

Bearing Witness to the Israel-Gaza War

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Contents

Summary	4
Professional and ethical statement (including trigger warning).....	5
Preface	7
Context.....	9
The massacre of Palestinians	10
Numbers and ratios	10
International responses	12
Indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks.....	13
Mortality and impacts on groups in Palestinian society.....	15
Massacres, rules of engagement and examples	16
Causing the deaths of civilian populations	20
Famine and starvation	23
December to April.....	23
May and June	25
Additional findings	27
Non-food shortages (electricity, medicine, water).....	28
Gaza’s health system	29
Israeli discourse and de-humanization of Palestinians.....	31
Dehumanization in Israeli institutions and the IDF.....	31
De-humanization in the IDF	32
Dehumanization in Israeli society	37
Effects of de-humanization on detained and arrested Palestinians.....	39
Ethnic cleansing	43
Hostages.....	49
The West Bank	51
Evidence for the killing of Palestinians	52
Abuse, humiliation and detainment of Palestinians.....	53
The media, propaganda and the war (disclaimer).....	54
Emphasizing the horrors of the Oct. 7 attacks.....	56
Discrediting critical voices outside Israel.....	58
Limiting information flow from Gaza.....	59
Rallying the Israeli public around the war	59
Israeli media and discourse	61
Israeli’s media’s uncritical pro-war position	62

American media	64
The treatment of UNRWA as a case of media misrepresentation.....	65
Another case of successful propaganda: doubting the Palestinian death toll	67
US involvement in the war.....	71
US military aid to Israel	71
Active deployment of US military	72
Diplomatic support	74
US oversight and Israeli accountability.....	75
US-Israeli relations	78
Dissent in the US administration and society	82
Zoom-in 1: The Second Israeli invasion of al-Shifa hospital (18 March-1 April)	83
Zoom-in 2: Campus Protests in the US (April 17-May 2024)	86
Coverage and reactions	88
Appendix 1 – The reasons underlying my definition of Israel’s actions in the war as genocide	91

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 April 15 by adding much content and evidence to existing sections, adding new sections (on the American involvement in the war, and on the campus protests in solidarity with Gaza) as well as responding to the discussion it initiated.

Over the past eight months, Israel has repeatedly massacred Palestinians in Gaza, resulting in the deaths of over 37,000 Palestinians – some 60% 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. Speaking about Palestinians in genocidal language is openly legitimate in Israeli discourse. 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 and discuss 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 – some 120 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 seven hostages through military operations, while killing many other hostages directly or indirectly through its actions. Moreover, there is much evidence that Israel has stalled the negotiations for releasing hostages or attempted to obstruct them on many occasions.

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 killing of over 500 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 de-humanization of Palestinians.

America’s almost complete support has been fundamental for Israel’s conduct of the war. This support took the form of military aid, the deployment of US military and other assets, ironclad diplomatic support, especially at the United Nations, and the release of Israel from mechanisms of US oversight and serious accountability. Despite rhetoric that was sometimes critical, de facto there were also no changes in the support the US gave to Israel. Dissenters in the US – both government employees and sizable groups in American society – had little to no influence on US policy.

In two focused sections I zoom in on the second raid on the al-Shifa hospital in late March, and on the student protests across the US in April and May as case studies 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 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.

Throughout the document I have refrained from using loaded but difficult to define terms such as Zionism, antisemitism, terror/terrorism and brutality.¹ 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. Antisemitism is the partial exception to this rule, but it is used primarily in discussions others had about it.

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 (half a year 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. The document has since become better organized, and I supply footnotes to further references that could inform or be useful to readers.

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. As the war has continued, policies towards Gaza and conditions within the Gaza Strip change over time. To acknowledge this reality and facilitate a better understanding of the situation, I often note the month regarding specific claims and datapoints in relevant sections such as the ones on famine or the US involvement in the war.

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

¹ <https://fair.org/home/brutal-is-a-word-mostly-reserved-for-palestinian-violence/>

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>.

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 faculty 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.

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](https://www.academia.edu) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/) pages, which have both English and Hebrew versions. Older versions appear on my Twitter page. I plan to continue to revise this document every several 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.

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, mid-March and mid-April 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 six drafts, Merle Eisenberg who has commented on the draft of the first version, and Joshua Meyrowitz (Professor Emeritus of Communication, 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.

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>).

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), 3.2% (January) and 4% (March-April) of Jewish Israelis believed the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) was using too much firepower in Gaza or that Israel's military response has gone too far.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 believe that Israel's Prime Minister wants to prolong the 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 Subsequent professional analyses of a UN Special Rapporteur and academic centers for Human Rights reached the same conclusion.¹⁸ A federal judge in California ruled the Israel's actions are "plausibly" genocide.¹⁹ An Independent International Committee of the UN Human Rights Council concluded that Israel's actions consist of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including extermination and ethnic

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; <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/05/30/views-of-the-israel-hamas-war-may-2024/>. Also on March: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-06-13/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/00000190-0677-d667-abf0-66ffad40000>

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/>; <https://time.com/6984968/joe-biden-transcript-2024-interview/>

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.icj-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>;

https://www.democracynow.org/2023/10/16/raz_segal_textbook_case_of_genocide; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/gaza-un-experts-call-international-community-prevent-genocide-against>

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/>; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/134005/>; also <https://twitter.com/drtlaleng/status/1784503409665577016>; <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2024/06/06/is-israel-committing-genocide-aryeh-neier/>

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

¹⁸ <https://www.humanrightsnetwork.org/genocide-in-gaza>; <https://unipd-centrodirittumani.it/en/news/United-Nations-Anatomy-of-a-genocide-Report-of-the-Special-Rapporteur-on-the-situation-of-human-rights-in-the-Palestinian-territories-occupied-since-1967-Francesca-Albanese-2024/6900>

¹⁹ <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.

cleansing that were conducted with intent.²⁰ I discuss my specific reasoning for using the term genocide to describe Israel's actions in an appendix to this document.

Since the situation in the Gaza Strip continued to deteriorate in February and March,²¹ the UN Security Council has passed a resolution demanding "an immediate ceasefire" in Gaza in late March.²² 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.²³ 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.²⁴ 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).²⁵ 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)²⁶: Israel did so matter-of-factly, while almost completely trusting the results of an automatic system for identifying targets.

