oversee aid.

The “flour massacre” in late February (discussed above) was apparently the result of this approach of Israel to coordinate aid delivery with a Gaza City family.¹⁵² Hamas reacted by attempting to set up local emergency committees for security and aid distribution, apparently using al-Shifa Hospital for this coordination in the North.¹⁵³ Israel reduced the number of trucks it let into the Strip to less than a third than what it had committed to facilitating,¹⁵⁴ while also attacking Gazan police officers responsible for coordinating aid.¹⁵⁵ This was the context for Israel’s second raid on al-Shifa in mid-March (discussed in Zoom-in #1 below), during which it killed several figures closely associated with aid efforts.¹⁵⁶ By late March, Israeli strikes on the emergency committees killed more than 70 people waiting for aid, so the committees stopped working. Israel further limited the distribution of aid by informing the UN that it would not allow further UNRWA convoys to North Gaza.¹⁵⁷ Additional police officers associated with the distribution of aid were killed in April.¹⁵⁸

¹⁴⁶ <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inflicting-unprecedented-suffering-and-destruction-seven-ways-the-government-of-621591/>; https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/north-sinai-governor-to-un-chief-7000-gaza-aid-trucks-waiting-israel-holding-up-flow/

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-140>

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/21/gaza-police-aid-hamas/>

¹⁴⁹ <https://www.ft.com/content/8aa813fc-a87e-4002-9aaf-890c111aec35>; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/>

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/>; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%98%D7%A8%D7%94-%D7%A9%D7%9C-%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C-%D7%94%D7%99%D7%90-%D7%9C%D7%94%D7%A9%D7%90%D7%99%D7%A8-%D7%90%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%9B%D7%90%D7%95%D7%A1-%D7%A2%D7%9C-%D7%9B%D7%A0/>; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1770422130712146254>

¹⁵¹ <https://www.axios.com/2024/02/24/gaza-humanitarian-aid-israel-hamas-police-biden>;

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/18/world/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news>

¹⁵² <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

¹⁵³ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza> (footnote 105).

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/>

¹⁵⁵ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-says-airstrike-in-rafah-killed-3-senior-officers-in-hamass-emergency-committee/; <https://english.palinfo.com/news/2024/03/20/316217/>; also this mayor: <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/177681986586325481>

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/18/israel-hamas-gaza-shifa-issa/>

¹⁵⁷ <https://twitter.com/UNLazzarini/status/1771917857598693549>

¹⁵⁸ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/hamass-internal-security-chief-killed-in-northern-gaza-airstrike-idf-shin-bet/

Famine and starvation

The siege reality has resulted in the severe shortages of basic necessities (food, water and energy) as well as a sharply deteriorating humanitarian situation. A report by the NGO International Crisis Group noted people in Rafah who queued for flour for ten hours at a time on four consecutive days in December. Some left empty-handed.¹⁵⁹ In January, a survey among shop owners revealed a significant shortage of basic food items, with 81% indicating depletion and 19% having only limited supplies.¹⁶⁰ The situation has been extreme in North Gaza. In the northern parts of the Gaza Strip in early February, the price of a bag of flour, 30 shekels (~\$8) before the war, reached 500-1000 shekels (~\$125-250), 15-30 times higher.¹⁶¹ In late February, the price of a plate with some raw meat and rice reached \$95 (US) according to social media,¹⁶² while a nurse in Al-Shifa hospital claimed he had not eaten bread for 2 months during which he consumed animal feed.¹⁶³ At the same time, the UN's leading expert on the right to food described the circumstances as 'a situation of genocide', while the World Food Programme stated that "people are already dying from hunger-related causes".¹⁶⁴ In early March, the head of Israel's Committee for Food Security called for a ceasefire because of the humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip.¹⁶⁵ In April, the price of a kilogram of sugar reached between \$19 and \$30.¹⁶⁶

As of mid-April, at least 31 people (of which 28 were children) in Gaza died of malnutrition or dehydration.¹⁶⁷ In this context, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy stated in front of the UN Security Council that "starvation is being used [by Israel] as a war arm".¹⁶⁸ Leading NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Oxfam concluded that "the Israeli government is using starvation of civilians as a weapon of war in Gaza".¹⁶⁹ Israeli accounts have de facto admitted this,¹⁷⁰ and within a broader historical context, Israel has long used food in such a manner in Gaza.¹⁷¹ A report by a global authority on food security and nutrition from mid March stated that famine (their definition here¹⁷²) was imminent in the northern governorates of the Strip

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza> (footnote 54).

¹⁶⁰ https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Feb_July2024_Special_Brief.pdf, p. 9.

¹⁶¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-02-07/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018d-8213-daa1-a9fd-e21b04660000> ; <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20231117-give-us-our-daily-bread-gaza-faces-flour-crisis>

¹⁶² <https://twitter.com/HamzaAbuToha/status/1760588426103963720>

¹⁶³ <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1762736475957829852>

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68349031.amp> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/27/un-israel-food-starvation-palestinians-war-crime-genocide>

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/2024-03-03/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-03c5-da4e-adbf-83fdc01f0000>

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-04-04/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-a379-d315-ab9f-aff98d4b0000> ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/133730/>

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-160>

; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>;

https://twitter.com/Sarah_Hassan94/status/1761372883278807170 ; <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1761322640935940449> ;

<https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1762518985633890640> ; <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1762478847277084910> ;

https://twitter.com/save_children/status/1762543144061575626 ; <https://twitter.com/aliila2021/status/1762535516774302206> ;

https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/two-babies-starve-to-death-in-northern-gaza-hamas-health-ministry/;

<https://twitter.com/FranceskAlbs/status/176346651968035006> ; <https://twitter.com/FranceskAlbs/status/1764689858067358154> ;

<https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1764728907578712177> ; <https://twitter.com/UNICEF/status/1764296731380920490> ;

<https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6212/in-just-24-hours-two-children-and-an-elderly-man-starve-to-death-amid-rising-malnutrition-rates-in-gaza>

¹⁶⁸ <https://apnews.com/video/europe-gaza-european-union-war-and-unrest-josep-borrell-63eebfe7f71f4ed881580913c51b7036>

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/19/israeli-forces-conduct-gaza>

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra13878899> ; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/biden-warns-iran-over-gaza-israel-forms-emergency-war-cabinet-2023-10-11/>

¹⁷¹ <https://www.nybooks.com/online/2024/03/30/the-road-to-famine-in-gaza/>

¹⁷² Famine is defined as a combination of all three conditions: (1) 20% or more of households suffering an extreme lack of food; (2) 30% or more + of children suffering from acute malnutrition; and (3) at least 2 adults/4 children for every 10,000 people die daily from starvation or from disease linked to malnutrition. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/18/world/middleeast/gaza-famine-report-starvation.html>

over the next two months.¹⁷³ Anecdotal evidence confirms this. In late March, the UNICEF spokesperson wrote that he saw a dozen “skeletal” children in a single hospital in Beit Lahia.¹⁷⁴ The price of a bag of flour in northern Gaza increased to \$275 (normally \$8) by mid March, alongside rampant banditry.¹⁷⁵ By late March, apparently in the same area, the price of a few dozen kilograms (estimated from video) of vegetables reached some \$3,000.¹⁷⁶ For context, the average income in Gaza before the war was \$13-20/day.¹⁷⁷ A late March poll of Gazans in the south of the Strip found that only 44% have enough food for a day or two, and only 19% can access a place for assistance of food and water without great risk.¹⁷⁸ Individual accounts confirm these details.¹⁷⁹

As a result, the vast majority of Gaza’s population is at risk of famine. Virtually all households are skipping meals every day, with 50-80% of households going entire days and nights without eating.¹⁸⁰ Some 90% of civilians in Gaza experience “high levels of acute food insecurity”.¹⁸¹ In late January the World Health Organization’s Director-General noted the food shortages that result in medical staffs and patients receiving only one meal per day.¹⁸² Some 40% experience “emergency levels” and over 15% (378,000) experience catastrophic levels, namely “extreme lack of food, starvation and exhaustion of coping capacities”.¹⁸³ The Chief Economist of the World Food Program has stressed that “In my life, I’ve never seen anything like this in terms of severity, in terms of scale, and then in terms of speed.”¹⁸⁴ A prominent scholar of famine and Executive Director of the World Peace Foundation stated that he had never seen the war crime of starvation perpetrated in such scale over the 40 years of his career¹⁸⁵ and that “The rigor, scale and speed of the destruction of the structures necessary for survival, and enforcement of the siege, surpasses any other case of man-made famine in the last 75 years”.¹⁸⁶ An aid organization stated on CNN that Gaza was the fastest decline in nutritional status ever recorded in a human population.¹⁸⁷ In mid-March, The UK foreign secretary described a series of obstacles Israel was placing in the delivery of aid, de facto blaming Israel for the humanitarian crisis and Israel’s spokesperson for providing false information.¹⁸⁸ In late March, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to allow unimpeded food aid into Gaza.¹⁸⁹ In early April, a group of US government humanitarian experts privately warned other officials that the spread of hunger in Gaza is “unprecedented in modern history”.¹⁹⁰

¹⁷³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/18/world/middleeast/gaza-famine-report-starvation.html>

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/22/unicef-official-utter-annihilation-gaza>

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/>

¹⁷⁶ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1770911921870446966>

¹⁷⁷ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-investment-climate-statements/west-bank-and-gaza/>

¹⁷⁸ <http://pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/Poll%2091%20English%20press%20release%2020%20March%202024.pdf> (p. 6)

¹⁷⁹ <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/gaza-starvation-denial-aipac/>

¹⁸⁰ https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Nov2023_Feb2024.pdf ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/01/world/middleeast/gaza-israel-hunger.html>; <https://www.972mag.com/rafah-children-hunger-aid/>

¹⁸¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-12-21/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-8908-d60e-afdf-ed0e2bb70000>

¹⁸² <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-on-gaza--the-who-executive-board--trans-fats-and-leprosy>

¹⁸³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/gaza-is-starving>

¹⁸⁵ https://youtu.be/OpGgFZovlAw?si=mone7185_SobAivS&t=875 ; <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/mar/21/we-are-about-to-witness-the-most-intense-famine-since-world-war-ii-in-gaza> ; https://www.democracynow.org/2024/2/5/alex_de_waal

¹⁸⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/11/health/gaza-israel-hunger-starvation.html> ;

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/jan/31/israel-gaza-starvation-international-law> ; also

<https://jewishcurrents.org/israel-policy-starvation-gaza-aid>

¹⁸⁷ <https://twitter.com/MedicalAidPal/status/1763172220900151317>

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/mar/21/david-cameron-accuses-israel-of-blocking-key-aid-crossing-in-gaza>;

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/44011/documents/217998/default/>

¹⁸⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/28/famine-is-setting-in-icj-orders-israel-to-unblock-gaza-food-aid>

¹⁹⁰ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/gaza-collapse-famine_n_660c96aae4b0328a72be47f5

Evidence from the Strip reveals some of the actions that desperate Gazans are forced into because of the lack of food.¹⁹¹ Media coverage refers to people eating horse meat,¹⁹² grass and drinking contaminated water or sea water.¹⁹³ One video shows a group of people swimming in an area flooded with sewage to procure airdropped aid that landed in that area.¹⁹⁴ As of late March, about 18 Gazans died from circumstances associated with attempting to get aid (aid falling on Gazans, trampling, and drowning while trying to get to aid that fell in the sea).¹⁹⁵

A group of aid organizations that include UNICEF stated in late February that over 90% of children under the age of 5 in Gaza were facing “severe food poverty”. A similar percentage was suffering from infectious diseases, with 70% of them having diarrhoea over two weeks in February.¹⁹⁶ Images and videos from the strip appear to confirm these findings.¹⁹⁷ Despite this situation, IDF officers demanded a further lowering of the humanitarian aid to Gaza.¹⁹⁸ About 60 percent of Israeli Jews oppose humanitarian aid to Gaza, a stable figure over time.¹⁹⁹ Jewish activists have completely blocked the entrance of aid to Gaza on several occasions in recent months.²⁰⁰ IDF soldiers recorded themselves destroying and burning food warehouses in Gaza.²⁰¹

Non-food shortages (electricity, medicine, water)

As of writing, since the beginning of the war there is no electricity supply in Gaza (i.e. full electricity blackout; for comparison, in the years before the war, electricity was available on average for 12-13 hours a day).²⁰² As of December, fuel prices had increased by over 500 percent.²⁰³ In April, the price of a liter of gasoline reached 150 shekels (~\$40).²⁰⁴ I have not come across subsequent prices for fuel, suggesting that any sales of it are extremely limited. A study revealed that by January nighttime light across Gaza has been reduced by 84% (91% in Gaza City) compared to the pre-war reality.²⁰⁵ This data includes light coming from IDF troops within the Strip, and presumably light from the still functioning Palestinian hospitals that receive petrol for operating their generators. Testimonies from the Strip reveal that university library books were burned as kindling for cooking fires.²⁰⁶

¹⁹¹ <https://twitter.com/amirs74/status/1771198476446998611>

¹⁹² <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240224-dead-horses-scraps-leaves-gaza-s-hungry-get-desperate>;

<https://twitter.com/KhalilAsslan/status/1773732648847876569>

¹⁹³ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/30/middleeast/famine-looms-in-gaza-israel-war-intl/index.html> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-02-07/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018d-8213-daa1-a9fd-e21b04660000>;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mN1SRUx0R8>

¹⁹⁴ <https://twitter.com/sarabahaa94/status/1771278625175654815>

¹⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/arixegal/status/1772657137136619838> ; <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/26/middleeast/palestinians-drown-gaza-aid-drop-intl/index.html>

¹⁹⁶ <https://www.nutritioncluster.net/sites/nutritioncluster.com/files/2024-02/GAZA-Nutrition-vulnerability-and-SitAn-v7.pdf> ;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2024/feb/20/middle-east-crisis-live-israel-gaza-yemen-houthi-lebanon-hague-court-justice?page=with:block-65d4650d8f08f68df4ca9a84&filterKeyEvents=false#liveblog-navigation>

¹⁹⁷ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1750503719806923075> ; <https://twitter.com/NABEELRAJAB/status/1750017231197544706>;

<https://twitter.com/jakeshieldsajj/status/1751580352601309591>

¹⁹⁸ <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3633138>

¹⁹⁹ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/52967>

²⁰⁰ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-125> ;

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2024/gaza-aid-truck-sea-airdrop/> ; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-30/ty-article/.premium/a-new-low-the-israelis-advocating-to-starve-the-people-of-gaza/0000018d-5b42-d0fc-a9bd-5f5fc0740000>

²⁰¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1757406177883750809> ; also <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inflicting-unprecedented-suffering-and-destruction-seven-ways-the-government-of-621591/> (p. 11)

²⁰² <https://www.ochaopt.org/page/gaza-strip-electricity-supply>

²⁰³ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000154766/download/>

²⁰⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-04-04/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-a379-d315-ab9f-aff98d4b0000>

²⁰⁵ <https://www.care.org/news-and-stories/press-releases/care-warns-84-of-gazas-lights-extinguished-people-left-sick-and-starving/>

²⁰⁶ <https://www.nbcnews.com/specials/gaza-universities-destroyed-israel-military-war/index.html>

In November, the average water supply per person in Gaza was between 1.5-1.8 liters daily (the minimum average volume of water for drinking and domestic hygiene should be 15 liters),²⁰⁷ but this number decreased to less than one liter on average in February.²⁰⁸ Even basic medical supplies are in short supply. Gauze, for example, is sterilized and reused for the next patient.²⁰⁹ The lack of medical supplies has resulted in the conduction of medical operations, including C-sections and amputations, without anesthesia or blood supplies.²¹⁰ An online video shows a Gazan doctor who had to amputate his daughter's foot on the dining table in their home without anesthesia.²¹¹ A medical student at Al-Shifa hospital recounts how he had to stitch the face of a boy who was wounded in an Israeli bombardment for 3 hours in darkness and without anesthesia.²¹² A British surgeon who visited al-Aqsa hospital recounted in the UN the story of a girl burned so badly that he could see her facial bones. She had no chance of surviving it, so she died in agony because there was no morphine to give her, and because there was no place for her to die in she was simply left on the floor to die. The surgeon stated there were many such cases and recounted several.²¹³ There are many similar stories. These stories have long-term implications. For example, there are already over 1,000 Gazan children amputees, each of which will require 8-12 more surgical interventions as they grow up.²¹⁴

As a result of the lack of supplies, women who face postpartum bleeding as they give birth have undergone hysterotomies for lack of medicine and blood supply, preventing them from giving birth in the future.²¹⁵ Oxfam's Middle East Regional Director stated that "Amongst the horror and carnage in Gaza, we are now at the abhorrent stage of babies dying because of diarrhoea and hypothermia. It is shattering that newborns are coming into the world and due to the apocalyptic conditions, stand little chance of survival." In some cases, mothers had to give birth in classrooms full with 70 other people, which the director described as "simply inhumane".²¹⁶ Miscarriages in Gaza have increased by 300% compared to the pre-war situation.²¹⁷ A doctor from Doctors Without Borders who spent a few weeks in Gaza stated the special vulnerability of breastfeeding women as well, who cannot produce enough milk because of malnutrition, and their infants, who often have neither the milk nor formula because of the lack of clean water in Gaza.²¹⁸ Women in Gaza also have difficulties finding menstrual pads, with some using alternatives such as the corners of their tents to manage their periods.²¹⁹

²⁰⁷ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000154766/download/>

²⁰⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/27/un-israel-food-starvation-palestinians-war-crime-genocide>

²⁰⁹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

²¹⁰ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-32>; <https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/nightmarish-gazas-pregnant-women-endure-c-sections-without-anesthesia-15823792>; <https://news.un.org/en/interview/2023/11/1143327>; <https://healthnews.com/news/c-sections-are-performed-without-anesthesia-in-gaza/>; https://www.juoor.org/cached_uploads/download/2023/11/11/maternal-health-report-final-1699726911.pdf

²¹¹ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1746887014337671410>

²¹² <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1763960723695185934>

²¹³ <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1770677587670684039>; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/single-worst-top-oxford-surgeon-horrors-gaza-hospital/>

²¹⁴ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/the-children-who-lost-limbs-in-gaza>

²¹⁵ https://www.juoor.org/cached_uploads/download/2023/11/11/maternal-health-report-final-1699726911.pdf

²¹⁶ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/babies-dying-preventable-causes-besieged-gaza-oxfam>

²¹⁷ <https://jezebel.com/miscarriages-in-gaza-have-increased-300-under-israeli-1851168680>

²¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/abierkhatib/status/1771451982500229193>

²¹⁹ <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2024/01/11/1224201620/another-layer-of-misery-women-in-gaza-struggle-to-find-menstrual-pads-running-wa>

Gaza's health system

Gaza's health system has all but collapsed. 84% of all health facilities have been damaged or destroyed.²²⁰ Less than a third of Gaza's hospitals and a quarter of its primary health centers remain partially operational.²²¹ Doctors who visited the Gaza Strip during the war recount horror tales of the conditions within the overcrowded hospitals, the types and quantities of patient cases, and the recurring attacks on hospitals throughout the war.²²² There are at least many hundreds of thousands of reported cases of diseases in Gaza so far.²²³ As of early April, there have been almost 650,000 cases of acute respiratory infections.²²⁴ Almost 350,000 cases of diarrhea have been reported, over 100,000 of which are among children aged 5 or less.²²⁵ In a single week in mid-December, 3,200 cases of diarrhea were reported every day (compared to 2,000 per month before the war).²²⁶ On average, there is one shower in Gaza for every 4,500 people, and a toilet for every 220.²²⁷ Important public voices in Israel – such as a former general and head of Israel's National Security Council and official wartime advisor to Israel's Defense Minister²²⁸ – have spoken in favor of allowing diseases to decimate the civilian population in Gaza.²²⁹ A mid March report found that ~75% of Gaza's solid waste is dumped into random sites, contaminating water sources, so that 97% of ground water was unfit for human consumption.²³⁰

Israel has systematically dismantled the health system in Gaza, making it inoperable. In late February, the head of MSF stated that “there is no health system to speak of left in Gaza”.²³¹ Israel justified much of this by stating that the medical facilities were used for military purposes, but the head of MSF stated in late February that his organization has “seen zero independently verified evidence of this”.²³² In mid March, an Oxfam report stated that Israel continues to block aid response in seven different ways and warned that Gaza “will suffer mass death from disease and starvation far beyond the current 31,000 Palestinian war casualties”.²³³ A global authority on food security and nutrition released its own report in mid March, highlighting catastrophic levels (the highest level of malnutrition) of food insecurity across the Gaza Strip (55% in the north to 25% in the south).²³⁴

As a result of the above, the chair of global public health at the University of Edinburgh has stated in December that “the world faces the prospect of almost a quarter of Gaza's 2 million population - close to half a million human beings - dying within a year. These would be largely deaths from

²²⁰ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf>

²²¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192> ; https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/Sitrep_-_issue_27.pdf

²²² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REnN_dLtrLA

²²³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

²²⁴ https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/Sitrep_-_issue_27.pdf

²²⁵ https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/Sitrep_-_issue_27.pdf

²²⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-86>

²²⁷ <https://www.who.int/news/item/21-12-2023-lethal-combination-of-hunger-and-disease-to-lead-to-more-deaths-in-gaza>; in early January in UNRWA shelters the ratio was 1 toilet for over 486 people. <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-59-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem> ; more details and partially updated evidence here: https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Feb_July2024_Special_Brief.pdf (pp. 22-23).