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.²⁷ About 70% of the population descend from refugees who fled Mandatory Palestine to Gaza during the 1948 war ("Nakba").²⁸ In 2022, poverty levels in Gaza reached 65%, while unemployment was 45%.²⁹ Israel controls Gaza's borders, communications, electricity, water and even population registry.³⁰ It continuously surveils Gazans' movements and their communications, including all phone calls and all internet use.³¹ The

²⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-06-12/ty-article/.premium/00000190-0a69-d0f9-a1d5-da691e1f0000> ; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/immense-scale-gaza-killings-amount-crime-against-humanity-un-inquiry-says-2024-06-12/> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cl55gzp7vn9o>

²¹ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/how-israel-defied-icj-provisional-measures> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/11/israeli-human-rights-groups-icj-gaza-aid-ruling>

²² <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147931>

²³ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1148096>

²⁴ Originally based on: <https://twitter.com/tparsi/status/1774872023098888465>

²⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/02/world/middleeast/iran-israel-damascus-strike.html>

²⁶ <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2488606/world> ; <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2024/04/11/israels-use-of-ai-in-gaza-is-coming-under-closer-scrutiny>

²⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-87>

²⁸ https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/gaza_thematic_6_0.pdf

²⁹ <https://unctad.org/news/gaza-unprecedented-destruction-will-take-tens-billions-dollars-and-decades-reverse>

³⁰ <https://features.gisha.org/gaza-up-close/>

³¹ <https://theintercept.com/2023/10/12/israel-gaza-internet-access/> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/27/technology/israel-facial-recognition-gaza.html> ; <https://www.mei.edu/publications/nowhere-hide-impact-israels-digital-surveillance-regime-palestinians> ;

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.³² 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,³³ Amnesty International,³⁴ and B'Tselem³⁵). Apartheid and de-humanization were in place far before the beginning of the war. A 2012 poll found that back then 58% of Israelis believed Israel was already practicing apartheid against Palestinians, 69% said that if Israel annexed the West Bank the local Palestinians should be denied the right to vote, 49% thought Jewish citizens should be treated better than Arab (i.e. Palestinian) citizens, and 47% want to transfer some of Israel's Arab population to the Palestinian Authority.³⁶

Israel's justice system was one-sided and biased against Palestinians well before the beginning of the war as well. Between 2017-2021 for example, Israeli security forces killed 614 civilians and injured 76,340 (according to the UN). The military justice system received 1,260 complaints regarding Israeli soldiers' conduct towards Palestinians, including at least 409 cases of Palestinian deaths. Of these only 248 investigations were opened, and only 11 of those investigations resulted in indictments. Only three of the indictments included the killing of Palestinians (out of 409 or 614 deaths), and the few soldiers found guilty received minor punishments.³⁷

All of the above has facilitated many of the policies and actions I discuss below.

The massacre of Palestinians

Numbers and ratios

As of June 14, Israel has killed over 37,266 Gazans – over 1.5 percent of the total population of Gaza.³⁸ This death toll is conservative and will almost certainly increase.³⁹ The number is accepted by Israeli officials (see discussion below)⁴⁰ and media.⁴¹ The number does not over ten thousand

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-can-monitor-every-telephone-call-west-bank-and-gaza-intelligence-source> ;
<https://newlinesmag.com/argument/how-changes-in-the-israeli-military-led-to-the-failure-of-october-7/>

³² Long list of references in

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3538249d5abb21360e858f/t/66475850eceb152a52fd55fe/1715951696844/Genocide+in+Gaza+-+Final+version+051524.pdf> (paragraph 18). Also: 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/>

³³ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

³⁴ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/>

³⁵ <https://www.btselem.org/topic/apartheid>

³⁶ <https://www.haaretz.com/2012-10-23/ty-article/.premium/israelis-say-no-vote-to-arabs-if-w-bank-annexed/0000017f-f55e-d460-afff7e683c0000>

³⁷ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/%d7%94%d7%a1%d7%99%d7%9b%d7%95%d7%99-%d7%9c%d7%9b%d7%aa%d7%91-%d7%90%d7%99%d7%a9%d7%95%d7%9d-%d7%a0%d7%92%d7%93-%d7%97%d7%99%d7%99%d7%9c-%d7%a9%d7%a4%d7%92%d7%a2-%d7%91%d7%a4%d7%9c%d7%a1%d7%98%d7%99/>

³⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-179-gaza-strip>

³⁹ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/%d7%9E%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/>

⁴⁰ <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-%>

missing people, many still buried under the rubble.⁴² It also does not include any individuals whose death was not reported to Gaza's overwhelmed health ministry.⁴³ According to the available public data some 60% of the deaths in Gaza are of women, children, and the elderly.⁴⁴ As of mid May, 7,797 identified children had already been killed.⁴⁵ 85,102 people (over 3 percent of Gaza's population) have been injured.⁴⁶ Polls among Palestinians in southern Gaza in late March and late May found that about 60% of respondents lost a member of their family during the war.⁴⁷

Israeli spokespersons themselves have estimated that two civilians have died for each Hamas militant, and stated that it is a justified ratio.⁴⁸ In reality, the ratio is likely worse and civilian deaths could reach 75% and even more of the total death count.⁴⁹ An NGO had estimated in January that some 92% of deaths were of civilians, while a Hamas member in Qatar claimed the organization lost some 6,000 militants in February (meaning some 80% of deaths were of civilians), although the group later rejected that claim.⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹ 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.⁵²

<https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694>; more confirmations by the IDF in March and April:

⁴¹ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/world/Article-1095370>

⁴² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>; see also

<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>

⁴³ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694>

⁴⁴ <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 56% number derives from the distribution of actual deaths counted. The Ministry does not explain the discrepancy. For the 56% number see here: <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694> (I divided the 8% of elderly by 2). The ratio of women and children deaths has decreased over time:

<https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-hamas-war-casualties-toll-65e18f3362674245356c539e4bc0b67a>

⁴⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024> ; note the drop from an earlier estimated children mortality of some 14,500 to some 7,797 identified children deaths out of some 24,686 identified dead.

⁴⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-179-gaza-strip>

⁴⁷ 60% in March: <http://pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/Pol%2091%20English%20press%20release%2020%20March%202024.pdf> (p. 6); 61% in May: <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/980>

⁴⁸ <https://cnn.com/2023/12/05/middleeast/israel-hamas-military-civilian-ratio-killed-intl-hnk/index.html>

⁴⁹ 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 ~60% of the dead were women, children and the elderly (see above), and it is likely that based on the high mortality among those groups, a significant number 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>.

Anecdotal, 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.

⁵⁰ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6093/On-100th-day-of-Gaza-genocide-100,000-Palestinians-killed-missing-or-wounded> ;

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-six-week-drive-hit-hamas-rafah-scale-back-war-2024-02-19/> ;

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68387864>

⁵¹ <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> ; <https://www.jurist.org/features/2024/04/12/from-zionist-dream-to-dissent-an-interview-with-a-former-idf-captain-on-israeli-military-culture-personal-transformation-and-advocacy-for-change-part-3/> ; also

<https://news.walla.co.il/item/3660634>

⁵² <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/12/28/world/middleeast/jabaliya-gaza-strike-israel.html>

For comparison, civilian deaths in combat in other 21st century wars were far lower. In Iraq, for example, Coalition (i.e. US and allies) forces were responsible for killing 11,516 civilians over five years (2003-2008; many more were killed in local ethnic warfare, for example through suicide bombings).⁵³ In the first four years in Iraq, the US killed 18,832 militants.⁵⁴ In Afghanistan, 46,319 civilians and 52,893 Opposition fighters were killed in the war over 20 years (2001-2021).⁵⁵ Here too a large number of the civilians were killed by opposition forces rather than the US.⁵⁶

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]”.⁵⁷ The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reiterated that there is no safe space in Gaza.⁵⁸ A website documenting cases of civilian harm using open source information has gathered preliminary information about 3,000 incidents (some 650 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”.⁵⁹ 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 some 75 Palestinians a day.⁶⁰ A panel of UN experts stated in February that arms exports to Israel are illegal and must stop immediately,⁶¹ while a Dutch court ordered a halt to export F-35 jet parts to Israel.⁶² In March, Canada declared it will stop selling arms to Israel because of its conduct of war in Gaza,⁶³ 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 it.⁶⁴ 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,⁶⁵ and backed a call for an arms embargo on Israel.⁶⁶ 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.⁶⁷ In late April, a leaked US assessment revealed that several bureaus within the US government raised “serious concern over

⁵³ Hicks et al. “Violent Deaths of Iraqi Civilians, 2003–2008: Analysis by Perpetrator, Weapon, Time, and Location” *PLoS Medicine*, 2011. <https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.1000415>. Another study found 14,781 deaths over 8 years, Crawford, “Civilian Death and Injury in the Iraq War, 2003-2013”. *Costs of War*, 2013.

<https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2013/Civilian%20Death%20and%20Injury%20in%20the%20Iraq%20War%20C%202003-2013.pdf>

⁵⁴ <https://web.archive.org/web/20200727084052/https://www.stripes.com/news/insurgent-body-count-records-released-1.69423>

⁵⁵ <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures/2021/human-and-budgetary-costs-date-us-war-afghanistan-2001-2022>

⁵⁶ <https://unama.unmissions.org/protection-of-civilians-reports> ;

https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2020/Rising%20Civilian%20Death%20Toll%20in%20Afghanistan_Costs%20of%20War_Dec%207%202020.pdf

⁵⁷ https://twitter.com/UN_News_Centre/status/1726609880986083685

⁵⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-82>

⁵⁹ <https://airwars.org/conflict/israel-and-gaza-2023/>; <https://twitter.com/ShaykhSulaiman/status/1776263272800354451>

⁶⁰ On Jan. 26 the death toll was 26,083. As of writing, the death toll was 37,266. <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>

⁶¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/arms-exports-israel-must-stop-immediately-un-experts>

⁶² <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/dutch-court-orders-halt-export-f-35-jet-parts-israel-2024-02-12/>

⁶³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-19/ty-article/0000018e-584f-d88e-a39e-7dff4580000>

⁶⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/30/uk-government-lawyers-say-israel-is-breaking-international-law-claims-top-tory-in-leaked-recording>

⁶⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/05/un-human-rights-council-israel-gaza-biden-netanyahu>

⁶⁶ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148261>

⁶⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/world/europe/israel-weapons-sales-genocide.html>

[Israel's] non-compliance" with international humanitarian law and asserted that Israel's assurances were "neither credible or reliable". Among the potential violations were repeatedly striking protected sites and civilian infrastructure and "unconscionably high levels of civilian harm to military advantage".⁶⁸ In May, the ICJ ruled that Israel was to halt its military assault on Rafah and re-open the Rafah crossing to facilitate the movement of people and humanitarian aid.⁶⁹ Israel refused, and in the following 48 hours, conducted more than 60 air raids on Rafah.⁷⁰ In June, the UN Secretary General decided to include Israel in a blacklist of countries that harm children in conflict areas, alongside ISIS, Russia, Syria and Somalia.⁷¹

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,⁷² while the IDF spokesperson stated that the IDF was "focused on what causes maximum damage" rather than accuracy.⁷³ Already in late October, US officials knew that Israel was regularly bombing buildings without solid intelligence that they were legitimate military targets.⁷⁴ About 40-45% of the air-to-ground munitions Israel dropped on Gaza by December were unguided.⁷⁵ These bombs have a wide margin of error of about 100 feet around the target.⁷⁶ 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.⁷⁷ In the first week of the war, Israel dropped 6,000 bombs on Gaza.⁷⁸ As of December, Israel dropped 29,000 weapons on Gaza. For comparison, the US military dropped 3,678 munitions on Iraq from 2004 to 2010.⁷⁹ In the first 200 days of the war, it is estimated that Israel dropped more than 70,000 tons of explosives on the Gaza Strip.⁸⁰

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.⁸¹ 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.⁸² In February, Amnesty International closely investigated four attacks that

⁶⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/some-us-officials-say-internal-memo-israel-may-be-violating-international-law-2024-04-27/>

⁶⁹ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/24/middleeast/israel-icj-gaza-rafah-south-africa-ruling-intl/index.html>

⁷⁰ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6348/Gaza:-After-ICJ-order-to-halt-attacks-on-Rafah,-Israel-launches-over-60-air-raids-on-the-city-in-48-hours>

⁷¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-06-07/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-f35c-d1a2-a5ef-f35de63f0003> ; <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/095/07/pdf/n2409507.pdf>

⁷² <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>

⁷³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/10/right-now-it-is-one-day-at-a-time-life-on-israels-frontline-with-gaza>

⁷⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/18/biden-israel-gaza-rafah-palestinians/>

⁷⁵ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/13/politics/intelligence-assessment-dumb-bombs-israel-gaza/index.html>

⁷⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf>, paragraph 80.

⁷⁷ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/> ; also <https://twitter.com/WarWatches/status/1783121782557352320>

⁷⁸ <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/israel-hamas-war-gaza-strip/card/israeli-air-force-says-it-has-dropped-6-000-bombs-on-gaza-QK1aSnupiGqytMVO86PU>

⁷⁹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542>

⁸⁰ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6282/200-days-of-military-attack-on-Gaza%3A-A-horrific-death-toll-amid-intl.-failure-to-stop-Israel's-genocide-of-Palestinians>.

⁸¹ <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-karadseh-pkg-vpx.cnn>

⁸² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-20/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-5677-dc6f-adff-df77a73d0000>

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.⁸³ 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.⁸⁴

In addition, Israel has commonly used drones in Gaza – including drones that launch grenades,⁸⁵ suicide drones,⁸⁶ and drones that attack in swarms.⁸⁷ Drones have also made the sounds of babies crying, perhaps to lure Gazans.⁸⁸ These and other quadcopters have fired on civilians, with dozens of documented cases of purposefully killing civilians, as documented by a human rights group and witnessed by doctors, among others.⁸⁹ One doctor stated that quadcopters wounded 30 people who tried to reach a hospital in a single night.⁹⁰ There are some indications that Israel has used thermobaric weapons, which have been internationally banned by several Conventions and international humanitarian law.⁹¹

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 1994.⁹² 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.”⁹³ Another doctor with 20 years of experience in humanitarian relief including in Iraq said that “I’ve seen combat in war zones... this is nothing like this... the amount of children that I’d seen is unprecedented... I’ve done more amputations and seen more traumatic amputations of children than I’ve seen during my entire career in the last two weeks... this is not like a war, this is just a complete and utter destruction”.⁹⁴

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

⁸³ <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/>

⁸⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/04/gaza-israeli-strike-killing-106-civilians-apparent-war-crime>

⁸⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFMz8KYS5rg> ; <https://x.com/yoavzitun/status/179284038607171729>

⁸⁶ <https://www.calcalist.co.il/internet/articles/0,7340,L-3741063,00.html?AF=3741062>

⁸⁷ <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3439695>

⁸⁸ <https://twitter.com/KufiyyaPS/status/1780669019659358244>

⁸⁹ <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/> . For a broader survey

of quadcopter use in Gaza: <https://zeteo.com/p/israel-gaza-quadcopter-drone-warfare> ;

<https://idanlandau.com/2024/05/21/%d7%94%d7%9e%d7%99%d7%9e%d7%93-%d7%94%d7%90%d7%a0%d7%9b%d7%99-%d7%95%d7%94%d7%9e%d7%99%d7%9e%d7%93-%d7%94%d7%90%d7%a0%d7%95%d7%a9%d7%99-%d7%94%d7%a8%d7%97%d7%a4%d7%a0%d7%99%d7%9d-%d7%94%d7%99%d7%a9/> ; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6357> ;

see also the example here: <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1802436588246286588>