²²⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r1zlcnoqa>

²²⁹ <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001462900>

²³⁰ <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inflicting-unprecedented-suffering-and-destruction-seven-ways-the-government-of-621591/>

²³¹ <https://www.msf.org/msf-briefing-gaza-un-security-council>

²³² <https://www.msf.org/msf-briefing-gaza-un-security-council>

²³³ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/israel-government-continues-block-aid-response-despite-ici-genocide-court-ruling>; <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inflicting-unprecedented-suffering-and-destruction-seven-ways-the-government-of-621591/>

²³⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/18/world/middleeast/gaza-famine-report-starvation.html> ;

https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Feb_July2024_Special_Brief.pdf

preventable health causes and the collapse of the medical system”.²³⁵ Other academics reached similar and more detailed conclusions.²³⁶

Israeli discourse and de-humanization of Palestinians

Dehumanization in Israeli institutions and the IDF

Much of the above is made possible through the consistent de-humanization of Palestinians, fore and foremost those living in Gaza. This dehumanization has proceeded from the top of the Israeli state. Israel’s Prime Minister has described the conflict as “a struggle between the children of light and the children of darkness, between humanity and the law of the jungle”,²³⁷ stated that “this war is civilization against barbarism”²³⁸ and defined the war as a battle against the Biblical Amalek,²³⁹ which the Bible directs to annihilate completely: men, women, children and livestock.²⁴⁰ Israel’s President has stated that Israel did not distinguish between militants and civilians, “it’s an entire nation out there that is responsible”.²⁴¹ He also personally wrote a message on an artillery shell to be shot into Gaza.²⁴² Israel’s Minister of Defense has described the Palestinians in Gaza as “human animals”. At least five other government ministers have made similar statements.²⁴³ Israel’s National Security minister told Border Police troops they should shoot terrorists even if the terrorists do not threaten them, against procedure.²⁴⁴ The minister of Social Equality and Women’s Advancement asserted that she was proud of the ruins in Gaza and that every baby there, even 80 years from now, will tell their grandchildren what the Jews did.²⁴⁵ A ruling party MP has stated on TV that he was told “it is clear that we need to destroy [or annihilate, depending on translation of להשמיד] all Gazans”.²⁴⁶ Other politicians have done the same.²⁴⁷ Israel’s Ambassador to the UK justified the destruction of Gaza because “every school, every mosque, every second house” was connected to a tunnel Hamas was using and therefore a legitimate target.²⁴⁸ The Minister for Social Equality & Women’s Advancement stated in late March that Israel’s was fighting against the Amalekites “of our times” in explicit context of the religious obligation to exterminate Amalek.²⁴⁹ At the same time, a former general described the people in three areas from which Israel retreated (Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon) as “human animals”.²⁵⁰

²³⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/29/health-organisations-disease-gaza-population-outbreaks-conflict>

²³⁶ https://gaza-projections.org/gaza_projections_report.pdf

²³⁷ <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/children-post-deleted-netanyahu/>

²³⁸ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-to-dutch-leader-this-war-is-civilization-vs-barbarism/

²³⁹ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/Article-1049593>; <https://www.npr.org/2023/11/07/1211133201/netanyahus-references-to-violent-biblical-passages-raise-alarm-among-critics>

²⁴⁰ 1 Samuel 15:2-3.

²⁴¹ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/israel-gaza-isaac-herzog_n_65295ee8e4b03ea0c004e2a8

²⁴² <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2024-01-03/ty-article/.premium/a-munition-signed-by-israeli-president-could-hit-a-child/0000018c-cbc4-d4e1-ad8f-fff5a0c70000>

²⁴³ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20231228-app-01-00-en.pdf>, pp. 60-62. ; also

<https://www.politico.eu/article/ron-prosor-israel-evoy-hamas-animals-must-be-destroyed>

²⁴⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkxx1alft>

²⁴⁵ <https://twitter.com/GolanMay/status/1759675501424042329>; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1760354792663142557>

²⁴⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfMxnNkQSfmQ>

²⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/AmirHetsroni/status/1743063371551822292> (speaker is Moshe Feiglin);

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syq0011n006>

²⁴⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQtqvSYjMlc>

²⁴⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771246005368861008>

²⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1773260052683469178>

Institutions in Israel's security apparatus repeatedly dehumanized Palestinians. The IDF ran a Telegram channel ("72 Virgins – Uncensored") that propagandized Israeli audiences through explicit and uncensored "exclusive" videos and images that depicted killings and corpses in Gaza, using explicit language that also compared Gazans to cockroaches and rats.²⁵¹ The IDF has published a series of eight poetry volumes that contained poems by civilians, soldiers (including the commander of the IDF Education Corps) and reservists – contained many revenge themes as well poems that treat the war as a religious war.²⁵² In January, over 130 reserve generals and colonels serving in Gaza called upon the military to lay siege to the Northern Gaza Strip, block humanitarian aid and stop the operation of any hospital.²⁵³ In mid-March Israel's security apparatus attempted to return to Gaza about 20 Gazan children and adults suffering from debilitating conditions such as cancer and receiving life-saving treatments in hospitals in East Jerusalem and Israel.²⁵⁴ The decision was delayed after a petition by the charity Physicians for Human Rights to Israel's Supreme Court.²⁵⁵

De-humanization in the IDF

The dehumanization of Palestinians is now normative, pervasive and obvious in many hundreds²⁵⁶ of images and videos, almost all of which were uploaded by IDF soldiers to social media.²⁵⁷ These videos and images present shooting civilians waving white flags,²⁵⁸ abuse of individuals,²⁵⁹ captives and corpses,²⁶⁰ gleefully damaging or destroying houses²⁶¹, various structures and institutions,²⁶²

²⁵¹ The IDF's involvement was denied at first. <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2023-12-12/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-3918-dc03-a9ec-3d7b95f80000>; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-02-04/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-7042-dd6e-a98d-f462d6a00000>

²⁵² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/literature/2024-03-26/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-7ad9-d96c-af9f-7ed9e9fa0000>

²⁵³ https://ynet-pic1.yit.co.il/picserver5/wcm_upload_files/2024/01/21/S1mT5hcKp/merged.pdf; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/terror-and-security/israel-hamas-war-gaza-idf-aid-strike-world-central-kitchen/>

²⁵⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/health/article/h17117hua6>

²⁵⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-20/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-5d54-d27e-a7af-7ffe83dc0000>; https://twitter.com/PHR_IL/status/1770877688539988234

²⁵⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAT9NQ4WkEQ> (hundreds; see below for many others)

²⁵⁷ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/videos-of-israeli-soldiers-acting-maliciously-emerge-amid-international-outcry-against-tactics-in-gaza>; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1757920440155242710>; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1761868392326148474>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1763708173905506449>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1763563991387746557>; images at <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1764384165724598533>; plenty of content at: <https://www.wattan.net/ar/news/430229.html?fbclid=IwAR3bg9o99KfZMujG1phBISjxDhNWIMF6hAal8nQlaf-3b-98IjVXZ2BOV4k>. Another collection at: <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1769359560131657965>; another collection at: <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771890196805517815>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772715497890394325>; another collection at: <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772964108121313599>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1773452674802806910>; another collection of dozens of videos and images: <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1773723836254450046>; <https://twitter.com/LensVeritatis/status/1774998396501373207>; another collection of dozens of videos and images: <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1775998584506167408>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1776588809011970367> (collection); <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1776384065920217472>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1778542167612592554>

²⁵⁸ <https://twitter.com/middleeasteye/status/1744351540435935525>;

<https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1750601287102542296>; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1749971465422745729>

²⁵⁹ <https://www.mistaclim.org/he/post/%D7%94%D7%92%D7%99%D7%91%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%A0%D7%95>

²⁶⁰ Long list of videos at: <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1713533460290076817>;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1744296383174025397>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1745427870216851736>;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1747994879156793524>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1752258519900766489>;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1755891061015064836>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1758617748383453638>;

<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1758914324150538698>; <https://twitter.com/angeloinchina/status/1759769783409738006>;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1764778057364042167>; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1764759225241129162>;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1765447101100785887>; <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2024/03/05/social-media-posts-show-off-blindfolded-and-bound-palestinian-detainees/>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1767223231549718862>;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1768061335030444144>; <https://twitter.com/Aboujahiah/status/1769867124103598146>;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1774197948487725476>

²⁶¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIC4ApANLwg>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YiolU7WwpUQ>;

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240103-israeli-soldiers-invade-damaged-house-in-gaza-and-destroy-it/>;

<https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1743665392722059344>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1748137507319939548>;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1746581304999542901>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1751618405453422875>;

religious sites²⁶³ and looting of personal belongings,²⁶⁴ as well as randomly firing their weapons,²⁶⁵ shooting local animals,²⁶⁶ destroying private property²⁶⁷ and defacing Palestinian²⁶⁸ and Islamic symbols.²⁶⁹ More videos are covered by *The New York Times*²⁷⁰ and *CNN*.²⁷¹

One video, for example, shows tens of Palestinian captives from Gaza sitting in a bus tied up and with their eyes covered. An Israeli soldier then demands that they praise his family and state that they want to become slaves to his family “forever and ever”.²⁷² Another testimony of a Gazan doctor states that the detained director of Al-Shifa medical complex was made to crawl like an animal, had a chain placed around his neck and was told to eat from a bowl like a dog.²⁷³ A Gazan detainee said that IDF soldiers placed women detainees from Gaza into the men’s section while being completely naked, and cut the hair of some of the women detainees.²⁷⁴ A detained Gazan woman recounted her story about the abuse and humiliation she suffered during her own detainment, during which she was separated from her little children and IDF soldiers beat her on multiple occasions as well as threatened to bury her alive.²⁷⁵

Looting has become normalized²⁷⁶ to the extent that one case was featured approvingly in a popular Friday evening news segment,²⁷⁷ while a prominent Israeli journalist’s Telegram channel shared an image of a table full of money with the caption “The [IDF] paratroopers hit the jackpot in Khan Younis”.²⁷⁸ Soldiers shared an image of themselves with tens of thousands of shekels (thousands of dollars)²⁷⁹ A military doctor noted disapprovingly that looting had become “almost

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1753158451734220834> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1756458915473105113> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1757155595877032104> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1757163079207358570> ; <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1760434485957390399> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1761849659671085212> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761723209760608272> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1765297033093538206> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771330290629157277> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771541779453546829> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772404140502630573> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1778766344256737443>

²⁶² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1742346460559995063> ; <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1743626241104543942> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760038133872095300> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772713480140865594>

²⁶³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=if_Z2ZeqrN8 ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1754458148276990180> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1757054593656103198> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1777799671647191117>

²⁶⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/amid-ongoing-genocide-gaza-systematic-israeli-theft-occurring-palestinian-civilian-homes-enar> ; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-war-gaza-singer-helpless-israeli-soldier-filmed-tiktok-his-guitar> ; <https://twitter.com/BChutzpah19416/status/1750186862579269867> ; written report that includes a soldier confessing to looting homes before demolishing them: <https://medium.com/@dillontelem/gaza-warzone-musings-a-soldiers-reflections-on-demolition-and-humanity-7ddeae313c00> ; <https://twitter.com/adinaitay/status/1756791144111816917> ;

<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1757157210356936804> ; <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1760426342753935765> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761463006720926062> ; <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1761815084081246331> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1762221066372485260> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772399473018192372>

²⁶⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1769705371935912186> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1769359560131657965> ; <https://twitter.com/abierkhatib/status/1776475339595628838>

²⁶⁶ https://twitter.com/Sarah_Hassan94/status/1754620276271149451

²⁶⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1748130778737729911> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761472312908320798> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1764773062908547579> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1765035342032142672> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772398568621346898> ; <https://twitter.com/adinaitay/status/1772903912867016869> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1776955769553867178>

²⁶⁸ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1742273606699106542> ; <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1743712184725594564>

²⁶⁹ <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1769378368431047090>

²⁷⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/06/world/middleeast/israel-idf-soldiers-war-social-media-video.html>

²⁷¹ <https://twitter.com/amanpour/status/1758204651927744784>

²⁷² <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1752433175320478060>

²⁷³ <https://twitter.com/adham922/status/1756068057779245412>

²⁷⁴ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1756605167946899965>

²⁷⁵ <https://snd.ps/post/117484/%D9%87%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AD-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%AF%D9%81%D9%86%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%B6%D8%B9%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A3%D8%B7%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A> ; <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1773318803075531136>

²⁷⁶ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/132092/>

²⁷⁷ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1756438313899024862>

²⁷⁸ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1760599708857237838>

²⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772972625532207265>

institutionalized”.²⁸⁰ An IDF soldier attempted to sell online a Gazan passport and other items he had looted while serving in Gaza.²⁸¹

Revenge is a common theme in this content.²⁸² Some IDF soldiers shared social media content that explicitly compared Gazans to the biblical Amalek (see above),²⁸³ as well as stating that they have fulfilled the religious commandment to annihilate the memory of Amalek.²⁸⁴ Other IDF soldiers opened a “ Hamas Hunting Club”, complete with a patch and logo, and filmed themselves holding it with Palestinian detainees in the background.²⁸⁵ Other soldiers upload much revenge content and relate it to the destruction of the Gaza Strip, including the destruction they themselves caused.²⁸⁶ A collection of brief interviews with IDF soldiers, uploaded by an IDF soldier, reveals that many of them speak of destroying the Strip and exacting revenge. The creator asserts that “It’s us or them. There is no proportionality and no symmetry”.²⁸⁷ High ranking officers have said similar things.²⁸⁸ In January alone, the IDF burned hundreds of houses and apartments in Gaza which Israeli soldiers temporarily occupied, without legal approval in a procedure that became normative.²⁸⁹ During the Jewish Purim celebration, IDF soldiers filmed themselves reading the Scroll of Esther while indiscriminately firing a mortar found each time the name “Haman” was mentioned (in Jewish tradition, the mentioning of the name “Haman” during reading the Scroll is supposed to be accompanied by loud noise).²⁹⁰

Many soldiers release videos that portray their experience and destruction in Gaza as a fun and humorous,²⁹¹ or content that ignores the war, such as conducting a yoga class in an abandoned home in Gaza,²⁹² or a soldier holding up a sign advertising a barber shop in Israel with corpses of dead Palestinians around him.²⁹³ Other photos include soldiers posing near election banners for local

²⁸⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra13792905>

²⁸¹ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/rjytktkra

²⁸² <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1750219568428036237> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1756652152607457781>

²⁸³ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1762185882994425961> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772965195683336261>

²⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1779808804751757387>

²⁸⁵ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1765386577855791185>

²⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1767900767313182897>

²⁸⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772304727457317039>

²⁸⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqEj3DzadiM>

²⁸⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-31/tv-article/.premium/0000018d-5fea-d9df-a9cd-7ffe4e820000> ;

<https://twitter.com/OmerArvili/status/1753754952155934999> ; see also this undated video of an IDF Major apparently torching a house:

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1769761897358750158> ; also <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772698517145796872>

²⁹⁰ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1771197890829898017>

²⁹¹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1745063720080793681> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1745491460525375587> ;

<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1748075046294163757> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1746696846817325288> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1746685595366125951> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1745973511301026092> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1749272544975229438> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1749593678861984045> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750782757326795020> ; <https://twitter.com/NABEELRAJAB/status/1750228266193969448> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750627849948532763> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750540763413287350> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1749795644532035602> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750197302579343870> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1753422534555427299> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1753536164085010674> ;

<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1754091912040968444> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1754553057696784519> ; a long list

of additional videos here: <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1755973157515669708> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1757094979460067773> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760040514915553463> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1759307381169701366> ; <https://twitter.com/NaksBilal/status/1761825956950421858> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761363322182516924> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761360983174316281> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1762212629576069120> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1762543392997703956> ;

<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1766193632661447085> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1766178422361821416> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1766491956090155333> ; more videos and images here:

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1766912143444656544> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1767985211747270834> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1769374467732767049> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1769865723843588124> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771544787264409759> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1773452109532323868> ;

<https://twitter.com/LensVeritatis/status/1774471148430111088> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1776049466656579639> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1764936131718635713> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1779619958126784854>

²⁹² <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1749956154975744455> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1753536576791970148> ;

<https://twitter.com/EmilioMorenatti/status/1759669676810904020> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1766582097404137482> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1779481518580125800>

²⁹³ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1755129771825000637>

(Israeli) politicians and restaurant chains “coming soon” to Gaza.²⁹⁴ Recurring types of content include humorously presenting the lingerie of Gazan women²⁹⁵ or posing with items (often toys) from abandoned Gazan houses.²⁹⁶ *Ha’aretz*, the left-leaning Israel newspaper, covered without irony the good food that IDF soldiers were eating in abandoned homes in Gaza at the same time as their displaced owners were starving.²⁹⁷ The IDF has even brought influencers to mockingly “review” a “hotel” in Gaza.²⁹⁸