⁹⁰ <https://x.com/GhassanAbuSitt1/status/1788570484981858793>

⁹¹ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6290>

⁹² <https://twitter.com/OwenJones84/status/1760286175699272027> ; <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/14/gaza-war-israel-civilian-deaths-urban-warfare-hamas/>

⁹³ <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/surgeons-cruelty-israel-gaza> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEBcDUYtMts> ; for a

nurse see: <https://twitter.com/ryangrim/status/1790111634930737387> ; <https://x.com/tparsi/status/1796984162169086156> ;

<https://x.com/NourNaim88/status/1798622171125952937>

⁹⁴ <https://twitter.com/ShaykhSulaiman/status/1790403949230784974>

Palestinian Islamic Jihad, including low-ranking ones, as potential bombing targets.⁹⁵ 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 17.⁹⁶ 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.⁹⁷ Experts in international humanitarian law expressed alarm at these ratios.⁹⁸ For comparison, the number of permissible civilians deaths to kill Saddam Hussein was 29.⁹⁹ 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.¹⁰⁰ This mass-generation of targets was stopped later partly due to American pressure,¹⁰¹ but subsequent attacks continued to be authorized despite knowing that many uninvolved citizens would be harmed.¹⁰²

Mortality and impacts on groups in Palestinian society

Since the beginning of the operation, Israel has killed dozens of children on average every day.¹⁰³ 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.¹⁰⁴ 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.¹⁰⁵ As UNICEF’s Executive Director put it, Gaza is “the most dangerous place in the world to be a child”.¹⁰⁶ UNICEF estimated in early February that at least 17,000 children are unaccompanied or separated from their parents.¹⁰⁷ Children deaths are prominent in videos from Gaza, often filmed by their own families.¹⁰⁸ 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.¹⁰⁹ A Gazan journalist wrote an open letter to Israeli society in which

⁹⁵ 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/>

⁹⁶ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

⁹⁷ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/03/israel-gaza-ai-database-hamas-airstrikes>

⁹⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/03/israel-gaza-ai-database-hamas-airstrikes>

⁹⁹ <https://www.businessinsider.com/saddam-husseins-life-was-deemed-worth-29-civilian-lives-as-the-us-invaded-iraq-2015-3>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.defensedaily.com/pentagon-removed-non-combatant-casualty-cut-off-value-doctrine-2018/pentagon/>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

¹⁰² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-06-03/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018f-d796-d5f5-ad8f-f7f797740000>;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/14/world/europe/carnage-and-contradiction-examining-a-deadly-strike-in-rafah.html>

¹⁰³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/gaza-3195-children-killed-three-weeks-surpasses-annual-number-children-killed-conflict-zones>;

¹⁰⁵ <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>.

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/press-releases/statement-by-unicef-executive-director-catherine-russell-on-the-resumption-of-fighting-in-gaza/>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/stories-loss-and-grief-least-17000-children-are-estimated-be-unaccompanied-or>

¹⁰⁸ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1760724513581584472>; <https://twitter.com/CensoredNws/status/1761662724331774349>;

<https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1762531665958547626>; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1779765891745378434>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.msf.org/msf-briefing-gaza-un-security-council>

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.¹¹⁰ 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.¹¹¹

150 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.¹¹² 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.¹¹³ 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.¹¹⁴

As of April 15, 273 UN and aid workers have been killed.¹¹⁵ More than 100 university professors, including several leading Palestinian academics, have been killed.¹¹⁶ More than 243 athletes (of which 161 are footballers) have been killed in Gaza and the West Bank.¹¹⁷ 498 health workers have been killed.¹¹⁸ By June, 55 specialist doctors (4% of the total in Gaza) were killed.¹¹⁹ Israel's attacks on hospitals have killed hundreds of Palestinians. More have died by lack of supplies¹²⁰ 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 decomposition as nobody cared for them.¹²¹ The number of Palestinian deaths has led to digging graves and mass graves everywhere, including in formerly built areas and parks.¹²²

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

¹¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/AGvryahu/status/176310277423659018/photo/1>

¹¹¹ https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/11/surgeons_in_gaza

¹¹² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>; <https://cpi.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>; 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>

¹¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/21/israel-idf-accused-targeting-journalists-gaza>; <https://cpi.org/2024/03/attacks-arrests-threats-censorship-the-high-risks-of-reporting-the-israel-hamas-war/>

¹¹⁴ <https://cpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/CPJ-Special-Report-May-2023-Deadly-Pattern.pdf>

¹¹⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.icj-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>; also <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/football/article/2024/may/07/sporting-tragedy-war-in-gaza-israel-palestine>

¹¹⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>; list with names (up to March 11) at <https://twitter.com/HCWWatch/status/1767666330252009517>.

¹¹⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/israel-palestinians-gaza-health/>

¹²⁰ <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-80-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>

¹²¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/03/gaza-premature-babies-dead-nasr/>

¹²² <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1759600702886748387>;

<https://twitter.com/omarsuleiman504/status/1769735691808743563>; <https://twitter.com/EuroMedHR/status/1783855639006986260>

but on where they were killed.¹²³ 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.¹²⁴ 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.¹²⁵ There are several filmed cases of Palestinians walking along the coasts and getting shot.¹²⁶ The UNICEF spokesperson stated that as he was attempting to deliver aid, tanks came and shot up two nearby fishermen, adding that this was not a unique event in Gaza.¹²⁷ 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.¹²⁸ One IDF reserve officer stated that “parts of Gaza are ex-territory... for some commanders, in junior ranks, the laws of the IDF and international law do not exist... the senior command is unaware of this or simply doesn’t seem to care”.¹²⁹

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. When the Palestinian Red Crescent called back, her cousin Hind Rajab, a 6 year old girl, answered 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 and receiving permission to proceed according to an agreed upon route. All connections with Hind and the paramedics were lost, and 12 days later the decomposing corpses of the girls and their family members were found in the car, while the paramedics were killed nearby when an IDF tank destroyed their ambulance about 50 meters away from the car that were trying to reach.¹³⁰ 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).¹³¹ 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.¹³² The IDF subsequently bombed the hospital.¹³³ 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!!!”.¹³⁴ A human rights organization documented other occasions in which Israeli soldiers have deliberately driven over dozens of Palestinian civilians while they were alive.¹³⁵ In

¹²³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-31/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-9035-d9a4-a7bf-dc7d839e0000>

¹²⁴ <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>

¹²⁵ <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1775960365630624249>

¹²⁶ <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1800790290783248589>

¹²⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9nY-niPcD0>

¹²⁸ <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>

¹²⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-06-07/ty-article/.highlight/0000018f-ef13-de64-a98f-efb768400000>

¹³⁰ <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> ; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2024/hind-rajab-israel-gaza-killing-timeline/>

¹³¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RDXQapOtUg>

¹³² <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/14/gaza-nasser-hospital-evacuation-israel-prisoner/> ;

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/israel-hamas-war-gaza-nasser-hospital-man-shot-dead-evacuation-warning-rcna139978>

¹³³ https://twitter.com/Ahmad_tibi/status/1758038092353503495

¹³⁴ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1763469843070697726>; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-israel-palestinian-ran-over-tank-images-suggest> ; the man was later identified:

<https://twitter.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1783450571250262494>

¹³⁵ <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>

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 as the soldier commanded.¹³⁶ 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".¹³⁷ 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.¹³⁸ An Israeli soldier shared a video showing the killing of five other Palestinians walking in the rubble in North Gaza.¹³⁹ A different video showed IDF soldiers shooting two unarmed Palestinian men before burying them in rubble with a bulldozer.¹⁴⁰ Many 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.¹⁴¹ 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.¹⁴² There are many similar stories of IDF soldiers purposefully killing civilians.¹⁴³

Cases in which the IDF kills civilians almost never make the news in Israel and the United States.¹⁴⁴ An exception happened in early April, when the IDF killed 7 workers of the international NGO World Central Kitchen (all foreign citizens) within their clearly marked vehicles operating in full coordination with the IDF.¹⁴⁵ 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).¹⁴⁶ 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.¹⁴⁷ 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).¹⁴⁸ This exception (alongside a few others I document here) suggests that in many similar occasions the IDF killed civilians with little oversight or consequences. Later in April, a UNICEF truck bringing humanitarian aid was hit by IDF fire (directed at nearby civilians) while a water truck operated by a Canadian NGO was bombed in a targeted attack.¹⁴⁹ The first international UN worker was killed in May when an

¹³⁶ <https://www.itv.com/news/2024-03-01/he-didnt-understand-disabled-man-shot-dead-in-gaza-hospital-by-idf>

¹³⁷ <https://twitter.com/MatanGolanPhoto/status/1766586400558739508> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Dp95bN81Ww>

¹³⁸ <https://twitter.com/GozukaraFurkan/status/1770919234278740269>

¹³⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1770919159800402148>

¹⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1773065074162213322>

¹⁴¹ <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 ; <https://www.itv.com/news/2024-04-24/i-operated-without-anaesthetic-british-surgeons-harrowing-gaza-account>

¹⁴² <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>

¹⁴³ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1761163980947558806> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771589516920238241> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772925436231598415> ; <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2024-02-16/rafah-gaza-hospitals-surgery-israel-bombing-ground-offensive-children> ; <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1779892829231140976> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1790893499115606334>

¹⁴⁴ For example: <https://twitter.com/SaulStaniforth/status/178025222279840036> ;

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/4/16/israels-war-on-gaza-live-israel-vows-response-to-iran>

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9e1e-d764-adff-9edf9cd00000>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-05/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-aca8-d906-a5cf-aebcb1100000>

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9e1e-d764-adff-9edf9cd00000>

¹⁴⁸ <https://twitter.com/marcowenjoness/status/1775125251149500706>

¹⁴⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sl3XydVerm8> ; <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/canadian-aid-truck-bombed-water-gaza-1.7179849>

Israeli tank attacked his vehicle, which was marked as a UN vehicle.¹⁵⁰ A investigative report found that back in January, five Palestinian technicians were on their way to fix a cellular operator unit in Khan Younis, following coordination with the IDF. A tank in the area shot their vehicle, killing two. The investigative report found that the IDF spokesperson's version of events is likely false.¹⁵¹

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.¹⁵² Palestinians claimed that the IDF shot them,¹⁵³ while the IDF claimed that most casualties died because of overcrowding and the general mayhem in which the lorries run over the civilians.¹⁵⁴ In both cases, the IDF, according to the rules of war as an occupying power, is legally responsible for the deaths of civilians. UN experts and human rights organizations,¹⁵⁵ as well as the media,¹⁵⁶ 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.¹⁵⁷ A CNN investigation found inconsistencies with, and cast further doubts on, the IDF's version and leaned towards accepting the Palestinian version.¹⁵⁸ A sample of 200 dead and injured victims found that they were hit by bullets of the diameter used by IDF troops.¹⁵⁹ A subsequent report by the UN Committee of Human Rights reached the conclusion that the IDF is likely responsible for the deaths of civilians by firing at them.¹⁶⁰ 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".¹⁶¹ Israel's National Security Minister nonetheless praised the IDF soldiers for their conduct during the event.¹⁶² International law stipulates that Israel is required to supply food and water in the areas where it is an occupying power.¹⁶³ 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 2021.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-69013439> ; https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-23/ty-article_premium/0000018f-9c76-d6da-a1cf-ff76832b0000

¹⁵¹ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/134512/>

¹⁵² <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/08/middleeast/gaza-flour-massacre-idf-report-intl/index.html>

¹⁵³ <https://twitter.com/NaksBilal/status/1763188564823576868> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1763174751042695313> ; https://twitter.com/kaneez_e_zahrah/status/1763176424012230952 ;

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/08/middleeast/gaza-flour-massacre-idf-report-intl/index.html>

¹⁵⁵ <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/>

¹⁵⁶ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6200> ; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6200/In-press-conference,-Euro-Med-confirms-Israel%27s-full-involvement-in-Gaza-flour-massacre> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/05/un-experts-condemn-israeli-massacre-of-palestinians-collecting-flour>

¹⁵⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1763221018103996559> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68445973>

¹⁵⁸ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/09/middleeast/gaza-food-aid-convoy-deaths-eyewitness-intl-investigation-cmd>

¹⁵⁹ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6259/New-Report:-Killing-starving-Palestinians,-targeting-aid-trucks-is-a-deliberate-Israeli-policy-to-reinforce-famine-in-the-Gaza-Strip>

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf>, paragraphs 240-249.

¹⁶¹ <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> ; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6259/New-Report:-Killing-starving-Palestinians,-targeting-aid-trucks-is-a-deliberate-Israeli-policy-to-reinforce-famine-in-the-Gaza-Strip>

¹⁶² <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/>

¹⁶³ <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/occupied-territory/>

¹⁶⁴ <https://press.un.org/en/2021/gashc4336.doc.htm>

A report by Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor found that between mid January and late March, Israel killed a total of 563 Palestinians and injured 1,523. All of these were waiting for aid, were in or around distribution centers, or were responsible for organizing, protecting and distributing aid.¹⁶⁵

An NGO documented around 130 random mass graves of Palestinians across the Gaza Strip.¹⁶⁶ Other corpses have been interred in improvised burials within built areas,¹⁶⁷ with additional decomposed corpses¹⁶⁸ and skeletons on the streets.¹⁶⁹ Reports have “documented dozens of cases of field executions carried out by the Israeli army”.¹⁷⁰ 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.¹⁷¹ In another, over 30 Palestinian corpses were found in black plastic bags, blindfolded and handcuffed.¹⁷² Similar events took place in al-Shifa hospital, according to several eyewitness accounts (see also Zoom-In 1 below).¹⁷³ Few of these cases have even been covered in Israeli media.¹⁷⁴

The IDF has refrained from accountability or responsibility in the past. Not only does the Israeli security apparatus attempt to hinder the ability of Palestinians to file claims,¹⁷⁵ but the ratio of indictments among those complaints that had been filed even before the war has been negligible. Among 1,260 complaints regarding Israeli soldiers harming Palestinians and their property between 2017 and 2021, less than 1% resulted in an indictment.¹⁷⁶

In a January poll, two thirds of Israelis preferred to continue the war in its current form of excessive bombardment and violence.¹⁷⁷ In a poll from February, about three quarters of Israeli Jews supported the continuation of the military operation to Rafah.¹⁷⁸ A poll from March-April found that only 4% of Israeli Jews believe the military campaign has gone too far.¹⁷⁹