In late February, the top IDF lawyer acknowledged that the actions of some soldiers have crossed the criminal threshold, and said that action must be taken against them.²⁹⁹ I have seen almost no reporting on such disciplinary processes within the IDF since the beginning of the war, and in the few cases where such process took place the impact on the IDF soldiers committing the acts was negligible.³⁰⁰

Dehumanization in Israeli society

In the first month of the war, some 18,000 calls to flatten, erase or destroy Gaza were mentioned on Hebrew Twitter (compared to 16 in the month and a half before the war).³⁰¹ In November, 90 Israeli doctors signed a letter calling to bomb hospitals in Gaza.³⁰² A popular singer used a long series of expletives against Gaza during a show for Israeli soldiers.³⁰³ In early January, a long list of rabbis, academics and ten MPs have called for the cessation of all humanitarian aid to Gaza.³⁰⁴ In February, a former senior Mossad figure and an important journalist agreed that children aged 5 and up in Gaza are not uninvolved in the conflict and therefore do not deserve humanitarian aid.³⁰⁵ An Israeli media outlet has also noted with glee that the number of deaths of “Arabs” in Gaza in the current war is higher than all previous wars.³⁰⁶ An Israeli Telegram channel with 127,000 followers shared the image of a Gazan child with cerebral palsy who starved to death as the sequel to the film E.T.³⁰⁷ A rabbi at the head of a yeshiva for pre-military age men stated that according to Jewish law, all Gazans must be killed, including babies.³⁰⁸ A popular Israeli stand-up comedian mocked Gazans who were killed from faulty airdropped humanitarian aid, declaring that they were “such morons”.³⁰⁹

²⁹⁴ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760407071747719357> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761039679212671105>
²⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760359033095991623> ; <https://twitter.com/OwenJones84/status/1760640827720638639> ;
<https://twitter.com/wattheactualfuq/status/1760775215418634685> ; https://twitter.com/bernstein_ariel/status/1761809205147717664 ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1762207301920776365> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1762201439785410805> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1763708246227865971> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1763708570514657704> ;
<https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1764883823857218031> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1765392369531187549> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1766016416371630284> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772748840388419826> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772964108121313599/> ; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-soldiers-play-with-gaza-womens-underwear-online-posts-2024-03-28/> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1775564585329729787> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1776717745045803169>
²⁹⁶ <https://twitter.com/grapesofwhat/status/1761332020402118799> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1762556002711289987> ;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1763682787054211217>
²⁹⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/food/2024-02-13/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018d-82c5-d6dc-ab9f-cffd1ebc0000>
²⁹⁸ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1743296706576269446> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1739728935779234254>
²⁹⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/21/world/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news#the-israeli-militarys-top-lawyer-reports-some-troop-conduct-that-crosses-the-criminal-threshold> ; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-02-21/ty-article/.premium/top-idf-lawyer-some-israeli-soldiers-have-engaged-in-criminal-behavior-during-war/0000018d-cbb5-d6e9-a38d-fbbdc0610000>
³⁰⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-11/ty-article/0000018e-2c36-d682-a9df-edbe2df50000> ;
https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/rjytkkra
³⁰¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-war-rhetoric.html>
³⁰² <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/11/israeli-doctors-urge-the-bombing-of-gaza-hospitals/>
³⁰³ <https://www.ice.co.il/social/news/article/988380> “Gaza, you daughter of a bitch, Gaza, you Black, you garbage can, Gaza, you whore...”
³⁰⁴ <https://twitter.com/shilofreid/status/1742919348401135788>
³⁰⁵ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1757837275830907052>
³⁰⁶ https://twitter.com/itamar_green/status/1741504115874627765
³⁰⁷ <https://twitter.com/CensoredMen/status/1765773664325075354>
³⁰⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sy3bfhu6p>
³⁰⁹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1769159335299485732>

Israeli TV promoted a genocidal song in which a choir of Israeli children sang lines such as “In a year, there will be nothing there [in Gaza] and we will safely return to our homes. Within a year, we will annihilate everyone and then we will return to plow our fields” (the original song was removed).³¹⁰ Several Israeli hip hop hits have been released as well, garnering millions of views on YouTube. These songs call for repeated attacks on Gaza, dehumanize Gazans (“All your Fatmas look like whores”) and express glee for Gazans not having food, water and homes (e.g. “You don’t have bread or water. Ah and you don’t have a home either”).³¹¹ A senior journalist asserted that Gazans “have earned that hell fairly, and I don’t have a milligram of empathy”.³¹² A senior commentator stated that “to destroy Hamas... you have to bring Gaza to a humanitarian disaster”.³¹³ Many other media workers and artists have said similar things.³¹⁴ Voices on the street speak openly and positively about the killing of civilians in Gaza in interviews.³¹⁵ After the IDF bombed and killed 7 workers of an international NGO (discussed above), a popular Israeli telegram channel expressed joy for the deaths for the foreign citizens while discussing them in a humiliating manner.³¹⁶ When the IDF killed three sons and four grandchildren of Ismail Haniyeh, one of Hamas’s leaders,³¹⁷ an Israeli journalist cited the religious commandment to erase the memory of Amalek.³¹⁸

Israeli demonstrators have repeatedly attempted to block humanitarian aid from entering Gaza, including holding a rave/protest just outside the border wall.³¹⁹ On one occasion, the IDF attacked a food convoy.³²⁰ In late February and early March about half of the missions aimed at delivering aid to areas in the north part of the Gaza Strip were denied access by Israeli authorities.³²¹ After the “flour massacre” on 29 February, Israel’s Minister of National Security called to “completely support” all IDF troops while also calling for stopping all humanitarian aid to Gazans.³²² When the IDF transferred about 70 Gazan orphans to the West Bank as a gesture of good will to Germany, it was harshly criticized by both politicians and the government.³²³

The de-humanization of Palestinians is closely associated with a sharp increase in Israeli militarism. Israeli dating practices attest to both these changes.³²⁴ It became extremely common for soldiers and reservists during the war to upload to their social media accounts, including accounts on dating apps, content related to the war – such as images of themselves in uniform brandishing guns, standing in front of destroyed buildings, sitting in abandoned homes, or filming themselves with Gazan detainees.³²⁵ One Tinder bio, for example, stated that “We are not only here to fuck

³¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV0pEUXMz6M>

³¹¹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1768989430084227090> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfZ0JYA7EOg> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfZ0JYA7EOg>

³¹² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2023-12-19/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-7d09-de44-a9be-7d9d47790000>

³¹³ <https://twitter.com/frevisrael1/status/1769996721591877793>

³¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1768045698350465445>

³¹⁵ <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C5YJhcglsvz/>

³¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1775162156792631334>

³¹⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/three-sons-hamas-leader-haniyeh-killed-israeli-airstrike-2024-04-10/>

³¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1778072422530400755>

³¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/LowkeyOnline/status/1757326323712774650> ; <https://twitter.com/loffredojeremy/status/1762480372963508266> ; <https://twitter.com/mekomit/status/1768220704833446359>

³²⁰ <https://palestine.un.org/en/259747-food-convoy-waiting-move-northern-gaza-was-hit-israeli-naval-gunfire>

³²¹ <https://twitter.com/UNRWA/status/1759993361702748380> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-140>

³²² <https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1763196768458604583>

³²³ <https://www.inn.co.il/flash/981582> ; https://www.mako.co.il/news-diplomatic/2024_q1/Article-ad64e47a0ed2e81026.htm ; <https://www.zman.co.il/newsletter/2024-03-12/> ; <https://www.idn.co.il/news/2157725/> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-12/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-3344-d5ad-addf-7f518fc0000> ; <https://chabad.info/news/war/1063572/> ; <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3649971> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/on-the-line/2024-03-13/ty-article/.highlight/0000018e-32df-d897-a58f-b7dfad0b0000>

³²⁴ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-03-24/ty-article-magazine/.premium/were-not-only-here-to-fuck-hamas-how-israeli-militarism-took-over-online-dating/0000018e-60aa-d27e-a7af-7aee5b00000>

³²⁵ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-03-24/ty-article-magazine/.premium/were-not-only-here-to-fuck-hamas-how-israeli-militarism-took-over-online-dating/0000018e-60aa-d27e-a7af-7aee5b00000>

Hamas".³²⁶ Both men and women, both within straight and LGBT communities and dating apps, have reported that these images have increased the "stock value" of those that upload them (a similar effect was reported for soldiers in uniform who frequented bars).³²⁷ All of the above legitimizes as well as incentivizes violent behavior in the war within the Gaza Strip.

Effects of de-humanization on detained and arrested Palestinians

Thousands of Palestinians have been detained and moved to camps within Israel.³²⁸ Many of these Palestinians (as much as 85-90% according to Israeli media) are detained without any concrete connection to Hamas.³²⁹ The conditions throughout the process of arrest and detainment are appalling, as a released Gazan poet has narrated in detail in *The New Yorker* in January.³³⁰ Many others have shared similar stories, including on the torture they experienced.³³¹ Online videos provide more evidence.³³² In one, a Gazan doctor who was detained by Israel said that he was held for 45 days, throughout which he was blindfolded and handcuffed, with his legs tied in clamps in what amounts to torture. He was subsequently released.³³³ A Gazan who was detained with his wife said that she was separated from their children (a 4 year old boy and a half year old baby), and that since his release he has not found her or them.³³⁴ To date, at least 8 Palestinian prisoners and captives have died in Israeli jails since the beginning of the war,³³⁵ where conditions are appalling as well.³³⁶ The IDF has admitted that additional detained Palestinians from Gaza have died but refused to supply additional details,³³⁷ until in early March *Ha'aretz* revealed that 27 Gazans died in IDF detention camps.³³⁸ For comparison, in the notorious American Guantánamo prison, 9 prisoners died over more than 20 years of operation.³³⁹ The IDF refused to answer whether it opened Military Police investigations for the deaths of these Gazans.³⁴⁰ According to a law amendment that was passed after the beginning of the war, Israel can now hold "illegal fighters" as detainees for up to 45 days without a warrant or notifying their families, and putting a detainee in contact with their lawyer

³²⁶ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-03-24/ty-article-magazine/.premium/were-not-only-here-to-fuck-hamas-how-israeli-militarism-took-over-online-dating/0000018e-60aa-d27e-a7af-7aee5b00000>

³²⁷ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-03-24/ty-article-magazine/.premium/were-not-only-here-to-fuck-hamas-how-israeli-militarism-took-over-online-dating/0000018e-60aa-d27e-a7af-7aee5b00000>

³²⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/09/gaza-civilians-detained-israel/> ;
<https://twitter.com/YinonMagal/status/1754505872753979498> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1755342772670804416> ;
<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/03/world/middleeast/unrwa-gaza-detention-israel.html> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772380808327618560>

³²⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-12-10/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-542b-df2f-adac-fe2f4bf80000>

³³⁰ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/01/01/a-palestinian-poets-perilous-journey-out-of-gaza>

³³¹ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/20-%d7%A9%d7%A2%d7%95%d7%AA-%d7%A2%d7%9C-%d7%94%d7%91%d7%A8%d7%9B%d7%99%d7%99%d7%9D-%d7%9E%d7%99-%d7%A9%d7%96%d7%96-%d7%9E%d7%95%D6%BC%d7%9B%D6%B6%D6%BC%d7%94-%d7%90%d7%96%D7%A8%d7%97%d7%99%d7%9D/> ;
<https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1747273886264443173> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1756754492790349978> ;
<https://twitter.com/marwasf/status/1762590590737207562>

³³² https://twitter.com/brown_johnbrown/status/1743021596682371453 ; <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1753512387322474545> ;
<https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1753044873974849578> ; <https://twitter.com/arixegal/status/1759978751524212926>

³³³ <https://twitter.com/ReneeLevant/status/1754269959927079245>

³³⁴ <https://twitter.com/Hanine09/status/1769258663837827582>

³³⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-12-06/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-3b9b-d11b-a3bf-ffbb16d80000> ;
<https://twitter.com/KhalilAsslan/status/1741926482463633866> ; <https://twitter.com/MustafaBarghou1/status/1761325667252092984>

³³⁶ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1759571535637954816>

³³⁷ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/20-%d7%A9%d7%A2%d7%95%d7%AA-%d7%A2%d7%9C-%d7%94%d7%91%d7%A8%d7%9B%d7%99%d7%99%d7%9D-%d7%9E%d7%99-%d7%A9%d7%96%D7%96-%d7%9E%d7%95%D6%BC%d7%9B%D6%B6%D6%BC%d7%94-%d7%90%d7%96%D7%A8%d7%97%d7%99%d7%9D/>

³³⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-07/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-1240-df16-a58e-1ffedcf70000>

³³⁹ <https://reprieve.org/uk/campaign/guantanamo/faq/>

³⁴⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-c6e1-d6c4-ab8d-e7f5fd670000>

can be delayed for up to 75 days (or half a year, if a judge approves).³⁴¹ The same law was used, for example, to detain and imprison an 82-year old woman with Alzheimer disease for almost two months.³⁴² An UNRWA report based on over a hundred interviews with released detainees contained many gruesome details, such as a Gazan law student who was beaten so badly that his genitals turned blue and his urine continued to contain blood for weeks. He was forced to sleep naked in the open air, next to a fan blowing cold air, and was played music so loudly that his ears bled.³⁴³

A BBC investigative report in mid-March found that the IDF beat, humiliated and detained for days dozens of Gaza medical staff from Nasser hospital. The UK foreign secretary said that the report was “very disturbing”.³⁴⁴ In mid-March the UNICEF spokesperson revealed the extent of destruction in the then-empty hospital.³⁴⁵ In early April, an Israeli doctor in the hospital in a detention facility described in a letter the harsh conditions in which the detained Gazans are held. His letter states that in the week of his writing, two patients’ legs were amputated because of injuries they sustained because of the way in which their legs were restrained during their detention (“this is a regular event”). All patients in the hospital are straw-fed, wear diapers, are blindfolded and their hands and feet are all handcuffed.³⁴⁶ For weeks the facility’s hospital lacked medicine for treating chronic illnesses. In early April the facility held some 600-800 Gazans (and 849 others were arrested in Israeli prisons).³⁴⁷

The number of women detained in Gaza (and the West Bank) since Oct. 7 has been in the hundreds (140 in Gaza in mid-December³⁴⁸). In mid-February, a panel of experts appointed by the UN’s Human Rights Council found evidence for egregious human rights violations, including keeping Gazan women in a cage in the rain and cold, without food, sexual assault against detained women including rape in two cases, and threats of rape and sexual violence, as well as uploading pictures of female detainees in degrading circumstances.³⁴⁹ One Palestinian woman has spoken about the sexual, emotional and physical abuse she has experienced for over a month in which she was detained.³⁵⁰ Other women have said similar things.³⁵¹ In late March, an Israeli former general claimed that a US official accused the IDF of “systematically” abusing Palestinian women.³⁵²

Ethnic cleansing

³⁴¹ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/20-%d7%a9%d7%a2%d7%95%d7%aa-%d7%a2%d7%9c-%d7%94%d7%91%d7%a8%d7%9b%d7%99%d7%99%d7%9d-%d7%9e%d7%99-%d7%a9%d7%96%d7%96-%d7%9e%d7%95%d6%bc%d7%9b%d6%b6%d6%bc%d7%94-%d7%90%d7%96%d7%a8%d7%97%d7%99%d7%9d/>

³⁴² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-02-01/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-5f18-d0af-a3af-7fbcea840000>

³⁴³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/03/world/middleeast/unrwa-gaza-detention-israel.html>

³⁴⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68513408>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68546268>

³⁴⁵ https://twitter.com/1james_elder/status/1770440852717912117

³⁴⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-04/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9ac3-dd2b-ad9f-dadb900f0000>

³⁴⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-04/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9ac3-dd2b-ad9f-dadb900f0000>

³⁴⁸ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-disturbing-reports-north-gaza-mass-detentions-ill-treatment-and-enforced-disappearances-possibly-thousands-palestinians>

³⁴⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/israelopt-un-experts-appalled-reported-human-rights-violations-against>

³⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1762502752184467495>

³⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1772749440027074609>; <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1773318803075531136>. In late March, a woman claimed (almost certainly falsely) that IDF soldiers had raped Palestinians in context of a raid into al-Shifa hospital but the account was removed and both a former editor at al-Jazeera (that published it) and the woman’s brother stated it was false.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mN1SRUx0R8>; <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240324-women-in-gaza-are-being-raped-and-this-is-not-being-investigated-or-reported/>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771585576963092757>;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/by115jgc0a>

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/al-jazeera-report-alleging-idf-rapes-in-shifa-hospital-retracted/>

³⁵² <https://www.ipost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-793420>

Ethnic cleansing is openly discussed in Israeli discourse, including by ministers in the ruling government. This includes the ministers of Finance,³⁵³ National Security,³⁵⁴ Heritage,³⁵⁵ the former minister of Information³⁵⁶ and a former Minister of Justice.³⁵⁷ Israel MPs have also participated in the discussion.³⁵⁸ A Israeli government plan proposal to repopulate all Gazans to the Sinai Peninsula (part of Egypt) has been leaked.³⁵⁹ Israel has also attempted to get the US to pressure Egypt into accepting Gazan refugees,³⁶⁰ and has attempted to convince several countries including Congo to accept Palestinian refugees.³⁶¹ Other locations members of Israel government suggested as potential resettlement locations include Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the European Union and Chile.³⁶² According to Israeli media, Chad and Rwanda have expressed interest to accept tens of thousands of Palestinians in exchange for generous financial support that included military support.³⁶³ In early February a coalition MP stated that the removal of Gazans from the North of the Strip is “the only achievement we have in the war”.³⁶⁴ In mid-February a local human rights organization revealed that Egypt was building a high-security area for the reception of Palestinian refugees,³⁶⁵ and in late March an Egyptian source claimed Egypt was preparing for the entrance of 150,000 Palestinians during an Israeli invasion of Rafah.³⁶⁶ Jared Kushner, Donald Trump’s son-in-law, suggested in mid March that Israel should remove civilians from Gaza and added that “waterfront property [in Gaza] could be very valuable”.³⁶⁷ According to estimates, the number of Palestinians who left to Egypt by April was 30-50 thousand.³⁶⁸ In early April, a coalition MP said that several government offices were working on an operational program to resettle the Gaza Strip with a Jewish population “behind the scenes”.³⁶⁹

The absence of clear war plans,³⁷⁰ war goals or a clear end game to the war has allowed many Israelis to support the resettling of Gaza with Jewish settlements after the war.³⁷¹ Over 30 right-wing organizations have supported this goal in a late January conference.³⁷² A total of 11 ministers and 15 MPs (of a total of 120) participated in the conference.³⁷³ Several IDF soldiers have stated their will to resettle Gaza while uniformed and within Gaza.³⁷⁴ In March, the commander of an armored battalion

³⁵³ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-call-for-resettling-gazas-palestinians-building-settlements-in-strip/>
³⁵⁴ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-call-for-resettling-gazas-palestinians-building-settlements-in-strip/>
³⁵⁵ https://twitter.com/Eliyahu_a/status/1772645094295830643
³⁵⁶ <https://www.hidabroot.org/article/1187840>
³⁵⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEU-dQWOL4>
³⁵⁸ <https://twitter.com/tzvisuccot/status/1754822778950148138>
³⁵⁹ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/%d7%94%d7%9e%d7%a1%d7%9e%d7%9a-%d7%94%d7%9e%d7%9c%d7%90-%d7%a9%d7%9c-%d7%9e%d7%a9%d7%a8%d7%93-%d7%94%d7%9e%d7%95%d7%93%d7%99%d7%a2%d7%99%d7%9f-%d7%9b%d7%99%d7%91%d7%95%d7%a9-%d7%a2%d7%96%d7%94-%d7%95/>; <https://www.972mag.com/intelligence-ministry-gaza-population-transfer/>
³⁶⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/12/21/biden-netanyahu-dispute-palestinian-state/>
³⁶¹ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/israeli-officials-said-in-talks-with-congo-others-on-taking-in-gaza-emigrants/
³⁶² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/01/04/gaza-displaced-civilians-resettlement-israel/>
³⁶³ <https://www.zman.co.il/453910/popup/>
³⁶⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-02-05/ty-article-live/0000018d-762a-dd6e-a98d-f62a9c200000?liveBlogItemId=310435701#310435701>
³⁶⁵ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-egypt-building-buffer-zone-palestinian-refugees>
³⁶⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkl1144rk>; <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7-%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84-%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%AD>
³⁶⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/mar/19/jared-kushner-gaza-waterfront-property-israel-negev>
³⁶⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-04-04/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-a379-d315-ab9f-aff98d4b0000>
³⁶⁹ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1777360030380986803>
³⁷⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/18/biden-israel-gaza-rafah-palestinians/>
³⁷¹ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2023_q4/Article-9f47fed9563eb81027.htm; <https://www.ipost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-794770>
³⁷² <https://twitter.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1746855797328433438>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/09/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-settlers.html>
³⁷³ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2024_q1/Article-7ce65d03aa05d81027.htm
³⁷⁴ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1746854844818681861>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1745907053426565605>

did the same during an interview with Israeli TV.³⁷⁵ Polls from January, February and March reveal that some 20-25% of Israeli Jews believe that Israel should resettle Gaza.³⁷⁶ A video from late February shows an Israeli civilian tractor sowing fields within the Gaza Strip as a “victory photo”.³⁷⁷ In early March, Jewish activists were able to briefly enter the Gaza Strip in an attempt to build a settlement there.³⁷⁸ A video of a military convoy driving in a major road in the Strip reveals a very large number of Israeli flags placed along it.³⁷⁹ A prominent settler leader declared in an interview on *CNN* that removing the local population of Gaza is necessary, while also claiming that she had a list of 500 Jewish families that were ready and willing to resettle Gaza.³⁸⁰

Inside the Gaza Strip, IDF soldiers appear to have constructed “the first synagogue in Khan Younis”,³⁸¹ another synagogue there,³⁸² as well as inaugurated a Torah scroll in three occasions (Sheikh Radwan in Gaza City, the Islamic University in Gaza, and Khan Younis).³⁸³ One soldier filmed himself spray painting the Temple in Jerusalem on the ruins of a destroyed mosque in Gaza.³⁸⁴ An IDF military “pizzeria” has allegedly opened in Khan Younis, and soldiers placed a sign of a fast food restaurant that might soon open in Gaza.³⁸⁵ Other soldiers hold a commercial sign of an American construction company from New Jersey (and an American flag) with the destroyed buildings of Gaza in the background.³⁸⁶ Donna Italia (an international pizzeria chain) appears to have opened a pizzeria in a displaced family’s home in Khan Younis to support IDF troops.³⁸⁷ In late March, it appears that soldiers recorded themselves reading the Scroll of Esther in al-Shifa hospital.³⁸⁸

All the evidence I have seen indicates that Israel is systematically destroying Gaza to make it unlivable in the future. In the first three months of fighting Israel had destroyed over 10,000 buildings in the Strip – compared to some 4,700 buildings in Aleppo after three years of fighting. According to a joint report by the World Bank and the UN, the cost of damage to physical structures alone was around \$18.5 billion at the end of January (the cost during the 2014 Protective Edge was \$1.4 billion).³⁸⁹ In the first week of fighting, Israel dropped 6,000 bombs on Gaza – over the annual total used by the US in Afghanistan.³⁹⁰ An expert on the topic pointed out that this destruction fits the term ‘domicide’, a massive violation of the right to housing and basic infrastructure in residential areas by making them inhabitable, which is itself a crime against humanity.³⁹¹

³⁷⁵ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/727102/>; he was reprimanded as a result.

³⁷⁶ <https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/swords-of-iron-14/>; <https://ippi.org.il/en/%D7%A1%D7%A7%D7%A8-%D7%97%D7%93%D7%A9-%D7%94%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%95%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%9C-%D7%94%D7%90%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%A7%D7%90%D7%99-%D7%A2%D7%9C-%D7%9E%D7%A1>

³⁷⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760758994350588388>

³⁷⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r11oner3a>; <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-settlers-gaza-outpost-erez-crossing/>

³⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/VermimusM/status/1774080556701245486>

³⁸⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkXJwErm8DM>; also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqRzfb2oMaM>;

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68650815>

³⁸¹ <https://twitter.com/yanivkub/status/1742189448006127715>

³⁸² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1745979741931282775>

³⁸³ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1743588216630919271>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750793042850664750>;

<https://twitter.com/KhalilAsslan/status/1753364384800252200>

³⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1756666882331988140>

³⁸⁵ <https://twitter.com/arixegal/status/1747704367145201666>

³⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1759534834710352030>

³⁸⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1753547113638604865>; also <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1765450350549487672>

³⁸⁸ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1771974813491360211>

³⁸⁹ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf>

³⁹⁰ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-04/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/amid-israeli-destruction-in-gaza-a-new-crime-against-humanity-emerges-domicide/0000018c-d585-d751-ad8d-ffa5965e0000>

³⁹¹ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-04/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/amid-israeli-destruction-in-gaza-a-new-crime-against-humanity-emerges-domicide/0000018c-d585-d751-ad8d-ffa5965e0000>

Israel is said to have dropped over 500 2,000-pound bombs within the densely populated urban area, despite the massive collateral damage these bombs cause (causing death or injury in a radius of up to 365 meters around the target). These bombs are four times heavier than the largest bombs the United States used when fighting ISIS in Mosul; the US dropped a single such 2,000-pound bomb throughout its fight with ISIS.³⁹² Over 60 percent of Gaza's housing units have been destroyed or damaged.³⁹³ As of mid-January experts estimate based on satellite imagery that between 142,900 to 176,900 buildings have been damaged.³⁹⁴ By early March, 54.8% of the buildings in the Gaza Strip were likely damaged or destroyed (~70% in the North, ~50% in Khan Younis).³⁹⁵ Drone videos reveal the extent of the destruction.³⁹⁶ By late March, some between a quarter and a third of greenhouses were completely destroyed, some 40-48% of tree crops in Gaza have been damaged; some 48% of tree cover has been lost or damaged; and some 38% of farmland (roughly half the Strip's total land area) was destroyed by Israeli military activity.³⁹⁷ As a result of the war and destruction, 89% of Gazan workers lost their jobs by December.³⁹⁸ As of April, all staff of at least one hospital have not been paid since October 7.³⁹⁹

Israel has destroyed not only buildings whose connection to Hamas militants is weak,⁴⁰⁰ but also a long list of cultural institutions,⁴⁰¹ historical and archaeological sites,⁴⁰² dozens of governmental buildings (including the parliament⁴⁰³ and the main courthouse)⁴⁰⁴, religious buildings (over 233 mosques and 3 churches⁴⁰⁵), universities (most or all universities in Gaza have been destroyed according to Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor; at least 5 of 7 major universities were destroyed or partially damaged according to NBC; 12 of 12 were damaged or destroyed according to Le Monde),⁴⁰⁶ hospitals,⁴⁰⁷ public libraries,⁴⁰⁸ archives,⁴⁰⁹ and UN offices.⁴¹⁰ Already in early December, Israeli attacks destroyed or damaged more than 100 heritage sites,⁴¹¹ including buildings from Gaza's medieval, Byzantine and Roman periods. Soldiers have been filmed within a warehouse filled with antiquities, and there appears to have been a post by the director of the Israel Antiquities Authority

³⁹² <https://www.cnn.com/gaza-israel-big-bombs/index.html>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/12/israel-opt-us-made-munitions-killed-43-civilians-in-two-documented-israeli-air-strikes-in-gaza-new-investigation/>

³⁹³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

³⁹⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2024/jan/30/how-war-destroyed-gazas-neighbourhoods-visual-investigation>

³⁹⁵ https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Feb_July2024_Special_Brief.pdf (p. 6). See also alternatives: <https://unosat.org/products/3804> (35% till late February); <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542> (50% till late December).

³⁹⁶ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1777786701768708193>

³⁹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/mar/29/gaza-israel-palestinian-war-ecocide-environmental-destruction-pollution-rome-statute-war-crimes-aoe>; <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/ecocide-in-gaza>

³⁹⁸ <https://gisha.org/almost-89-of-gaza-residents-have-lost-their-jobs-heb/>

³⁹⁹ https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/11/surgeons_in_gaza

⁴⁰⁰ <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/>

⁴⁰¹ E.g. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israeli-army-says-it-struck-islamic-university-of-gaza/3015542>

⁴⁰² <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-26/ty-article-magazine/.premium/bombing-historical-sites-in-gaza-israel-is-destroying-everything-beautiful/0000018c-a565-df1f-a7bf-b7e53e8e0000>; <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2023/12/22/gaza-city-archives-among-heritage-sites-destroyed-in-israel-hamas-war>; <https://www.unesco.org/en/gaza/assessment>; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1766458940118769799>

⁴⁰³ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542>

⁴⁰⁴ <https://www.newarab.com/news/israel-destroys-gaza-courthouse-dozens-govt-buildings>

⁴⁰⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

⁴⁰⁶ <https://twitter.com/PeruginiNic/status/1747730495482310771>; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6108/Israel-kills-dozens-of-academics-destroys-every-university-in-the-Gaza-Strip>; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6163/Israel%E2%80%99s-demolition-of-educational-institutions-cultural-objects-in-Gaza-is-additional-manifestation-of-genocide>; <https://www.nbcnews.com/specials/gaza-universities-destroyed-israel-military-war/index.html>; https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/03/07/all-12-universities-in-gaza-have-been-the-target-of-israeli-attacks-it-s-a-war-against-education_6592965_4.html

⁴⁰⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760766861279391872>

⁴⁰⁸ <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2023-12-12/gaza-library-bombing>; <https://lithub.com/gazas-main-public-library-has-been-destroyed/>; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1759474743189660011>

⁴⁰⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCNftkL7cx4>

⁴¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/177119550488339683>

⁴¹¹ <https://www.npr.org/2023/12/03/1216200754/gaza-heritage-sites-destroyed-israel>, <https://www.heritageforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Report-of-the-effects-of-the-last-war-of-2023-on-the-cultural-heritage-in-Gaza-Strip-Palestine-english.pdf>

that claimed that some of those antiquities were taken to Israel and presented in the Knesset (the post was later deleted).⁴¹²

The civilian infrastructure in the Gaza Strip necessary to the functioning of a society has been severely damaged. Most of Gaza's 980 registered NGOs have ceased operations.⁴¹³ Over 80% of all school buildings have sustained damage.⁴¹⁴ As of late March, Israel has destroyed 91% (51 of 56) of bank branches and 92% (84 of 91) of the ATMs in the Gaza Strip. All surviving branches and ATMs are in the Strip's south.⁴¹⁵ Certain areas have been completely cleared of Palestinian buildings. For example, one IDF soldier claims his unit received orders to destroy the village of Khuza'a and uploaded a video showing that they accomplished the mission over two weeks.⁴¹⁶ At least 16 cemeteries have been desecrated by the IDF, often by bulldozing.⁴¹⁷ One video shows a bulldozer driving within a cemetery,⁴¹⁸ while another shows the results of such an operation, with corpses left scattered across the landscape.⁴¹⁹ The IDF further bulldozed broad areas in the Gaza Strip.⁴²⁰ An online video depicts the torching of the Shujjaiya neighborhood in a military operation.⁴²¹ Satellite images reveal the massive extent of destruction of Khan Younis.⁴²² In late March, a UNICEF spokesperson described "utter annihilation" in Khan Younis, stating that "the depth of the horror surpasses our ability to describe it".⁴²³ The amount of debris created by the destruction of residential areas (about 26 million tons in early April) will take many years to remove.⁴²⁴ A coalition of aid groups stated in December that rebuilding the housing destroyed to that point will take 7 to 10 years if financing is available and will cost some \$3.5 billion.⁴²⁵

After two months of fighting, Israel had already caused more destruction in Gaza than Syria in Aleppo (2012-2016), Russia in Mariupol in 2022, or (proportionally) the Allied bombing of Germany in World War II,⁴²⁶ as well as the fights against ISIS in Mosul (2016-7) and Raqqa (2017).⁴²⁷ The destruction in Gaza has resulted in the displacement of some 75 percent of Gaza's population.⁴²⁸

Evidence supports the conclusion that Israel is attempting to destroy all buildings inside the Gaza Strip within a kilometer of the Israel-Gaza fence to create a "buffer zone".⁴²⁹ This buffer zone will take over 16% of the territory of the Gaza Strip.⁴³⁰ Such destruction has been described by the UN's Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights as a "grave breach of the Fourth Geneva

⁴¹² <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240122-israel-army-displays-artefacts-stolen-from-gaza-in-the-knesset/> ; <https://twitter.com/EmekShavehHeb/status/1749030636529008651>

⁴¹³ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf>

⁴¹⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

⁴¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/ryangrim/status/1774422433736393207>

⁴¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1744195835577921772>

⁴¹⁷ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/20/middleeast/israel-gaza-cemeteries-desecrated-investigation-intl-cmd/index.html> ;

<https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1749145986595713498> ; also: <https://twitter.com/HossamShabat/status/1779565112300302634>

⁴¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771125186370101561>

⁴¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1743386378606412188>

⁴²⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750443193575886945>

⁴²¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1767698980127838474>

⁴²² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-14/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-3bab-db12-a9ef-fbfb627d0000>

⁴²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/22/unicef-official-utter-annihilation-gaza>

⁴²⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-150> ; Earlier estimates stated that removing 8 million tons would take about three years: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-104>

⁴²⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542> ;

https://twitter.com/NRC_MiddleEast/status/1741341343111110950

⁴²⁶ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-bombs-destruction-death-toll-scope-419488c511f83c85baea22458472a796>

⁴²⁷ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/14/gaza-war-israel-civilian-deaths-urban-warfare-amas/>

⁴²⁸ <https://twitter.com/UNHumanRights/status/1742863747683668418> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

⁴²⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1758376261628436523>

⁴³⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-28/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018d-9cc9-df62-a3fd-9ecdb8420000> ; <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-amas-war-buffer-zone-explained-2a7347af>

convention and a war crime”.⁴³¹ In mid-February, Israeli media announced that the IDF was constructing a road to bisect the Gaza Strip, suggesting its plans for a long occupation.⁴³² In early March, its construction was completed,⁴³³ and it enables rapid movement and will be held by Israel for “at least another year” according to the IDF.⁴³⁴

An investigation of Israel’s evacuation orders to Gazans revealed numerous unclarities and inconsistencies within the IDF’s official orders. This included, for example, four different geographical definitions of the al-Mawasi “safe zone”, which was itself bombed and invaded by IDF ground troops.⁴³⁵ Some of the evacuation orders were given online during periods of full communication outages.⁴³⁶ Already by early February, 67% of the Gaza Strip’s area was under evacuation orders.⁴³⁷ As a result of these repeated orders and the general overcrowdedness of the Strip, many Palestinians have been displaced several times.⁴³⁸

Hostages

Within this context, the Israeli government has refrained from making serious moves to release the 134 Israeli hostages that remain in Gaza.⁴³⁹ To date, three hostages of some 250 hostages taken on October 7 have been released by military operations.⁴⁴⁰ The military operation that released two of them also killed 74 Gazans (or about 100), mostly civilians.⁴⁴¹ Three other Israeli hostages were killed by IDF forces within Gaza despite waving white flags and calling for help.⁴⁴² Another was killed during an attempted rescue operation.⁴⁴³ Three others were supposedly killed by gas that the IDF flooded the tunnels with.⁴⁴⁴ In late February an Israeli report found that at least 10 hostages were killed by the IDF’s actions, including a case where the IDF bombed a building that it suspected had a Israeli hostage.⁴⁴⁵ In late March a senior journalist specializing in military intelligence shared an estimate that only 60-70 of the hostages are still alive.⁴⁴⁶

⁴³¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/widespread-destruction-israeli-defence-forces-civilian-infrastructure-gaza>

⁴³² <https://twitter.com/YairWallach/status/1759572148559962424>

⁴³³ <https://news.sky.com/story/israel-completes-construction-of-road-which-cuts-across-gaza-strip-13089556>

⁴³⁴ https://twitter.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1762434310831796618 ; <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-is-building-a-road-bisecting-gaza-in-next-phase-of-war-c73503ff>

⁴³⁵ <https://gaza.forensic-architecture.org/displacement> ; https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Humanitarian-Violence_Report_FA.pdf

⁴³⁶ https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Humanitarian-Violence_Report_FA.pdf (e.g. p. 28)

⁴³⁷ https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/israel-s-evacuation-covers-67-of-gaza-leaves-palestinians-crammed-124020600748_1.html

⁴³⁸ <https://gaza.forensic-architecture.org/displacement> ; https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Humanitarian-Violence_Report_FA.pdf ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%91-%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%A4%D7%99%D7%97-%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%93%D7%A8%D7%93%D7%A8-%D7%95%D7%AA%D7%95%D7%A9%D7%91%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%91%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%97%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%9C%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%9B/> ; examples at <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/surviving-genocide-people> ;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cK7oytWs7vQ> ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/133730/>

⁴³⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

⁴⁴⁰ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-10-30/ty-article/.premium/israel-rescues-woman-soldier-kidnapped-to-gaza-by-hamas/0000018b-81cc-df47-a3df-ffcdbcdc0000> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/11/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-hostages-rescued.html>

⁴⁴¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-strikes-rafah-refugee-camp-22-killed-local-health-officials-say-2024-02-12/> ;

<https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/12/middleeast/israel-airstrikes-rafah-ground-offensive-looms-intl-hnk/index.html>

⁴⁴² <https://www.ft.com/content/2e299603-2fed-4855-9694-9801008c48dc>

⁴⁴³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjzpo117da>

⁴⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/tomashinyu3/status/1747651031737979233>

⁴⁴⁵ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/post/revital-host-idf>

⁴⁴⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/yossimelman/2024-03-26/ty-article/0000018e-7564-d787-a5de-75e616c60000>