Causing the deaths of civilian populations

Israel has placed a stranglehold on the Palestinian population of Gaza since the beginning of the war.¹⁸⁰ The absence of supplies in Gaza – a siege – has been the stated policy of top Israeli officials

¹⁶⁵ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6259/New-Report:-Killing-starving-Palestinians,-targeting-aid-trucks-is-a-deliberate-Israeli-policy-to-reinforce-famine-in-the-Gaza-Strip>

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/pictures/all-cemeteries-are-full-palestinians-buried-mass-grave-gaza-2023-11-22/> ; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6264> ; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1782115765790867492> ; <https://twitter.com/EuroMedHR/status/1783855639006986260>

¹⁶⁷ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1769304583325483266>

¹⁶⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Poydd3EG_-8 ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761369042596647177> ;

<https://twitter.com/OnlinePalEng/status/1773440806411546953> ; <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1799849647059714303>

¹⁶⁹ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1772664508210655331> ; <https://x.com/KufiyyaPS/status/1795870171237646833> (appears reliable) ; <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1796525578499088829> ; <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1796550174111645766> ; <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1798345071722684760>

¹⁷⁰ <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>

¹⁷¹ <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>

¹⁷² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/1/palestinians-demand-international-inquiry-after-mass-grave-found-in-gaza>

¹⁷³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlerY4M9kQc>

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra13792905> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syv8bslop>

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/magazine/israel-west-bank-settler-violence-impunity.html>

¹⁷⁶ <https://www.npr.org/2024/05/15/1250417719/israel-military-idf-investigations-icc>

¹⁷⁷ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/52071>

¹⁷⁸ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/53276>

¹⁷⁹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/05/30/views-of-the-israel-hamas-war-may-2024/>

¹⁸⁰ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

since the beginning of the war.¹⁸¹ 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)¹⁸² as well as severely degrading, destroying or putting out of use much of the water infrastructure (wells, reservoirs and desalination plants).¹⁸³ Throughout the war, only some 100-150 full truckloads have been allowed in daily,¹⁸⁴ out of about 300 that are necessary for humanitarian needs (supply of food and water).¹⁸⁵

Israel has weaponized humanitarian aid to Gaza, limiting its entrance to Gaza based on political reasoning which is often opaque.¹⁸⁶ Trucks that attempt to enter the Strip encounter multiple problems as they try to do so, including attacks by the IDF.¹⁸⁷ 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.¹⁸⁸ In one case, it took a UN organization three months to get approval to deliver 500 tons of animal feed.¹⁸⁹ The UN's humanitarian coordinator explained in April some of the ways in which Israel was impeding aid. For example, Israel required then that all aid trucks enter Gaza half full, and demanded a complete separation between Egyptian truck drivers (who crossed into Gaza, then unloaded and left) and Palestinian truck drivers (who would 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.¹⁹⁰

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).¹⁹¹ 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.¹⁹² The

¹⁸¹ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/defense-minister-announces-complete-siege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/; <https://twitter.com/KnessetT/status/1716502486331113922>

¹⁸² 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

¹⁸³ <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>

¹⁸⁴

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoizTVkYmEwNmMtZWYxNy00ODhllWI2ZjctNjZMzQ5OGQxNzY5IiwidCI6IjI2MmY2YTQxLTIwZTkxNDU0MC04ZDNiLWZkZjVlZWNiNDE1NyIsImMiOiI9&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.

¹⁸⁵ <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>

¹⁸⁶ 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>

¹⁸⁷ <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/israel-palestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/11/israel-aid-gaza-banned-blocked/>

¹⁸⁹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148296>

¹⁹⁰ <https://twitter.com/ChronicBabak/status/1778616402280059360>; <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1x/k1xkc2nwph>

¹⁹¹ <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/

¹⁹² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-140>

numbers were similar in May.¹⁹³ Some of the food on these trucks rots during the long times they wait to enter Gaza.¹⁹⁴

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".¹⁹⁵ 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.¹⁹⁶ 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.¹⁹⁷ Both the US and the UN asked Israel to stop targeting the police to avoid "a total breakdown of law and order".¹⁹⁸ 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.¹⁹⁹ 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.²⁰⁰ Israel reduced the number of trucks it let into the Strip to less than a third than what it had committed to facilitating,²⁰¹ while also attacking Gazan police officers responsible for coordinating aid.²⁰² 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.²⁰³ 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.²⁰⁴ Additional police officers associated with the distribution of aid were killed in April.²⁰⁵

An analysis of reported data found at least 80 separate attacks by Israel on aid in Gaza between January and mid May. There were at least 37 attacks on civilians seeking aid.²⁰⁶

¹⁹³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

¹⁹⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000009486472/gaza-food-aid-trucks-rafah-egypt.html>

¹⁹⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/21/gaza-police-aid-hamas/>

¹⁹⁶ <https://www.ft.com/content/8aa813fc-a87e-4002-9aaf-890c111aec35> ; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/> ;

¹⁹⁷ <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>

¹⁹⁸ <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>

¹⁹⁹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

²⁰⁰ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza> (footnote 105).

²⁰¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/>

²⁰² 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/1777681986586325481>

²⁰³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/18/israel-hamas-gaza-shifa-issa/>

²⁰⁴ <https://twitter.com/UNLazarini/status/1771917857598693549>

²⁰⁵ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/hamass-internal-security-chief-killed-in-northern-gaza-airstrike-idf-shin-bet/ ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-04-16/ty-article-live/000018e-e3b4-daaf-afaf-e7f555f60000?liveBlogItemId=1978850928#1978850928> . Also <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra13878899>

²⁰⁶ <https://gaza-aid-attacks.forensic-architecture.org/> ; <https://twitter.com/ForensicArchi/status/1790796901123559572>

Famine and starvation

December to April

The siege reality has resulted in severe shortages of basic necessities (food, water and energy) as well as a sharply deteriorating humanitarian situation.²⁰⁷ 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.²⁰⁸ 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.²⁰⁹ 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.²¹⁰ In late February, the price of a plate with some raw meat and rice reached \$95 (US) according to social media,²¹¹ while a nurse in Al-Shifa hospital claimed he had not eaten bread for 2 months during which he consumed animal feed.²¹² 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".²¹³ 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.²¹⁴ In April, the price of a kilogram of sugar reached between \$19 and \$30.²¹⁵

As of mid-April, at least 31 people (of which 28 were children) in Gaza died of malnutrition or dehydration.²¹⁶ 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".²¹⁷ 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".²¹⁸ Israeli accounts have de facto admitted this,²¹⁹ and within a broader historical context, Israel has long used food in such a manner in Gaza.²²⁰ A report by a global authority on food security and nutrition from mid March

²⁰⁷ https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/202404_manufacturing_famine_heb.pdf

²⁰⁸ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza> (footnote 54).

²⁰⁹ https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Feb_July2024_Special_Brief.pdf, p. 9.