On the other hand, a temporary ceasefire has resulted in the release of 105 hostages.⁴⁴⁷ Instead of negotiating additional hostage releases, the Israeli government prefers to continue its military operation, despite the obvious risk to the hostages. Those hostages who have been released in the previous exchange have repeatedly stated that Israeli bombardments they experienced were among the most terrifying things they experienced during their captivity.⁴⁴⁸ The spokesperson for the Likud, the largest party in the Israeli parliament, met the families of the hostages and warned them against pushing for an early election because “it will be bad for the hostages” and “in such a period [i.e. elections] a lot of filth will surface”.⁴⁴⁹ There is additional evidence that families of the hostages fear that if they speak up too loudly their family members might be pushed to the end of the list of hostages to be released.⁴⁵⁰ In mid-March, the chief of staff of the IDF unit responsible for the hostages resigned as he felt that Israel’s political leadership was not interested in moving towards a deal.⁴⁵¹ Similar feelings have been expressed within Israel’s security apparatus.⁴⁵² Several government members scorned the hostages’ family members.⁴⁵³ In late March some of the family members of the hostages publicly blamed Israel’s Prime Minister for continuously postponing a deal to release them.⁴⁵⁴ In mid-April, two members of Israel negotiations team, at least one of whom was involved in it for six months, said explicitly that the government and especially Israel’s prime minister are trying to delay and even prevent a deal to release the hostages.⁴⁵⁵ Foreign sources said similar things.⁴⁵⁶

The West Bank

The West Bank has received less attention in media and public discourse. Nonetheless, the situation there has deteriorated quickly since the beginning of the war. At least 15 herding/Bedouin Palestinian settlements there have been abandoned after attacks by Israeli Jewish settlers (727 recorded since October 7).⁴⁵⁷ About 4,000 Palestinians have been displaced in the West Bank in 2023,⁴⁵⁸ and 1,244 have been displaced since October 7.⁴⁵⁹ Jewish settlers have killed several Palestinians, and have wounded, terrorized and abused others.⁴⁶⁰ Settlers conducted periodic larger rampages against Palestinian villages as well.⁴⁶¹ A total of 432 Palestinians have been killed so far.⁴⁶²

⁴⁴⁷ <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2023/12/world/hostage-israel-amas-deal-dg/>

⁴⁴⁸ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-1061467>

⁴⁴⁹ https://twitter.com/Bar_ShemUr/status/1757852992215056477

⁴⁵⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bikutcon6>

⁴⁵¹ <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/politics/security/sqpwv-903972705/>

⁴⁵² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/yossimelman/2024-03-26/ty-article/0000018e-7564-d787-a5de-75e616c60000>

⁴⁵³ <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/politics/politics/hostages-903992721/>; for similar sentiment towards family members of civilians killed during Oct. 7, see <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/Article-1085268>

⁴⁵⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/biebbbohyc>

⁴⁵⁵ https://twitter.com/Uvda_tweet/status/1778496650798833931

⁴⁵⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-14/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-de16-deb6-afee-ded71d110000>

⁴⁵⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-152> ;

<https://twitter.com/YehudaShaul/status/1758122975386014057> ; also <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1770753310686917108> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1770743445969064360> ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/%D7%A7%D7%94%D7%99%D7%9C%D7%94-%D7%A4%D7%9C%D7%A1%D7%98%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%92%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%A9%D7%94-10-%D7%99%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%9C%D7%90%D7%97%D7%A8-%D7%A9%D7%A7%D7%9D-%D7%9C%D7%99/>

⁴⁵⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/about-4000-palestinians-displaced-west-bank-2023>

⁴⁵⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-152>

⁴⁶⁰ For example: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2024/01/09/israel-settler-violence-qusra-west-bank/> ;

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/03/04/israel-west-bank-settlers-attacks-palestinians>

⁴⁶¹ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-amas-west-bank-war-f85997a95d5579159ffe83d2c0cb988e> ;

<https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-west-bank-7e75e1ef8f5307946d24f8b9a190fd66> ;

<https://twitter.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1779136328480805197>

⁴⁶² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-152>

Half the fatalities in the West Bank since the beginning of 2023 (four times higher than in 2022) were reported in operations that did not involve armed clashes. The deputy mayor of Jerusalem stated that Israeli police in Jerusalem used live ammunition and shot-to-kill Palestinian rioters, killing five in early-mid October.⁴⁶³ Since October 7, 4,800 Palestinians have been injured in the West Bank.⁴⁶⁴ A *Wall Street Journal* investigative report found that after Oct. 7 Israeli settlers have rapidly built both illegal roads and settlements in the West Bank. The Israeli government refused to review the evidence the newspaper supplied.⁴⁶⁵ In late March the IDF was still blocking the entrances to West Bank villages, forcing residents to make long detours to enter or leave.⁴⁶⁶ As of the same time, Israel has prevented Palestinians from the West Bank from entering Israel for work, resulting in a loss of their income and a deteriorating economic condition.⁴⁶⁷ In the first three months of 2024, Israel declared a record amount of land in the West Bank (almost 11,000 dunam, equal to 2,743 acres) as state-owned.⁴⁶⁸

Evidence for the killing of Palestinians

Several videos depict the killing of unarmed and unthreatening Palestinians.⁴⁶⁹ When an Israeli police officer shot and killed a 12 year old boy who launched a firework, Israel's National Security minister commended him and said he should receive a medal.⁴⁷⁰ Israeli troops disguised as medical workers and Muslim women have entered a hospital in the West Bank and killed three unarmed militants there in their beds as they slept, including one who was paralyzed for three months.⁴⁷¹ In a different case, an IDF soldier killed a Palestinian who had converted to Judaism after finding a knife in his belongings. Two videos reveal that the man was shot as his hands were raised.⁴⁷²

Abuse, humiliation and detainment of Palestinians

Multiple videos present Israeli troops abusing and humiliating Palestinians,⁴⁷³ hitting them,⁴⁷⁴ destroying their property⁴⁷⁵ or public infrastructure,⁴⁷⁶ and defacing Palestinian symbols.⁴⁷⁷ One

⁴⁶³ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1754079208643420204>

⁴⁶⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-152>

⁴⁶⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/video/series/in-depth-features/visual-evidence-shows-illegal-settler-construction-in-west-bank-surgin/BF11225B-45A7-430A-A39C-48336B5B8286>

⁴⁶⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-19/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-50c4-dca4-ad8e-f4fe5f020000>

⁴⁶⁷ <https://news.sky.com/story/the-war-may-be-in-gaza-but-its-effects-can-mean-starvation-in-the-west-bank-13101929>

⁴⁶⁸ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-04-11/ty-article/.premium/israel-has-declared-record-amount-of-west-bank-land-as-state-owned-in-2024/0000018e-c7a2-dd23-a3cf-e7a713c90000>

⁴⁶⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1746987605034447294>

⁴⁷⁰ <https://twitter.com/Kahlissee/status/1767976353532383504> ; <https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1767860298432528673> ;

<https://twitter.com/origivati/status/1767806214254002619>

⁴⁷¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-forces-kill-3-gunmen-west-bank-hospital-army-says-2024-01-30/>

⁴⁷² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hym4dpy0t> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hk9p5nact> ;

<https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1773557971831632078>

⁴⁷³ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1741445118333222937> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1748100280560845092> ;

<https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1747358396519493874> ; <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1751689800254476390> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760462497943839127> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1765200009580925182> ;

<https://twitter.com/masafering/status/177052972885483666> ; <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1770320641826169263> ;

<https://twitter.com/adinitay/status/1771990979333026009>

⁴⁷⁴ <https://twitter.com/AdameMedia/status/1761508331598848224>

⁴⁷⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1743038305581593033> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1756688401233817855> ;

<https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1776551587885801759>

⁴⁷⁶ <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1751125745701671025>

⁴⁷⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1768010284860416327>

soldier shared an image in which he claimed to have stolen a bag full of money notes.⁴⁷⁸ Another shows a soldier celebrating his birthday(?) with balloons while a handcuffed and blindfolded Palestinian is lying on the ground behind him.⁴⁷⁹ One video showed Israeli forces kidnap or detain a Palestinian, dressed him in uniform, cuffed his hands and feet, and apparently used him as a human shield.⁴⁸⁰ As in Gaza, here too there are video clips humiliating and de-humanizing Palestinians.⁴⁸¹ There are several video clips of settler youths confronting and attacking Palestinians,⁴⁸² as well as settlers dressed up as soldiers who detain Palestinians, including on their own lands.⁴⁸³ Yet other videos show settlers stealing Palestinian property,⁴⁸⁴ or soldiers who do not intervene when settlers harm Palestinian civilians and their property.⁴⁸⁵

More Palestinians, including children,⁴⁸⁶ are being arrested in the West Bank. In the first month of fighting, over 2,200 Palestinians were arrested. Over 2,000 Palestinians were held in administrative detention, without charge or trial. These detained Palestinians have been subjected to torture and degrading treatment, according to Amnesty International.⁴⁸⁷ Many descriptions of released detainees refer to constant abuse by their prison staff.⁴⁸⁸ One recently said that daily, since Oct. 7 their guards require them to crawl while draped in an Israeli flag and kiss the Israeli flag, beating them if they refuse to do so. Food was thrown to the floor and stepped on.⁴⁸⁹ Another prisoner from Bethlehem narrated at length the violence, abuse and degrading humiliation that he suffered while in Israeli prison for three months as part of his “administrative detention”, a status that was sufficient to hold him without charges or evidence.⁴⁹⁰ Online social media content includes more evidence.⁴⁹¹

The media, propaganda and the war (disclaimer)⁴⁹²

To focus the discussion this section will examine Israeli and American media as well as other actions of the Israeli state to limit public discourse.

Introduction: propaganda, sometimes known as public diplomacy, aims to disseminate information to influence public perception. Such propaganda may convey facts, lies or anything in between.

⁴⁷⁸ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1756695309239939117>

⁴⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1758619734809928130>

⁴⁸⁰ <https://twitter.com/TameeOliveFern/status/1752615765092815206>

⁴⁸¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1756696385510883830> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1756697908907233406> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1765313264324333905> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1765436458108653778> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1765673191521874004> ;

⁴⁸² <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1769277315941339483> ; <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1769435760392900855> ;

<https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1769300216719515931> ; <https://twitter.com/masafering/status/1769723591480742007> ;

<https://twitter.com/masafering/status/1775593225278939147> (probably settlers?)

⁴⁸³ <https://twitter.com/masafering/status/1769453241929011501>

⁴⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1753732272816029757>

⁴⁸⁵ https://twitter.com/YesH_Din/status/1779501559379849229

⁴⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1775555921151693151>

⁴⁸⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/11/israel-opt-horrifying-cases-of-torture-and-degrading-treatment-of-palestinian-detainees-amid-spike-in-arbitrary-arrests/>

⁴⁸⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/2023-12-30/ty-article/0000018c-b51e-d45c-a98e-bf5e7a340000>

⁴⁸⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-c6e5-d6c4-ab8d-e7f561840000>

⁴⁹⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/twilightzone/2024-03-22/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-62b4-d541-a78e-ffff79470000>

⁴⁹¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761463527489900685>

⁴⁹² Because of the nature of the evidence, this section includes discourse to a greater extent than the rest of this document. The truth is also considerably less clear. I nonetheless did my best to present the evidence in a critical manner. Feedback would be welcome.

States and other actors in the 21st century commonly employ propaganda. The propaganda of the Israeli state is often called hasbara (lit. “explaining”).⁴⁹³

Context: Scholars have argued for decades that despite the large quantities of information to which we are exposed, most individuals extract only a little of this information, and even less knowledge and understanding.⁴⁹⁴ The result of this process has been labeled already in the 1990s as “the destruction of political intelligence” due to the manipulations of modern media.⁴⁹⁵ This section assumes that the information conveyed by state, non-state and media actors is biased, but is also not completely reliable or unreliable by definition. Rather, these actors author and disseminate information that fits within their different interests (e.g. political, economical or ideological). The main problem is not “fake news” – but rather the fact that much of the information conveyed is used out of context and weaponized to further these interests, leading to misinformation and disinformation.⁴⁹⁶ To better evaluate the reliability of the information that different voices disseminate one must employ critical reading and thinking, alongside a careful consideration of the source of information.

Part of Israel’s propaganda is institutionalized through the state apparatus.⁴⁹⁷ The state of Israel has been buying positive coverage in international media since 2018, claiming that many other countries have been doing the same.⁴⁹⁸ A long list of local politicians and government offices have been doing the same in national media.⁴⁹⁹ Government offices have sometimes used contracts that allow them to veto the content of the positive coverage that they had bought.⁵⁰⁰ Already in 2017, the Israeli government had invested tens and perhaps hundreds of millions of shekels (likely tens of millions of dollars) to create a network of organizations through which it could relay its propaganda messaging, originally directed against the de-legitimization of Israel and the BDS movement.⁵⁰¹ Unlike traditional and direct propaganda, this propaganda is conducted through civic organizations rather than governmental ones, and the association with the state is hidden from the consumers (and sometimes also the civic organization itself).⁵⁰² The Israeli government had worked with hundreds of these organizations and likely maintains these connections.⁵⁰³ In January 2024, Israel acquired a technological system for mass influence that can create content suitable for online influence

⁴⁹³

https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%94%D7%AA%D7%A2%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%9C%D7%94_%D7%94%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%AA ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/272146>

⁴⁹⁴ <https://lib.civics.cet.ac.il/pages/item.asp?item=9260&kwd=2079>

⁴⁹⁵ <https://lib.civics.cet.ac.il/pages/item.asp?item=9260&kwd=2079>

⁴⁹⁶ <https://firstdraftnews.org/long-form-article/understanding-information-disorder/>

⁴⁹⁷ <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/07/gaza-israel-netanyahu-propaganda-lies-palestinians/>

⁴⁹⁸ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/281581>

⁴⁹⁹ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/281581> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/268428> ; many examples in <https://shakuf.co.il/books/critical-reading.html>

⁵⁰⁰ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/281581>

⁵⁰¹ <https://cdn.the7eye.org.il/uploads/2017/11/mizam201217.pdf> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/272146> ;

<https://www.the7eye.org.il/269874> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/262318> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/276553> ;

<https://www.the7eye.org.il/444078> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/399982> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/443586> ;

<https://www.ipost.com/israel-news/article-713678> ; <https://forward.com/israel/453286/us-pro-israel-groups-failed-to-disclose-grants-from-israeli-government/>

⁵⁰² <https://www.the7eye.org.il/272146>

⁵⁰³ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/272146> ;

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://fs.knesset.gov.il/20/Committees/20_ptv_348357.doc&ved=2ahUKewjE5r24_ZCFAxVhElkFHcatCNwQFnoECBEQAQ&usq=AOvVaw2FYnze1NfDxQLuIPUg-2rX (p. 8).

operations and began using it.⁵⁰⁴ In addition to state-led efforts, several start-up companies have attempted to influence discourse on their own both before and during the war.⁵⁰⁵

The current war has been enabled and facilitated by massive media efforts⁵⁰⁶ to shape discourse in Israel as well as in the West – in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany⁵⁰⁷. Israel maintains a powerful hold over media attention, particularly in the US. *The Intercept*, for example, has highlighted how Israel repeatedly “chooses an issue and demands global attention to its agenda at the expense of any other matter”.⁵⁰⁸ Israel’s information warfare strategy has focused on four efforts: (1) emphasize the horrors of the Oct. 7 events; (2) discredit critical voices; (3) limit the flow of information about the conflict coming out of Gaza; and (4) rally the Israeli public by advertising its military prowess and the destruction of Gaza.⁵⁰⁹ The chief aim of this campaign was to legitimize the massive Israeli attacks against Gaza. The following four sections of this document expand on each of these four efforts.

Emphasizing the horrors of the Oct. 7 attacks

Immediately after Oct. 7 Israel began a massive advertisement campaign to emphasize the horrors of the Hamas massacre.⁵¹⁰ One examination of the evidence found that in the first ten days, Israel “flood[ed]” social media with at least 70 ads, including graphic videos, to millions. About 30 ads were completely removed from Google’s public library because of the violent images they contained.⁵¹¹ A different review found that in less than two weeks, Israel targeted audiences in Western Europe in particular with some 88 ads, spending \$7.1 million to reach nearly a billion impressions.⁵¹² In at least six European countries, pro-Israel ads including disturbing content were used in advertisements in family-oriented video games, where they were watched by children.⁵¹³ In the first month of the war, Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ digital team estimated they had reached 2 billion people.⁵¹⁴ On Facebook and Instagram alone, US pro-Israel organizations spent over \$2.2 million on online ads by December, spending 100 times more than pro-Palestinian groups.⁵¹⁵ In March, an Israeli NGO revealed in a report a pro-Israeli influence operation that included three new media outlets and hundreds of Twitter profiles to target Democrat congressmen/women and senators from the US (predominantly Black) in attempt to a sway their opinion on Hamas crimes on Oct. 7 (especially sexual crimes) as well as UNRWA (see below for a detailed discussion of the UNRWA discourse).⁵¹⁶

Despite the real horrors of the Hamas attacks on Oct. 7, Israeli officials repeatedly shared content that was soon disproved as unreliable or outright fake. Most Israeli media chose not to inform the

⁵⁰⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-01-16/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-e8c1-d765-ab9d-f8fd29800000>

⁵⁰⁵ <https://www.israelhayom.com/opinions/can-ai-help-hasbara/>; <https://wordsofiron.com/>;

<https://www.calcalistech.com/ctechnews/article/rkrug57na>

⁵⁰⁶ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/israel-social-media-twitter-messaging-david-saranga-1234874381/>

⁵⁰⁷ <https://adamtooze.substack.com/p/chartbook-271-reasons-of-state-memory>

⁵⁰⁸ <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/07/gaza-israel-netanyahu-propaganda-lies-palestinians/>; also <https://newyorkwarcrimes.com/a-continuous-series-of-insults-to-our-understanding>

⁵⁰⁹ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/03/11/israel-gaza-hamas-netanyahu-warfare-misinformation/>

⁵¹⁰ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/israel-social-media-twitter-messaging-david-saranga-1234874381/>

⁵¹¹ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israel-social-media-opinion-hamas-war/>

⁵¹² <https://www.lalibre.be/international/moyen-orient/2023/10/23/israel-a-concentre-sa-campagne-publicitaire-youtube-anti-hamas-sur-la-france-de-la-propagande-4MECZ54CHFFWRPWBVU5BVPIB6U/>

⁵¹³ <https://www.eurogamer.net/rovio-blocks-disturbing-pro-israel-ad-found-in-angry-birds-and-other-games>

⁵¹⁴ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/israel-social-media-twitter-messaging-david-saranga-1234874381/>

⁵¹⁵ <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/12/06/israel-palestinian-advocacy-groups-social-media-spending-00130118>

⁵¹⁶ https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-19/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-4cd5-d26a-afbf-ecd552de0000;https://fakeporter.net/pdf/pro-israel_influence_network_report-0324.pdf?v=2

public that these stories had been refuted.⁵¹⁷ In a conversation with US President Joe Biden, the Israeli Prime Minister himself has stated falsehoods such as that Hamas “took dozens of children, bound them up, burned them and executed them.”⁵¹⁸ His wife wrote to Jill Biden a story about a hostage held by Hamas who gave birth in Gaza, a story supported by the Israeli state and media that was subsequently proved as fake.⁵¹⁹ The IDF accepted and claimed to have verified evidence of beheaded babies, later found out to be false.⁵²⁰ Other stories such as putting a baby in the oven or cutting a baby out of his mother’s belly and stabbing it, were all promoted by the media and/or the IDF, yet found out to be fake as well.⁵²¹ Israeli officials such as Israel’s Minister of Economy continued to repeat these falsified stories in international interviews as late as April.⁵²²

A university researcher that was tasked with investigating rapes on Oct. 7 by Israel was chosen to receive the prestigious Israel Prize for her work, even though she never published the report for which she received the prize, featured fake evidence in her messaging, and was strongly criticized by Israeli state employees who cast serious doubts on her methodology and refused to collaborate with her.⁵²³ Other stories during the war, such as the Israeli claim that the central Hamas bunker is located under al-Shifa hospital, were found to be false (see also the discussion of the flour massacre above).⁵²⁴

Discrediting critical voices outside Israel

Israel also discredited critical voices. One tactic to do so was by claims of antisemitism, a tactic Israel has used for many years.⁵²⁵ When Amnesty International claimed war crimes were conducted by both sides in late October, Israel attacked it as antisemitic.⁵²⁶ Israel and its media attacked climate activist Greta Thunberg who called for a ceasefire in Gaza in late October, while an IDF spokesperson stated that “whoever identifies with Greta in any way in the future, in my view, is a terror supporter” (he later apologized).⁵²⁷ Greta was subsequently removed from the Ministry of Education’s materials in Israel.⁵²⁸ Supporters of a ceasefire in Gaza in November were smeared as “pro-Hamas” or “pro-Palestinians” in both Israel and the US.⁵²⁹ Israeli officials accused photographers who worked for

⁵¹⁷ For two exceptions to this rule: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-12-03/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-2036-d21c-abae-76be08fe0000> ; https://twitter.com/moshe_aryeh/status/1750418165736100294

⁵¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rq5hTirpL9s>

⁵¹⁹ <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3623538> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LScqOF48h34>;

<https://www.maariv.co.il/news/health/Article-1067610> ; investigation here: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/hamas-committed-documented-atrocities-but-a-few-false-stories-feed-the-deniers/0000018c-34f3-da74-afce-b5f5be24f0000>

⁵²⁰ <https://twitter.com/i/broadcasts/1MYGNorgjLw> ; <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/07/gaza-israel-netanyahu-propaganda-lies-palestinians/>

⁵²¹ <https://twitter.com/Israel/status/1717553687025815817> ; <https://www.mako.co.il/culture-articles/Article-cdbeed08ded1b81027.htm> ; <https://www.news1.co.il/Archive/001-D-475197-00.html> ; <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-1043930> ;

<https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1716462311370633484> . The story about the baby cut from its mother’s belly remained in public discourse into March, when it was cited during a discussion of one of the Israeli Parliament’s Committees, <https://twitter.com/KnessetT/status/1769687691669430716> (0:38).

⁵²² <https://twitter.com/waleedshahid/status/1775934807165272158>

⁵²³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skt8j03rt> ; <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/domestic/internal/r16up-903990418/>. The researcher is the niece of a journalist closely associated with Israel’s Prime Minister. https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/hjnoxpf0a

⁵²⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/us/politics/israel-al-shifa-hospital-hamas-evidence.html> ;

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/21/al-shifa-hospital-gaza-hamas-israel/> ; see also the evidence-less:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/01/03/hamas-gaza-israel-alshifa-tunnels/> ; and the recognition of the false claims at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/01/gaza-al-shifa-hospital-israel/>

⁵²⁵ <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1649970> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0TFxp7pco> ;

<https://www.columbiaspectator.com/opinion/2024/04/10/jewish-faculty-reject-the-weaponization-of-antisemitism/>

⁵²⁶ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israel-calls-amnesty-international-antisemitic-and-biased-after-it-criticized-war-crimes-by-all-parties/>

⁵²⁷ <https://www.dw.com/en/greta-thunberg-faces-backlash-for-pro-palestinian-post/a-67172344>

⁵²⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/environment-science/article/b1uzeagf6>

⁵²⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skttx811ba> ; <https://theintercept.com/2023/11/09/republican-debate-hamas-gaza-ceasefire/>

foreign outlets on Oct. 7 of working for Hamas, describing them as terrorists – even as no evidence was produced to support the claims and the media watchdog who made the allegations walked them back.⁵³⁰ A Human Rights Watch report found more than a thousand cases of the removal or censorship of pro-Palestinian content written in 60 countries on Facebook and Instagram. In a systematic examination of all this content, all but one contained content defined as “peaceful”. In parallel, only a single case of removal of pro-Israeli content was found (according to HRW, the ratio is not necessarily representative). One of the four cited reasons for the removal of content was a direct request by the Israeli state.⁵³¹

Limiting information flow from Gaza

Israel attempts to control media reporting on Israel in support of its own propaganda. To date, Israel has not allowed international reporters to enter the Gaza Strip independently, limiting the world’s ability to witness the true cost of the war.⁵³² As discussed above, Israel attempts to prevent Gazan journalists from reporting on events from Gaza, including by threatening their lives and the lives of their families. In another example, the IDF’s censor declared early in the war a ban on reporting on 8 subjects without approving them first. This censorship applies to Israeli journalists and their foreign counterparts, who have to sign a document that they will comply with the censor to get a visa as a journalist in the country.⁵³³ CNN, for example, has admitted that it runs all its Gaza coverage through its Jerusalem bureau, itself monitored by the censor.⁵³⁴ Israeli media, especially during the beginning of the war, stressed repeatedly that their coverage had passed military censorship, thus creating an atmosphere that strongly promoted self-censorship as well.⁵³⁵ Already in December, Israeli researchers declared that the media was becoming a propaganda arm of the government.⁵³⁶

Rallying the Israeli public around the war

To rally the Israeli public around the war, Israel strongly limits the boundaries of acceptable public discourse. Israeli police has been repressing anti-war protests since the beginning of the war, often with excessive violence.⁵³⁷ In late March, the police entered the house of an anti-government activist who was suspected of coloring a fountain’s water red, trashing her place,⁵³⁸ while also using excessive force to disperse a demonstration that claimed that “Israel is committing genocide in Gaza”, claiming that such statements “disturb the public peace”.⁵³⁹ In another demonstration the

⁵³⁰ https://www.lemonde.fr/en/les-decodeurs/article/2023/11/11/photojournalists-embedded-with-hamas-on-october-7-heavy-but-unsubstantiated-israeli-accusations_6247085_8.html ; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-photographers-attack-200be1ba47361f1c1fc113cdaeb65d04>

⁵³¹ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/12/21/metaspoken-promises/systemic-censorship-palestine-content-instagram-and>; and for context: <https://www.972mag.com/meta-arabic-palestine-censorship/>

⁵³² <https://twitter.com/FPAlPal/status/1777599364568875206> ; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-04-08/tv-article/premium/foreign-press-association-calls-on-israel-to-lift-ban-on-independent-press-in-gaza/0000018e-be21-d92b-adaf-fe6513ea0000>

⁵³³ <https://theintercept.com/2023/12/23/israel-military-idf-media-censor/>

⁵³⁴ <https://www.salon.com/2024/01/05/cnn-admits-it-runs-all-gaza-coverage-through-bureau-monitored-by-israeli-military-censor-partner/> ; <https://theintercept.com/2024/01/04/cnn-israel-gaza-idf-reporting/>

⁵³⁵ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-25/tv-article-magazine/premium/how-israeli-media-became-a-wartime-government-propaganda-arm/0000018c-a0d3-d957-a98f-aed3ea560000>

⁵³⁶ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-25/tv-article-magazine/premium/how-israeli-media-became-a-wartime-government-propaganda-arm/0000018c-a0d3-d957-a98f-aed3ea560000>

⁵³⁷ <https://www.972mag.com/israel-police-repression-protests-gaza/>

⁵³⁸ <https://twitter.com/JoshBreiner/status/1772662679225635054>

⁵³⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/b1pggh4yr>

police prohibited reading the names of dead Gazans and confiscated both the microphone and the pages with the list of their names.⁵⁴⁰ Palestinian citizens of Israel were not allowed to protest early during the war with the support of Israel's Supreme Court,⁵⁴¹ a situation that has only partially improved subsequently. Israel has attempted to pressure Palestinian journalists from the West Bank from publishing about the war.⁵⁴² A website without formal affiliation that was created by the Israeli Ministry of Hasbara has been blocked from access within Israel.⁵⁴³ Israel has obstructed external official investigations into the Oct. 7 atrocities, for example one led by the UN Human Rights Council,⁵⁴⁴ and another that aimed to investigate sexual violence on Oct. 7.⁵⁴⁵ In early April Israel passed a law to shut down the operations of the critical channel al-Jazeera in the country.⁵⁴⁶

In addition, Israeli media has revealed that the IDF has conducted a covert campaign aimed at influencing Israeli citizens during the beginning of the war. As part of this campaign, the military opened and operated a Telegram channel that shared exclusive explicit content from IDF sources that showed the abuse and dehumanization of Palestinians, mostly within a Gaza context.⁵⁴⁷

The deeper discussion of Israeli media and discourse in the next two sections highlights the success of Israel's attempts to rally the Israeli public.

Israeli media and discourse

Following the above, Israeli journalists cannot get independent access to the Gaza Strip or to Gazans. The entire connection between Israeli journalists and the war is moderated through the IDF. One journalist summarized things as such: "if there is something that the military does not want us [journalists] to see and hear – we will not see it and not hear it. The IDF prevents us, Israeli journalists, any contact with Palestinians in the Strip... all the articles and images coming out of the Strip with journalists undergo a careful examination of the military censorship. This article was also changed by it. Most entrances of journalists to the Strip are very short... about half an hour on the ground... Sometimes it seems that the IDF stages scenes with more military action for those journalists it wishes to reward".⁵⁴⁸

Israeli discourse almost uniformly ignores Palestinian voices. There is almost no attention to the experiences of Gazans or the horrors of war.⁵⁴⁹ Instead, the dominant perspective provided to the Israeli public is the official account of the IDF's spokesperson which is rarely challenged despite

⁵⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/OmerArvili/status/1776192429709812033>

⁵⁴¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/2023-11-16/ty-article/.premium/0000018b-d84e-dffa-edef-fe4e97f50000>;
<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/2023-11-08/ty-article/.premium/0000018b-af66-dedf-adab-ef76b2400000>;
<https://13tv.co.il/item/news/domestic/crime-and-justice/war-protest-903791798/>

⁵⁴² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1774836624280473643>

⁵⁴³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-04-02/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018e-9ef0-d9c2-afbe-bef6abb00000> ;
<https://saturday-october-seven.com/>

⁵⁴⁴ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/government-forbids-doctors-from-speaking-to-un-group-investigating-oct-7-atrocities/>

⁵⁴⁵ <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20231206-un-seeks-israel-access-for-amas-sexual-violence-investigation> ;
<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/accounts-sexual-violence-amas-attack-mount-justice-is-remote-israels-victims-2023-12-05/>

⁵⁴⁶ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-al-jazeera-qatar-amas-war-gaza-49c2aa4afb3c3b0ee6ac314b63d80716>;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/entertainment/article/r17bidy0>

⁵⁴⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-01-16/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-e8c1-d765-ab9d-f8fd29800000> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-02-04/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-7042-dd6e-a98d-f462d6a00000> ;

⁵⁴⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2023-12-28/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018c-aaf0-d22d-a3dd-bff9c4ad0000>

⁵⁴⁹ <https://hazmanhazeh.org.il/dehumanization-by-disregard/> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/503665> ;

<https://www.kikar.co.il/journalism/s6bo7x> ; https://www.democracynow.org/2024/1/17/gideon_levy_israel_gaza ;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Myby8-55uwc> ; this has been the case also in the previous Gaza war:

<https://www.the7eye.org.il/128234>

many examples of falsehoods and misrepresentations of reality by the IDF in the war.⁵⁵⁰ For example, despite Israeli claims to have killed large amounts of Hamas militants (10,000-13,000 as of late February-early March),⁵⁵¹ the number has not been challenged in Israeli media, while a *BBC* examination found almost no evidence for this in hundreds of IDF videos, and little support for the number in the IDF's own reporting.⁵⁵² For several months, the IDF spokesperson presented the IDF's perspective on prime time every day on all Israeli TV channels with little criticism.⁵⁵³

In Israeli media, attention to the deaths of civilian Palestinians in Gaza is minimized to almost zero while the destruction is sanitized through images of buildings destroyed from far away.⁵⁵⁴ For example, the dozens of civilians deaths caused by the military operation that released two hostages in February were barely covered in Israeli media.⁵⁵⁵ Most Israeli media has not covered the atrocities and war crimes conducted by Israeli soldiers in Gaza, and the ones that have done so did it only months after the beginning of the war.⁵⁵⁶ The main challenges to dominant Israeli narrative in Hebrew language discourse come from independent media such as *+972 Magazine/Local Call* and *The Seventh Eye*, which nonetheless have very limited reach and resources⁵⁵⁷ and are themselves under military censorship⁵⁵⁸ as well as NGOs such as B'Tselem and Gisha.⁵⁵⁹

Israeli's media's uncritical pro-war position

Israeli media's pro-war position is rationalized, justified and widely accepted. The new CEO of Channel 13 told his employees in mid-March that they should unite the nation by providing entertainment and Israeli hasbara (i.e. public diplomacy/propaganda).⁵⁶⁰ An important Israeli journalist has stated that he believes that journalism should be used to bolster Israeli morale during the war.⁵⁶¹ Accordingly, Israeli media amplifies pro-war voices – seen to support the state's goals – while silencing others. Israeli journalists avoided reporting on friendly fire casualties in the IDF.⁵⁶²

The Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* (considered to be leftist by Israeli standards), for example, waited for five months until it called for a ceasefire,⁵⁶³ despite overwhelming evidence for the humanitarian costs of the war, widespread acknowledgement that the Israeli Prime Minister was prolonging the war for his own personal interests, and the apparent inability of the IDF to reach its military objectives. Similarly, it waited for almost half a year before speaking against the real possibility of

⁵⁵⁰ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/501228> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/television/tv-review/2024-01-16/ty-article/.highlight/0000018d-10f6-d71c-ad9f-53f6b2c90000>

⁵⁵¹ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/defense/article/15395367>; <https://www.ynet.co.il/blogs/118daysofwar/article/sksixiv9a> ; <https://www.politico.eu/article/israels-netanyahu-says-he-will-defy-bidens-red-line-and-invade-rafah/>

⁵⁵² The BBC found that only one of the 280 videos that the IDF uploaded to its website until 27 February showed what appeared as dead bodies of Hamas militants. The IDF referred in 160 posts to specified numbers of Hamas militants killed, reaching a total of 714. Other references were vague and therefore difficult to count. See <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68387864>

⁵⁵³ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-25/ty-article-magazine/.premium/how-israeli-media-became-a-wartime-government-propaganda-arm/0000018c-a0d3-d957-a98f-aed3ea560000>

⁵⁵⁴ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-25/ty-article-magazine/.premium/how-israeli-media-became-a-wartime-government-propaganda-arm/0000018c-a0d3-d957-a98f-aed3ea560000>

⁵⁵⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-03/ty-article/.highlight/0000018e-a04c-ded0-a18f-e2fc22fc0000>

⁵⁵⁶ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-25/ty-article-magazine/.premium/how-israeli-media-became-a-wartime-government-propaganda-arm/0000018c-a0d3-d957-a98f-aed3ea560000>

⁵⁵⁷ <https://www.972mag.com/> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/>

⁵⁵⁸ https://www.democracynow.org/2023/12/1/israel_gaza_war_gospel_artificial_intelligence

⁵⁵⁹ https://www.btselem.org/hebrew/press_releases/20231010_revenge_policy_in_motion_israel_committing_war_crimes_in_gaza ; <https://gisha.org/targeting-civilians-is-a-war-crime/>

⁵⁶⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2024-03-13/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-38a2-d21d-a3ef-3be6160f0000>

⁵⁶¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-01-14/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018d-0361-d832-a59d-17f7e2e50000> ; also <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2023-12-27/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-a5c7-d97c-a9ec-bfc6d6d00000>

⁵⁶² <https://www.the7eye.org.il/503392>

⁵⁶³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2024-03-01/ty-article-opinion/0000018d-f607-da4e-adbf-f6bf17c30000> ; compare to the newspaper's position during the 2014 war in Gaza: <https://www.the7eye.org.il/128234>

ethnic cleansing in Gaza,⁵⁶⁴ and published in late March a piece covering a report that estimates excess mortality in Gaza because of famine and disease, which had been published in mid February.⁵⁶⁵ An important journalist in the newspaper flipped his own position without any admission of his earlier mistake.⁵⁶⁶ In another example, when an Israeli director won a prize for a film and discussed Israeli apartheid in his victory speech, the Israeli Channel 11 described it as antisemitic⁵⁶⁷ while *Ha'aretz* featured no less than four pieces against him.⁵⁶⁸ A Palestinian citizen of Israel who wrote an op-ed in the newspaper was not allowed to use the term 'Palestinian' to refer to Israeli citizens – and the editorial staff changed it to the socially acceptable 'Arabs'.⁵⁶⁹

Israeli media continued to disseminate claims that had already been debunked. A serious investigative program on Channel 12 broadcasted an interview with a senior IDF general who claimed to have seen atrocities that did not happen.⁵⁷⁰ The Israeli Channel 14 has presented especially egregious examples of promoting fake news and reiterating false claims. In one case, for example, a popular anchor discussed in depth a supposed *The Atlantic* piece about the events of Oct. 7, aiming to absolve the Israeli Prime Minister from responsibility. A brief subsequent investigation revealed that the *Atlantic* piece never existed.⁵⁷¹ In a different case the channel televised an interview with an IDF officer who openly lied about atrocities in the Gaza envelope well after those atrocities had been shown to be false in Israeli media.⁵⁷² On other occasions, Israeli media casts doubts on evidence that weaken Israel's legitimacy. For example, in late March Channel 11 broadcasted a segment under the title "Is there a famine in Gaza?",⁵⁷³ while the popular news website Ynet uncritically conveyed an official response that "there is no humanitarian crisis in Gaza" and blamed the UN for any problems in the distribution of food in Gaza.⁵⁷⁴

American media

In American media, several studies and experts have pointed out that there has been a pervasive bias against Palestinians for a century.⁵⁷⁵ For example, a survey of the American media's coverage of Palestinians found that only a tiny minority (less than 2%) of editorials, columns and guest opinion pieces that discussed Palestine in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* (between 1970-2019) were written by Palestinians.⁵⁷⁶ The media coverage of the beginning of the war remained strongly pro-Israeli.⁵⁷⁷ *The New York Times* supplied direct quotes from Israeli government and military

⁵⁶⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2024-03-27/ty-article-opinion/0000018e-7bc4-d680-a1cf-ffc775940000>

⁵⁶⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-03-27/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-8062-d49b-a3bf-f47f49810000>; https://gaza-projections.org/gaza_projections_report.pdf; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2024-03-31/ty-article-opinion/0000018e-907e-d9a4-a7bf-dc7f1b1f0000>

⁵⁶⁶ <https://twitter.com/idanlandau/status/1777753047789117499>

⁵⁶⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2024-02-26/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-e6ee-d7f4-a3dd-e6ee92270000>

⁵⁶⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/opinion/2024-02-28/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018d-ef8e-d1e0-a1dd-ffffe46f0000>;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-02-28/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018d-eedc-d7f4-a3dd-eedcb0040000>;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-03-05/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018e-0b2c-d9cb-afdf-0bbc88e20000>;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/opinion/2024-03-04/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-0a17-d9cb-afdf-0a9f2b770000>

⁵⁶⁹ Discussion of her speaking in another podcast at: <https://youtu.be/WHCMVqNOre0?si=PlZXwSpzeJ4boVvYR&t=2430>

⁵⁷⁰ <https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/6361323ddea5a810/Article-831cb8cdf6d6b81026.htm>,

https://twitter.com/brown_johnbrown/status/1768222848361881615

⁵⁷¹ <https://twitter.com/FakeReporter/status/1761696937256853788>

⁵⁷² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-21/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-2bb4-daf5-a1bf-aff41ac80000>

⁵⁷³ https://twitter.com/kann_news/status/1770492431990956343

⁵⁷⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sys5qtaa>; for context:

https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Feb_July2024_Special_Brief.pdf

⁵⁷⁵ Many references here: <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/new-york-times-complicit-plausible-genocide>;

<https://newrepublic.com/article/171286/new-york-times-israel-coverage-history-netanyahu>

⁵⁷⁶ <https://www.972mag.com/us-media-palestinians>. The Nation included a higher ratio (10.5%); the New Republic had no pieces authored by Palestinians.