²¹⁰ <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>

²¹¹ <https://twitter.com/HamzaAbuToha/status/1760588426103963720>

²¹² <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1762736475957829852>

²¹³ <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>

²¹⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/2024-03-03/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-03c5-da4e-adbf-83fdc01f0000>

²¹⁵ <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/>

²¹⁶ <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>. For examples see:

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

<https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1762518985633890640>; <https://twitter.com/muhammadshahad2/status/1762478847277084910> ;

https://twitter.com/save_children/status/1762543144061575626; <https://twitter.com/alijla2021/status/1762535516774302206> ;

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

<https://twitter.com/FranceskAlbs/status/1763466551968035006>; <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> ; <https://x.com/NourNaim88/status/1796267564953149612> ;

<https://x.com/AlMezanCenter/status/1801178293023994240> ; <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1800824868453089426>

²¹⁷ <https://apnews.com/video/europe-gaza-european-union-war-and-unrest-josep-borrell-63eebfe7f71f4ed881580913c51b7036>

²¹⁸ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/19/israeli-forces-conduct-gaza>

²¹⁹ <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/>

²²⁰ <https://www.nybooks.com/online/2024/03/30/the-road-to-famine-in-gaza/>

stated that famine (their definition here²²¹) was imminent in the northern governorates of the Strip over the next two months.²²² 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.²²³ The price of a bag of flour in northern Gaza increased to \$275 (normally \$8) by mid March, alongside rampant banditry.²²⁴ By late March, apparently in the same area, the price of a few dozen kilograms (estimated from video) of vegetables reached some \$3,000.²²⁵ For context, the average income in Gaza before the war was \$13-20/day.²²⁶ Humanitarian conditions were somewhat less dire in the south of the Gaza Strip, where a late March poll of Gazans 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.²²⁷ Individual accounts confirm these details.²²⁸

As a result, the vast majority of Gaza’s population is at risk of famine.²²⁹ Already by January virtually all households were skipping meals every day, with 50-80% of households going entire days and nights without eating.²³⁰ Some 90% of civilians in Gaza experienced “high levels of acute food insecurity”.²³¹ 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.²³² Some 40% experience “emergency levels” and over 15% (378,000) experience catastrophic levels, namely “extreme lack of food, starvation and exhaustion of coping capacities”.²³³ In January, 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.”²³⁴ Despite this situation, IDF officers demanded a further lowering of the humanitarian aid to Gaza.²³⁵ 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 career²³⁶ 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”.²³⁷

In February, an aid organization stated on CNN that Gaza was the fastest decline in nutritional status ever recorded in a human population.²³⁸ 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

²²¹ 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>

²²² <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/18/world/middleeast/gaza-famine-report-starvation.html>

²²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/22/unicef-official-utter-annihilation-gaza>

²²⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/>

²²⁵ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1770911921870446966>

²²⁶ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-investment-climate-statements/west-bank-and-gaza/>

²²⁷ <http://pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/Poll%2091%20English%20press%20release%2020%20March%202024.pdf> (p. 6)

²²⁸ <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/gaza-starvation-denial-aipac/>

²²⁹ For a nuanced view on starvation and a critical take on the meaning of measurements of food and caloric intake see:

<https://hazmanhazeh.org.il/hunger/>

²³⁰ 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/>

²³¹ <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>

²³² <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-on-gaza--the-who-executive-board--trans-fats-and-leprosy>

²³³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

²³⁴ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/gaza-is-starving>

²³⁵ <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3633138>

²³⁶ 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

²³⁷ <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>

²³⁸ <https://twitter.com/MedicalAidPal/status/1763172220900151317>

authorities.²³⁹ On more than one occasion, the IDF attacked a food convoy.²⁴⁰ 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.²⁴¹ In late March, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to allow unimpeded food aid into Gaza.²⁴² 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".²⁴³ At the same time, Oxfam stated that people in northern Gaza have been forced to survive on an average of 245 calories a day since January, less than 12% of average daily calorie needs.²⁴⁴ Despite reports about increased aid deliveries to Gaza in early April, In mid-April a UN official said that Israel turned down more than 40% of the UN's requests to deliver aid for Palestinians to northern Gaza the previous week, stating "We're dealing with this dance where we do one step forward, two steps backward, or two steps forward, one step backward, which leaves us basically always at the same point".²⁴⁵ In late April a leaked US administration paper written by US experts on food security in the Department of State and USAID stated that famine in Gaza was inevitable, and that the deterioration of food security in Gaza "exponentially" outpaced the long term declines that led to the other 21st century famines in Somalia (2011) and South Sudan (2017).²⁴⁶ 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.²⁴⁷ Images and videos from the strip appear to confirm these findings.²⁴⁸

May and June

Although April saw an uptick of aid entering Gaza, partially the result of international pressure after Israel's bombing of the World Central Kitchen's convoy, the amount of aid entering Gaza dropped again in May, this time as a result of fighting in the North and in the South, in which Israel took control of the Rafah crossing into Egypt.²⁴⁹ In the rest of May, the amount of food entering Gaza dropped by 70%²⁵⁰ (discrepancies with Israeli-supplied numbers derive from the different ways of counting trucks,²⁵¹ as well as the entry of commercial food sales).²⁵² Due to the food shortages, known famine-related mortality resumed after a hiatus of several weeks. The World Food Program suspended food distribution in Rafah because of lack of supplies and insecurity.²⁵³ The much-

²³⁹ <https://twitter.com/UNRWA/status/1759993361702748380> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-140>

²⁴⁰ For example: <https://palestine.un.org/en/259747-food-convoy-waiting-move-northern-gaza-was-hit-israeli-naval-gunfire> . See also the case of the World Central Kitchen.

²⁴¹ <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/>

²⁴² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/28/famine-is-setting-in-icj-orders-israel-to-unblock-gaza-food-aid>

²⁴³ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/gaza-collapse-famine_n_660c96aae4b0328a72be47f5

²⁴⁴ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/people-northern-gaza-forced-survive-245-calories-day-less-can-beans-oxfam>

²⁴⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-says-it-still-faces-obstacles-bid-fend-off-famine-gaza-2024-04-16/>

²⁴⁶ <https://www.devex.com/news/exclusive-usaid-officials-say-israel-breached-us-directive-on-gaza-aid-107545>

²⁴⁷ <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>

²⁴⁸ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1750503719806923075> ; <https://twitter.com/NABEELRAJAB/status/1750017231197544706>; <https://twitter.com/jakeshieldsaj/status/1751580352601309591>

²⁴⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/22/gaza-famine-aid-israel-hamas/>

²⁵⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/30/israel-hamas-war-news-gaza-palestine-rafah/>

²⁵¹ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-west-bank-jenin-raid-a3320a77a3a6ccff41db2a4bc63e4aa3> ;

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/30/israel-hamas-war-news-gaza-palestine-rafah/>

²⁵² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-reopens-gaza-food-sales-rafah-raid-chokes-aid-2024-05-30/>

²⁵³ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-west-bank-jenin-raid-a3320a77a3a6ccff41db2a4bc63e4aa3>

heralded US pier,²⁵⁴ that was supposed to provide additional aid (and cost \$320 million), encountered problems from its beginning – including a hiatus in its operation – and was ineffective into early June, before being moved away again in mid June.²⁵⁵ Israel re-opened commercial food sales in Gaza in late May, but the amount of commercial trucks that entered was far smaller than the amount of humanitarian aid (which, as aforementioned, was far from enough for the needs of the population).²⁵⁶ In late May, a poll of Gazans in the south of the Gaza Strip found that 64% had enough food for a day or two (44% in March) and 26% could access a place to get assistance with food and water without great risk (19% in March).²⁵⁷