⁵⁷⁷ <https://www.columblog.com/p/massacred-vs-left-to-die-documenting>

officials four times as much as the equivalent Palestinian quotes.⁵⁷⁸ In another example, an investigation by *The Guardian* demonstrated that *CNN*'s coverage is heavily biased towards Israel,⁵⁷⁹ a critique that surfaced within the channel as well.⁵⁸⁰ Similarly, a study by *The Intercept* found that already early in the war, the coverage of Palestinians in top newspapers in the United States decreased as the number of Palestinian deaths increased. Strong emotional words were disproportionately used to describe Israeli deaths and not Palestinian ones.⁵⁸¹ A different investigation found a similar effect continuing throughout February in *The New York Times*.⁵⁸² An internal memo at *The New York Times* told journalists to avoid terms such as “genocide”, “ethnic cleansing”, “occupied territories”, “refugee camps” or “Palestine” in its coverage of the war.⁵⁸³ While Israeli casualties are individuated in reporting, the far greater number of Palestinian casualties is frequently described collectively and in passive terms.⁵⁸⁴ The selection of language to blur Israeli responsibility, for example to the killing of Palestinians, and preserve its image has been long documented and continues throughout the war.⁵⁸⁵ As a result, for example, a February poll found that half of Americans do not know whether Israelis or Palestinians have had a higher death toll, despite the massive discrepancy in reality between both sides (about 20 Palestinians had been killed for each Israeli).⁵⁸⁶ The *New York Times* published an editorial in which it recognized that military aid to Israel cannot be unconditional only after more than half a year of war.⁵⁸⁷

American media has also largely avoided investigations of events that could make Israel appear negatively. The media watchdog group *FAIR* pointed out that US media shields its audience from reports of Israeli friendly fire incidents in the Oct. 7 attacks – reports that had been widely covered in Israeli media.⁵⁸⁸ Notably, Ronen Bergman, a journalist working for both the Israeli *Yediot Achronot* and *The New York Times*, has investigated these incidents in his *Yediot Achronot* publications but not in his *New York Times* ones.⁵⁸⁹ *The New York Times* has briefly or not covered other negative stories on Israel such as Israel’s targeting policy, its responsibility in starving Palestinians, or its torturing of detainees.⁵⁹⁰ Instead, a major story covering Hamas’ mass rape during Oct. 7 in *The New York Times* received inordinate resources – including the funding to conduct 150 interviews⁵⁹¹ – and was solicited by the paper itself. Inexplicably, the story was given to a former Israeli intelligence officer with no former reporting experience, who also liked a tweet that called upon Israel to “turn the [Gaza] strip into a slaughterhouse”.⁵⁹² After its release, independent media as well as *The Intercept*

⁵⁷⁸ <https://newyorkwarcrimes.com/the-times-quotes-israeli-and-american-sources-more-than-3-times-as-much-as-palestinians>

⁵⁷⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/feb/04/cnn-staff-pro-israel-bias>

⁵⁸⁰ <https://theintercept.com/2024/03/01/cnn-christiane-amanpour-israel-gaza-coverage/>

⁵⁸¹ <https://theintercept.com/2024/01/09/newspapers-israel-palestine-bias-new-york-times/>

⁵⁸² <https://newyorkwarcrimes.com/the-times-quotes-israeli-and-american-sources-more-than-3-times-as-much-as-palestinians>

⁵⁸³ <https://theintercept.com/2024/04/15/nyt-israel-gaza-genocide-palestine-coverage/>

⁵⁸⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/11/a-new-abys-gaza-and-the-hundred-years-war-on-palestine> ;

<https://newyorkwarcrimes.com/the-times-quotes-israeli-and-american-sources-more-than-3-times-as-much-as-palestinians>

⁵⁸⁵ <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/new-york-times-complicit-plausible-genocide> ;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1763453379811098672>; <https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1764012307385053635>;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1764815517548994866>; <https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1764752005673984066>;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1763254348942037335>; <https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1762992473067130934>;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1761979317779824767> ; <https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1767686506939068845>; the author of

these tweets includes many other examples.

⁵⁸⁶ <https://www.pewresearch.org/2024/03/21/emotions-news-and-knowledge-about-the-israel-hamas-war/>

⁵⁸⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/opinion/israel-military-aid.html>

⁵⁸⁸ <https://fair.org/home/shielding-us-public-from-israeli-reports-of-friendly-fire-on-october-7/> ; also

<https://theintercept.com/2024/02/27/zaka-october-7-israel-hamas-new-york-times/>

⁵⁸⁹ <https://fair.org/home/shielding-us-public-from-israeli-reports-of-friendly-fire-on-october-7/>

⁵⁹⁰ <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/new-york-times-complicit-plausible-genocide>

⁵⁹¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/28/world/middleeast/oct-7-attacks-hamas-israel-sexual-violence.html>

⁵⁹² <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/28/new-york-times-anat-schwartz-october-7/> . Her partner’s nephew worked with her, as well as a veteran reporter who was responsible for the framing.

found a long list of fundamental problems with the account.⁵⁹³ The *New York Times* itself had to admit that some of the information it had published was false,⁵⁹⁴ and later cut its ties with the reporter.⁵⁹⁵ *The Nation* described the piece as “the biggest failure of journalism” at the *Times* in the past two decades,⁵⁹⁶ while Ha’aretz compared the collapse of the *Times’* piece to its October 7.⁵⁹⁷

The treatment of UNRWA as a case of media misrepresentation

One example of the actions of Israel’s media strategy is the treatment of UNRWA, the UN body responsible for the support of Palestinian refugees. The same day after the ICJ found that it was plausible that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza (Jan. 26), Israel asserted that 12 UNRWA employees (out of c. 13,000 in the Strip) participated in the Oct. 7 attacks against Israel.⁵⁹⁸ Almost immediately, 16 of UNRWA’s donors – western countries – declared they would suspend their funding of UNRWA.⁵⁹⁹ Israeli and Western media followed the UNRWA story with coverage and discussions, burying the much more substantial ICJ story. Although Israel has not released any publicly available evidence to support these claims to date,⁶⁰⁰ a story in the British Channel 4 revealed the document Israel supposedly sent UNRWA’s donor countries. The document itself was extremely brief. Containing no actual evidence, it includes a single line about each of the 12 UNRWA employees that were supposed perpetrators.⁶⁰¹ A different intelligence dossier released by Israel contains no evidence either.⁶⁰² To date, the head of UNRWA has stated that despite multiple requests Israel has not shared any details of the allegation with him or his organization.⁶⁰³ Other claims made by Israel were never made to UNRWA but directly to the media.⁶⁰⁴ An assessment by the US’ national intelligence council assessed the involvement of a handful of UNRWA workers in the Oct. 7 events “with low confidence”.⁶⁰⁵ The weak evidence supporting the Israeli claim has led to several of the countries that stopped funding to resume it in March.⁶⁰⁶ Other countries did so subsequently or expressed plans to do so, and some even increased their humanitarian support for Gaza.⁶⁰⁷ In mid-March, the EU’s top humanitarian aid officer said that he had seen no evidence from Israel that supported Israel’s accusations against UNRWA.⁶⁰⁸ According to UNRWA’s own leaked

⁵⁹³ <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/28/new-york-times-anat-schwartz-october-7/>; <https://theintercept.com/2024/03/04/nyt-october-7-sexual-violence-kibbutz-beeri/>; <https://www.npr.org/2024/03/06/1236130609/new-york-times-hamas-attacks-israel-palestine> ; <https://jacobin.com/2024/02/new-york-times-anti-palestinian-bias>

⁵⁹⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/25/world/middleeast/video-sexual-assault-israel-kibbutz-hamas.html>

⁵⁹⁵ <https://www.ynetnews.com/culture/article/rkoh8h8ya>

⁵⁹⁶ <https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/new-york-times-intercept-hamas-rape/>

⁵⁹⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/galleryfriday/2024-03-28/tv-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-7ab6-de80-a78f-7bf747280000>

⁵⁹⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/world/middleeast/un-aid-israel-oct-7-attacks.html>

⁵⁹⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/01/unrwa-funding-pause-employees-october-7-hamas-attack-claims-no-evidence-un>

⁶⁰⁰ But see this video (originally reported on by *The Washington Post*) that allegedly shows an UNRWA worker taking the body of an Israeli on Oct. 7: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-presents-video-allegedly-showing-un-aid-worker-taking-body-israeli-oct-7-2024-02-17/>

⁶⁰¹ <https://twitter.com/DrSakriKaia/status/1754685268454785074>

⁶⁰² <https://www.scribd.com/document/702738861/Swords-of-Iron-UNRWA-Hamas-Relations> ; survey of how the media has treated

Israel’s claims here: <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/unwra-hamas-israel/>

⁶⁰³ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-02-20/tv-article-magazine/.premium/unrwa-chief-waiting-for-israels-evidence-on-hamas-infiltration-of-gaza-employees/0000018d-c5fc-db3b-a9cf-cdfdf5a0000> ; <https://twitter.com/UNLazzarini/status/1760764594644013287>

⁶⁰⁴ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-press-release-26feb2024/>

⁶⁰⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-finds-claims-that-u-n-aid-agency-staff-took-part-in-hamas-attack-credible-957b747e>

⁶⁰⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-68518468> ; <https://twitter.com/Kahlissee/status/1763587426163798282> ;

<https://www.reuters.com/world/unrwa-donors-likely-resume-funding-soon-norway-says-2024-03-06/>;

<https://www.reuters.com/world/eu-holds-back-part-unrwa-payment-boosts-palestinian-aid-2024-03-01/> ;

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/france-to-resume-unrwa-funding-while-ensuring-right-conditions-are-met/> ;

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2024/3/29/japan-to-resume-funding-to-unrwa-following-sweden-finland-and-canada>

⁶⁰⁷ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-uk-unrwa-plan-place-resume-funding>;

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20240228_10/ ; <https://apnews.com/article/australia-unrwa-hamas-israel-gaza-funding-1b4bcb81251cf7eed0904da9fe4144b>

⁶⁰⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/no-evidence-israel-back-unrwa-accusations-says-eu-humanitarian-chief-2024-03-14/>

report, Israel pressured Gazan employees of UNRWA to falsely state that UNRWA has links to Hamas and that its staff took part in the Oct. 7 attacks. The employees were severely beaten, tortured and were threatened that their family members would be harmed.⁶⁰⁹ In late March an Israeli organization released a report that revealed a pro-Israeli influence operation that targeted US Democrat legislators in attempt to sway their opinion against UNRWA.⁶¹⁰

Israeli officials have long stated that they want to shut UNRWA down.⁶¹¹ Israel has recently stated again this aim,⁶¹² and has acted upon it,⁶¹³ suggesting that it has been weaponizing its recent allegations for this purpose. In the recent war Israel and Israeli media state or insinuate there is a connection between UNRWA and Hamas, but Israeli media fails to independently evaluate the claims by the IDF, or mention facts such as that UNRWA is very frequently audited within the UN,⁶¹⁴ or notify its audience that all UNRWA employees had been approved by Israel and re-approved every year, and that UNRWA screens all its employees against the UN Security Council sanctions list twice a year.⁶¹⁵ UNRWA also fired several employees who were found to be linked to Hamas in the past.⁶¹⁶ Moreover, the closure of UNRWA would massively exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, while discussions in Israeli media include no clear plan for providing alternative aid to Gazans (a late March poll found that UNRWA oversaw the provision of assistance for 62% of respondents in shelters in south Gaza, in parallel to complaints for discrimination in those shelters⁶¹⁷).

Another case of successful propaganda: doubting the Palestinian death toll⁶¹⁸

Early during the war, Israel had publicly disputed the Palestinian death toll, claiming that it was exaggerated and unrealistic. Here too the media played a major role in propagating this claim, planting the seeds of doubt in the minds of many. Until today, the media retains these doubts, often by mentioning that Palestinian casualties are reported by, e.g. the “*Hamas-led Ministry of Health in Gaza*” (emphasis mine). The doubts reached as high as US President Joe Biden, who publicly doubted the number of casualties in a well-covered speech on Oct. 25 in which he stated he had “no confidence” in these numbers.⁶¹⁹ The relatively large number of Hebrew-speaking comments responding to an earlier version of this document (released on Twitter/X on 15 March) reveals that these doubts remain in the minds of many in Israel today. Superficial doubts of the death count continue to appear periodically in Israeli Hebrew-speaking media.

⁶⁰⁹ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/unrwa-report-says-israel-coerced-some-agency-employees-to-falsely-admit-hamas-links/

⁶¹⁰ https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-19/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-4cd5-d26a-afbf-ecd552de0000;https://fakereporter.net/pdf/pro-israel_influence_network_report-0324.pdf?v=2

⁶¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hObMANfCOBQ> ; <https://jewishcurrents.org/the-campaign-to-abolish-unrwa>

⁶¹² <https://www.kikar.co.il/israel-news/sa71dg> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-11/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-2dbc-d468-a9ff-2fbd-bafa0000>

⁶¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/31/israel-plan-un-dismantle-palestinian-relief-agency-unwra> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/mar/26/israel-unrwa-palestine>

⁶¹⁴ <https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are/frequently-asked-questions> [under oversight of UNRWA spending]; https://youtu.be/LA_xtBh3eLw?si=DXUkq3gct46VbE9O&t=445

⁶¹⁵ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-press-release-26feb2024/> ; <https://jewishcurrents.org/the-campaign-to-abolish-unrwa>

⁶¹⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/10/world/middleeast/unrwa-hamas-gaza.html>

⁶¹⁷ <http://pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/Poll%2091%20English%20press%20release%2020%20March%202024.pdf> (pp. 7-8)

⁶¹⁸ I have added this content here because of public interest, particularly in the responses to my publishing of the Hebrew version of this document on March 15. I hope that it sheds some more light on both my methodology while also presenting another case of media bias, propaganda and their lingering effects throughout the war.

⁶¹⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/biden-says-he-has-no-confidence-palestinian-death-count-2023-10-26/> ; <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/25/1208577490/biden-says-hes-worried-about-civilian-deaths-in-gaza-but-questions-death-toll-st> ; <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/israel-hamas-war-palestinians-news/card/biden-says-he-doubts-accuracy-of-palestinians-death-toll-reports-WXQUdN2EwX9EZO3Jhziq>

Nonetheless, this is an untenable position. Disregarding the obvious interests of Israel to minimize the Palestinian death count, a few days after Biden doubted the Palestinian death count, the health authorities in Gaza released a list of the 6,747 dead Palestinians who had died until Biden's statement on Oct. 26, including their names, sex, age and IDs.⁶²⁰ To the best of my knowledge, nobody, including Israel who holds the population registry for Gaza, has doubted the veracity of this list.⁶²¹ Subsequently, Biden himself apologized for casting public doubt on the Palestinian death toll.⁶²² To the best of my knowledge, there have been no explicit doubts of the Palestinian death toll in major international media outlets since that point (despite the repeated insinuations discussed above). The single attempt to do so, a March piece in the conservative Jewish *Tablet Magazine*, used cherry-picked and partial data to make a statistical argument.⁶²³ Although several experts and observers quickly refuted it as a case of shoddy statistics,⁶²⁴ a series of Israeli media outlets (as well as AIPAC) attempted to boost this message without any criticism to sow doubt.⁶²⁵

On the other hand, several serious media outlets have accepted the Gaza death count⁶²⁶ despite some methodological challenges⁶²⁷ and declared that "the figure is widely viewed as the most reliable one available".⁶²⁸ In December, a peer-reviewed scholarly analysis in the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* has argued that there was "no evidence of inflated mortality" in the reports from Gaza.⁶²⁹ The Gaza Health Ministry has provided reports of deaths to several media outlets, for example to *al-Jazeera* (a list of some 11,500 children who were killed, published)⁶³⁰ and to *NPR* (a report on the death count, unpublished).⁶³¹ In mid March, an expert epidemiologist with 30 years of experience in field measurement of mortality in crises accepted the number, adding that "In fact, there may have never been a major conflict where real-time surveillance data about deaths was more complete than is unfolding in Gaza today."⁶³²

Notably, the recent war has been the first major Gaza operation in which Israel does not keep its own estimates of the Palestinian death count. To the best of my knowledge, there is no other source for mortality in Gaza as of writing.⁶³³ An Israeli investigative journalist report revealed that the IDF

⁶²⁰ <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/10/this-is-a-list-of-the-names-of-more-than-6000-palestinians-that-israel-has-killed-in-gaza/>

⁶²¹ <https://theintercept.com/2023/10/31/gaza-death-palestine-health-ministry/>

⁶²² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/10/27/biden-israel-palestine-muslim-americans-war/> ;
<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/09/us/politics/biden-aide-israel-regret.html>

⁶²³ <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/how-gaza-health-ministry-fakes-casualty-numbers/>

⁶²⁴ Most obviously as the piece was published 5 months after the beginning of the war but examined a subset of only 15 days at the beginning of the war. Others have refuted this account, e.g. <https://twitter.com/joftius/status/1766199967364890949> ;
<https://twitter.com/BalouxFrancois/status/1769476779234721915>

⁶²⁵ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-amas-war/article-791838>; <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/world-news/middle-east/article/15388434> ; <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel-at-war/artc-expert-claims-amas-s-gaza-death-toll-exaggerated-or-faked> ;
<https://www.ins.org/amas-fakes-casualty-figures-the-numbers-are-not-real/> ;
<https://twitter.com/AIPAC/status/1769387362289655835>

⁶²⁶ <https://time.com/6909636/gaza-death-toll/>

⁶²⁷ The most serious methodological problem is the division of the death count into two categories. One includes actual corpses counted by the Health Ministry (some 60% of the death count) and includes full demographic information. The other number comes from areas where the Health Ministry has no communications or where the health system has broken down. In these cases, the Health Ministry uses "reliable media sources" (unclear which) to make its estimates, without full demographic information (or names). This is hardly ideal, but considering the challenges to get a decent count in real time is acceptable. Notably, death counts are notoriously difficult to count even in less disrupted environments. At the aftermath of hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico in 2017, the government claimed for half a year that less than a hundred people died, then revised its assessment to 2,975. I have studied this controversy as a scholar as events unfolded in 2017-2018. The best summary I know of is this Wikipedia page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Maria_death_toll_controversy

⁶²⁸ <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/29/1234159514/gaza-death-toll-30000-palestinians-israel-amas-war>

⁶²⁹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)02713-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)02713-7/fulltext)

⁶³⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIcZT9_YE9Y

⁶³¹ <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/29/1234159514/gaza-death-toll-30000-palestinians-israel-amas-war>

⁶³² <https://time.com/6909636/gaza-death-toll/>

⁶³³ <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/25/1208577490/biden-says-hes-worried-about-civilian-deaths-in-gaza-but-questions-death-toll-st>

itself is using the official Gaza death count, updating it daily in its own internal briefings.⁶³⁴ This has been confirmed by the *Wall Street Journal*.⁶³⁵ Israel's Prime Minister himself has claimed in an interview that Israel has killed 13,000 Hamas militants (see below on this number) and that 1-1.5 civilians died for each militant, indicating a total Palestinian death count of 26,000-32,500 as of March 10.⁶³⁶ This range includes the Palestinian death count the next day, 31,112.⁶³⁷ In late March, in a closed briefing to Senate Republicans, Israel's Prime Minister reiterated his position, stating that he estimated the death toll to be some 28,000 (about 14% lower than the official Gaza Health Ministry estimate on the next day, 32,623).⁶³⁸

Additional evidence supporting the Palestinian death count claims include the fact that in previous wars, the gap between the Israeli and Palestinian versions of the Palestinian death tolls have been negligible. Thus for example, for the 2014 Operation Protective Edge, Israel officially estimated 2,125 Palestinian deaths⁶³⁹ whereas the Palestinian Ministry of Health counted 2,310 Palestinian deaths⁶⁴⁰ (the UN Human Rights Committee's count reached 2,251⁶⁴¹). The reported number of Palestinian deaths is probably an undercount as it is likely that many deaths have not been found or have not been reported to the health ministry.⁶⁴² The death toll does not include about 7,000 people missing under the rubble. As this number had not been updated since November, it is almost certain that it has significantly increased since.⁶⁴³ Gaza's own electronic system for counting the dead was disrupted already on Nov. 12.⁶⁴⁴

Estimates of Hamas militant deaths by Israelis are often exaggerated, as is natural and unsurprising in military engagements on both sides.⁶⁴⁵ On other occasions, Israeli officials have long produced wild exaggerations with regards to the number of killed Hamas militants. On November 5, for example, "a senior security official" (perhaps the Minister of Defense), stated that the IDF has already killed 20,000 Gazans, "mostly terrorists".⁶⁴⁶ The overall Palestinian count back then was only 9,770.⁶⁴⁷ The exaggerations on the Israeli side have been strongly suggested, for example, by a BBC fact checking analysis of all IDF videos.⁶⁴⁸

Altogether, all the evidence strongly suggests that the Palestinian death counts are as precise as might be expected during a war, even more so considering the serious and sustained damage to the Gaza health system and its reports. The fact that a significant amount of interested commentators continues to doubt the reports and is willing to do so publicly highlights both the effectiveness of the

⁶³⁴ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/%D7%94%D7%A6%D7%91%D7%90-%D7%91%D7%93%D7%A7-%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%90-%D7%A9%D7%93%D7%99%D7%95%D7%95%D7%97%D7%99-%D7%94%D7%94%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%92%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%91%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%93-%D7%94%D7%91/>

⁶³⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/u-s-and-israels-unprecedented-intelligence-sharing-draws-criticism-a85979b4>

⁶³⁶ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israels-netanyahu-says-he-will-defy-bidens-red-line-and-invade-rafah/>

⁶³⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-136>

⁶³⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/us/politics/netanyahu-schumer-israel.html> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-175>

⁶³⁹ <https://mfa.gov.il/ProtectiveEdge/Documents/PalestinianFatalities.pdf>

⁶⁴⁰ <https://web.archive.org/web/20150111023729/http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=751290>

⁶⁴¹ http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/ColGaza/A_HRC_CRP_4.doc

⁶⁴² <https://twitter.com/BallouxFrancois/status/1743019663913537943>

⁶⁴³ <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/03/25/world/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news#missing-people-under-gazas-rubble-make-for-a-shadow-death-toll> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/08/relatives-anguish-tens-of-thousands-missing-in-gaza-war>

⁶⁴⁴ <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/29/1234159514/gaza-death-toll-30000-palestinians-israel-hamas-war>

⁶⁴⁵ The same is true for Hamas estimates of IDF casualties in their official communications channel. These estimates are often exaggerated or massaged, for example by Hamas claiming they have "targeted" a tank which implies (but does not actually state) that the tank sustained any damage, or by showing a video of Hamas militants firing a projectile at a tank and often an explosion but not showing actual damage done.

⁶⁴⁶ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/thpk0eg15

⁶⁴⁷ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-death-toll-numbers-injured-5c9dc40bec95a8408c83f3c2fb759da0>

⁶⁴⁸ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68387864>

propaganda campaign during the beginning of the war, and the tenacity of Israel's information war that continues to be waged as of writing.

Zoom-in 1: The Second Israeli invasion of al-Shifa hospital (18 March-1 April)

The second Israeli invasion of al-Shifa hospital in mid-late March stands out as a major yet distinct operation that fits into several of the sections in this document. The following section zooms into this particular event to highlight how this operation reflects the themes discussed above.

In mid-late March, the IDF conducted another military operation in the al-Shifa hospital.⁶⁴⁹ Early reports from within the Strip asserted that the IDF had killed or executed some 150 young men.⁶⁵⁰ An NGO received testimonies of systematic crimes conducted that included deliberate killings and extrajudicial executions, as well as arbitrary detentions of some 400 individuals and torturing of local residents and patients.⁶⁵¹ After the IDF released an collage image with images of 358 allegedly detained terrorists from al-Shifa hospital, an NGO found that the number of images was smaller (248), that the collage included 52 duplicates, and identified 11 portraits in the collage by name as healthcare workers.⁶⁵² Several doctors and other health practitioners have been killed or executed,⁶⁵³ including a pharmacist was among those executed in front of patients.⁶⁵⁴ People who escaped provide similar testimonies,⁶⁵⁵ such as a young man who recounts IDF soldiers shooting at detainees around him, as well as killing several as well as his father and brother.⁶⁵⁶ Footage of released detainees shows them in their underwear.⁶⁵⁷ Some of the released detainees were in wheelchairs.⁶⁵⁸ An adjacent hospital to al-Shifa (al-Helu) was bombed in the operation, hitting patient rooms as well.⁶⁵⁹ An eyewitness claimed to see about four times groups of three to ten detainees brought to hospital buildings. Gunshots were then heard, and the soldiers then left to bring another group of detainees; other eyewitnesses recounted similar events and execution-style killings.⁶⁶⁰ People who did not evacuate when ordered were regarded as suspects and killed.⁶⁶¹ Other eyewitnesses stated that they were not able to move and get food and water for days.⁶⁶² An NGO's

⁶⁴⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/24/world/middleeast/al-shifa-hospital-gaza-israel.html>

⁶⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/HossamShabat/status/1770813640251195394> ; the IDF claimed these were "terrorists", <https://twitter.com/ClubReel/status/1770822632725700746>

⁶⁵¹ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6236>

⁶⁵² <https://twitter.com/HCWWatch/status/1771307184145502250>

⁶⁵³ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1772039795662889006> ; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1777339018453058024> ; <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/04/come-out-you-animals-how-the-massacre-at-al-shifa-hospital-happened>

⁶⁵⁴ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1771370478906822877>

⁶⁵⁵ Several testimonies of people who escaped or were released in this tweet chain:

<https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1772039795662889006> ; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1777365780172026029>

⁶⁵⁶ <https://twitter.com/trhxian/status/1771648909753864280>

⁶⁵⁷ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771565663535960309>

⁶⁵⁸ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771565663535960309>

⁶⁵⁹ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771495855587000429>

⁶⁶⁰ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6232/International-community-must-act-immediately-to-stop-Israeli-army%E2%80%99s-massacre-of-Palestinians-at-Al-Shifa-Hospital> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2024/3/25/palestinian-testimonies-of-israeli-executions-at-al-shifa-hospital> ; <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/04/come-out-you-animals-how-the-massacre-at-al-shifa-hospital-happened>

⁶⁶¹ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/04/come-out-you-animals-how-the-massacre-at-al-shifa-hospital-happened>

⁶⁶² <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/24/world/middleeast/al-shifa-hospital-gaza-israel.html> ;

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/1/as-those-fleeing-al-shifa-get-to-south-gaza-they-recount-israeli-torture>

initial research found evidence for the execution of 13 children,⁶⁶³ as well as that over 25,000 civilians were forced to evacuate their homes in the vicinity of al-Shifa, and estimated that the IDF demolished and torched over 1,200 housing units in the area.⁶⁶⁴ Several consistent testimonies also reveal that the IDF used civilians as human shields.⁶⁶⁵

Israeli footage from al-Shifa revealed that the IDF has made the hospital into a makeshift center of operations, with widespread destruction and tied and blindfolded detained Palestinians placed along its corridors.⁶⁶⁶ Civilians living in the vicinity of al-Shifa hospital were left without food and water for days. According to one eyewitness, she was among 65 families that the IDF forced out of their building. The IDF then burned their clothes as well as the building in which they lived; other buildings and civilians were allegedly burned as well.⁶⁶⁷ The IDF's actions trapped over 240 sick and injured patients in the hospital without access to food, medication or treatment for about a week.⁶⁶⁸ Doctors who were in al-Shifa during the siege reported on their extreme experiences.⁶⁶⁹ At least 22 patients died due to lack of oxygen, food and water.⁶⁷⁰

After the IDF finally left al-Shifa, hundreds of corpses were found amidst widespread destruction of and in the hospital.⁶⁷¹ Dozens or even hundreds of corpses were found decomposing in the ground in makeshift and mass graves, some of them handcuffed in what suggests execution.⁶⁷² An independent research agency based in academia found evidence that the bodies of those killed during this invasion were bulldozed.⁶⁷³

An NGO claimed that based on preliminary reports, over 1,500 Palestinians were killed, injured, or are reported missing. Women and children made up half of the casualties. Hundreds of corpses were found, including some burned and others with heads and limbs severed.⁶⁷⁴ The directors and doctors of the hospital declared that the destruction put the hospital out of service while also naming many of their colleagues who were killed, detained and displaced.⁶⁷⁵ Despite the large amount of contrary evidence, the IDF Chief of the General Staff claimed that not a single medical personnel or local patients were harmed.⁶⁷⁶ Israel's former Prime Minister also claimed that not a single civilian was killed, "unprecedented in urban warfare".⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁶³ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6246/In-a-week,-Israeli-army-executes-13-children-in-and-near-Al-Shifa-Hospital>

⁶⁶⁴ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6254/Al-Shifa-Medical-Complex-Witnesses-One-of-the-Largest-Massacres-in-Palestinian-History>

⁶⁶⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-israeli-army-uses-palestinian-civilians-human-shields-its-operation-shifa-medical-complex-and-its-vicinity-enar>

⁶⁶⁶ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1772757426887926144>

⁶⁶⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mN1SRUx0R8>

⁶⁶⁸ <https://twitter.com/PHRIIsrael/status/1771499307478229244> ; also <https://twitter.com/DrTedros/status/1771276290315653372>

⁶⁶⁹ <https://twitter.com/DrMadsGilbert/status/1774371251881984169>

⁶⁷⁰ <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2024/4/1/israel-leaves-al-shifa-hospital-in-ruins-and-littered-with-human-remains> ; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6254/Al-Shifa-Medical-Complex-Witnesses-One-of-the-Largest-Massacres-in-Palestinian-History>

⁶⁷¹ A few here, and see also the next footnote: <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1777321386991612112> ;

<https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1777299876885241930> ; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1777306768802038012> ;

<https://twitter.com/HossamShabat/status/177726280084963393>

⁶⁷² <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/israel-al-shifa-massacre-denialism/> ;

<https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2024/4/1/israel-leaves-al-shifa-hospital-in-ruins-and-littered-with-human-remains> ;

<https://jacobin.com/2024/04/al-shifa-hospital-siege-gaza-massacre> ; many images and videos at the following:

<https://twitter.com/HossamShabat/status/1774741588226273379> ; <https://twitter.com/KufiyvaPS/status/177475137837773162> ;

<https://twitter.com/DrMadsGilbert/status/1774704992445731264> ; <https://twitter.com/Reuters/status/1774936027360297304> ;

<https://twitter.com/SkyNews/status/1776958103109664881> ; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1779859676827431399>

⁶⁷³ <https://twitter.com/ForensicArchi/status/1778106742737375471>

⁶⁷⁴ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6254/Al-Shifa-Medical-Complex-Witnesses-One-of-the-Largest-Massacres-in-Palestinian-History> ; <https://twitter.com/EuroMedHR/status/1777652447474749720>

⁶⁷⁵ <https://twitter.com/DrMadsGilbert/status/1775300379967729675>

⁶⁷⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymd23pka>

⁶⁷⁷ <https://twitter.com/naftaliibennett/status/1774663364314091870>

An IDF's spokesperson claimed on the IDF's official Twitter account that "200 terrorists [were] eliminated" and that more than 500 Palestinians were detained.⁶⁷⁸ Yet when the IDF brought international journalists to see the hospital just before it left, the local IDF spokesperson estimated the number of Palestinian fighters killed over two weeks of fighting at 40, while a commando leader said that the number was "a few dozens".⁶⁷⁹ A investigative report found that most of the people who were killed and arrested were workers in the government's civil branch – people working in Civil Defense, the police, the interior ministry and so on, who all came to al-Shifa to collect their salaries.⁶⁸⁰

As I hope to have demonstrated through the evidence above, the situation in Gaza is a horrible catastrophe that continues to unfold daily in front of our eyes. The least I can do is to gather the evidence and speak up now.

Do not go gentle into that good night \ Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

⁶⁷⁸ <https://twitter.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1774816428916412574> ; the number was "over 200" in Israeli media:
<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymd23pka>

⁶⁷⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/01/gaza-al-shifa-hospital-israel/>

⁶⁸⁰ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/04/come-out-you-animals-how-the-massacre-at-al-shifa-hospital-happened>

Appendix 1 – The reasons underlying my definition of Israel’s actions in the war as genocide

Disclaimer: Unlike other sections in this document which summarize the evidence about the war, this one explains my position about understanding Israel’s actions in it as genocide.

My definition of genocide builds upon my understanding of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This Convention defined genocide as “any of the [specified] acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.” It requires two interconnected elements:

1. The commission of one or more specific acts against a group:
 - a. Killing members of the group
 - b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
 - c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
 - d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group
 - e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group
2. The intent behind the commission of one or more of the aforementioned acts.

I believe that both these conditions have been met during the war. Israel has committed acts 1a, 1b, and 1c above. The killing of some 1.5% of the population of the Gaza Strip (not including the thousands of missing Gazans) that I describe in the section above on massacring Palestinians fits act 1a. As I describe in the same section, the wounding of some 3% of the population of the Gaza Strip, as well as the collective trauma resulting from the repeated attacks on the tiny and densely populated Gaza Strip fit act 1b. The starvation of Gaza, which I describe under the section on causing the deaths of civilian populations, fits act 1c. The ‘deliberate’ aspect of act 1c is clear from the descriptions of Israeli officials and IDF members that I quote in the section about Israeli discourse and de-humanization of Palestinians.

With regards to intent, I believe that a series of statements by top Israeli officials including the Prime Minister and President that took place mostly during the beginning of the war, but continued with subsequent statements by somewhat lower-ranking officials until the recent past, imply a general intention that both presented the “commander’s spirit” and legitimized disproportionate violence against Palestinians in subsequent months. Many testimonies from IDF troops as well as other parts of Israeli civil society ranging from rabbis to entertainers demonstrate that themes of genocide, for example through repeated reference to biblical Amalek, and ethnic cleansing, for example through repeated references to resettling the Gaza Strip, are common in discourse. The fact that nobody, to the best of my knowledge, has been indicted or even openly censured for such extreme messages indicates the legitimacy of these messages among Israeli state officials and broader society.

Based on the available evidence as of writing, I believe that Israel has attempted to do some combination of: (1) remove Gazans from the Strip, especially its northern parts; (2) make large parts of the Strip uninhabitable, hoping that this would contribute to the former objective; and (3) kill Gazans through direct violence, starvation, or prevention of aid or support, at least partially as part of the de facto policy of revenge, and at least partially as a way to facilitate the removal of Gazans from the Strip. I interpret the policy of using starvation as a weapon of war – acknowledged at least since December by some NGOs⁶⁸¹ and now widely by international officials – as an attempt to bring

⁶⁸¹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/18/israel-starvation-used-weapon-war-gaza>

about the physical destruction of Gaza as a political entity and population group, particularly to further the objective of cleansing Gaza from its inhabitants. The wholesale destruction of targets with no military value such as archives, libraries, universities, mosques and heritage sites – as well as the broader destruction of the civilian infrastructure as well as over half the buildings throughout the Gaza Strip – all contribute to the objective of making Gaza uninhabitable.

I do not believe this policy was meticulously planned or put in writing. Rather, high officials in the state and military have defined the war as explicitly lenient towards exacting inordinate revenge immediately at the beginning of the war, allowing local commanders to act as they see fit. The same high officials both put some policies in place, such as the starvation or approval of systematic attacks on hospitals, while purposefully maintaining some level of deniability and attempting to diffuse their responsibility, at least to the public. At the same time, the high officials are unwilling⁶⁸² (and likely unable) to prevent serious acts of killing and destruction on the ground, as well as the use of genocidal language among some cultural and religious public voices, resulting in the persistence of these acts.

Orders by commanders on the ground are often to just shoot every man of fighting age, as a senior Israeli journalist said on CNN.⁶⁸³ Other Israeli journalists pointed out the same policy in which “everyone in Gaza sets the rules for themselves” in their own reporting based on speaking to commanders and soldiers in the field. This purposeful vagueness – with the additional backdrop of strong language supporting genocide and/or ethnic cleansing by some political, cultural and religious elites – absolves the Israeli higher command from accountability, while diffusing responsibility among lower commanders on the field. Together with the absence of almost any attempt to restrain commanders or soldiers at the ground level, this results in a reality in which atrocities that are conducted at the ground level can nonetheless be superficially portrayed as “against procedures” by the high command.

The key to all of this is the pervasive dehumanization of Palestinians. Palestinians are widely seen as less than human, based on discourse, behavior and opinions supporting the use of more force in Gaza. Therefore, violent actions against Palestinians are condoned and are often encouraged publicly, especially by key individuals such as the Minister for National Security, who is particularly popular among younger audiences and soldiers.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸² The general public support that the IDF must maintain plays a significant role – reining in commanders and soldiers would easily lose this support.

⁶⁸³ <https://twitter.com/justfp/status/1775613111711465554>

⁶⁸⁴ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/250473/>; https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/s1lxz6uvs; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/election2022/article/s1ar9pebi>