Subsequent reports in May and June continued to indicate a serious crisis. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) said that “it is possible, if not likely” that famine was underway in northern Gaza since April, and that it is possible the famine will persist in the area through July. This was the first time an organization stated the possibility that famine was already happening.²⁵⁸ The uncertainty derived from major difficulties since only limited information was available, a situation nonetheless similar to that in other famines. Regardless of whether the reality in northern Gaza fit the technical definition of famine, “acute malnutrition among children is extremely high and this will result in irreversible physiological impacts”.²⁵⁹ The World Food Program and the Food and Agriculture Organization said that hunger is worsening, especially in northern Gaza, because of the heavy restrictions on humanitarian access and the collapse of the local food system.²⁶⁰ The UN’s aid chief said that “delivering aid was become almost impossible” in Gaza.²⁶¹ In late May, head of USAID said that conditions in Gaza are “worse... than ever before”.²⁶² A WHO spokesperson said in May that 85% of children “did not eat for a whole day at least once in the [past] three days” and that “children are starving”.²⁶³ A UNICEF spokesperson tried to bring medical and nutritional supplies to North Gaza in mid June. Despite receiving the necessary approvals in advance, on the ground the trucks were refused entry and sent back after a long delay.²⁶⁴ On the other hand, a group of Israeli scholars attempted to argue in a white paper in June that the amount of available food entering Gaza had increased between January and April, but their contribution suffers from fundamental methodological issues.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/04/27/world/middleeast/gaza-pier-israel-amas-war.html>

²⁵⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/us-pier-gaza-famine-israel-1feae14dac670bb4de0467988799c5c6> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/21/world/middleeast/gaza-aid-pier-food.html> ; <https://news.usni.org/2024/05/23/u-s-soldier-critically-injured-during-gaza-pier-operation-2-other-service-members-hurt> ; <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3787939/high-sea-states-impact-army-vessels/> ; <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/28/politics/us-gaza-pier-broken-apart/index.html> ; <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3808303/us-central-command-moves-pier-ahead-of-high-seas/>

²⁵⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-reopens-gaza-food-sales-rafah-raid-chokes-aid-2024-05-30/> ; for the scale of supplies between the humanitarian and private sectors see for example: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

²⁵⁷ <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/980>

²⁵⁸ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-amas-famine-0056ceecdb4ae3bee5f64c54ab034c7e> ;

https://fewsnetsites/default/files/2024-06/Gaza-Targeted-Analysis-Update-042024-Final_3.pdf

²⁵⁹ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-amas-famine-0056ceecdb4ae3bee5f64c54ab034c7e> ;

https://fewsnetsites/default/files/2024-06/Gaza-Targeted-Analysis-Update-042024-Final_3.pdf

²⁶⁰ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-amas-war-hunger-un-07afb7fe4a1654f54b81b944a0dab535> ;

<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000159235/download/>

²⁶¹ <https://x.com/UNReliefChief/status/1798118788576989489>

²⁶² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/30/israel-amas-war-news-gaza-palestine-rafah/>

²⁶³ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/05/1150486> ; <https://x.com/UNGeneva/status/1796579174204813488>

²⁶⁴ <https://x.com/blarn357857/status/1801920586677154113>

²⁶⁵ Besides the key problem of not dealing with three of the four pillars of food security (availability, access, utilization and stability) which the scholars acknowledge, the scholars’ paper is problematic because, among others, it (1) examines the trend from January to April, which was positive because of the influx of food in April after the World Central Kitchen attack, but declined afterwards (see below); (2) does not differentiate between the north of the Gaza Strip, where all evidence suggests food security was far worse in the period of the study, to the rest of the Gaza Strip; (3) overlooks all pre-war local food production in Gaza in its comparison between the pre-war and war conditions; (4) overlooks Palestinians as humans, for example by not including any references to the massive mortality in the Strip, the destruction of infrastructure, the deaths of Palestinians trying to get aid, the deaths of Palestinians from malnutrition and dehydration.

Additional findings

Evidence from the Strip reveals some of the actions that desperate Gazans are forced into because of the lack of food.²⁶⁶ Media coverage refers to people eating horse meat,²⁶⁷ grass and drinking contaminated water or sea water.²⁶⁸ One video shows a group of people swimming in an area flooded with sewage to procure airdropped aid that landed in that area.²⁶⁹ 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).²⁷⁰ Others fell as a building on which an airdrop of aid landed had collapsed.²⁷¹

About 60 percent of Israeli Jews oppose humanitarian aid to Gaza, a stable figure over time.²⁷² Jewish activists have completely blocked the entrance of aid to Gaza on several occasions in recent months.²⁷³ IDF soldiers recorded themselves destroying and burning food warehouses in Gaza.²⁷⁴ In May, Israeli settlers/protestors blocked²⁷⁵ and sometimes attacked Jordanian convoys of aid to Gaza.²⁷⁶ Such attacks included causing massive damage to the trucks themselves, as well as throwing away the humanitarian aid onto the road.²⁷⁷ Some of these attacks took place near IDF blockades and local eyewitnesses noted that the Israeli soldiers and the police allowed the destruction and looting of aid to take place.²⁷⁸ Other road blocks took place in major cities – including Jerusalem – with little to no police interference.²⁷⁹ In at least two occasions trucks were burned,²⁸⁰ and at least in two cases settlers attacked and injured the Palestinian truck drivers who were hospitalized

Israeli deaths are mentioned; (5) accepts without criticism the numbers by the IDF's COGAT, which has argued for example that 98.7% of all aid trucks were allowed to enter the Gaza Strip (p. 18) – numbers that are incongruent with the vast majority of evidence coming from the UN, international countries and media outside the Strip; (6) accepts without criticism claims such as the ones associated with the US pier or the *New York Times'* Screams Without Words article (the first failed and the second was widely acknowledged as severely flawed, see below for both). For the paper: <https://biochem-food-nutrition.agri.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/biochem-food-nutrition/files/preprint-nutritional-assessment-of-food-aid-delivered-to-gaza-via-israel-during-the-swords-of-iron-war.pdf> ; for the coverage in Israeli media: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkojsnksa>

²⁶⁶ <https://twitter.com/amirs74/status/1771198476446998611>

²⁶⁷ <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240224-dead-horses-scraps-leaves-gaza-s-hungry-get-desperate>;
<https://twitter.com/KhalilAsslan/status/1773732648847876569>

²⁶⁸ <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>

²⁶⁹ <https://twitter.com/sarabahaa94/status/1771278625175654815>

²⁷⁰ <https://twitter.com/arixegal/status/1772657137136619838> ; <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/26/middleeast/palestinians-drown-gaza-aid-drop-intl/index.html>

²⁷¹ <https://twitter.com/stairwayto3dom/status/1787522270555996657>

²⁷² <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/52967>

²⁷³ <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>

²⁷⁴ <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)

²⁷⁵ <https://twitter.com/JoshuaPHill/status/1789407061555445951>

²⁷⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/jordan-says-israeli-settlers-attacked-jordanian-aid-convoys-way-gaza-2024-05-01/>

²⁷⁷ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1787643854155321448> ; <https://twitter.com/adinitay/status/1787692297527693802> ;
<https://politicallycorret.co.il/tlv-ierus/>

²⁷⁸ <https://twitter.com/barakavid/status/1790014518828920977> ; <https://twitter.com/SuppressedNws/status/1789963866404692320> ;

<https://twitter.com/jose23317578/status/1790002807312957511> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-13/ty-article/0000018f-73a1-ddbe-addf-77af249a0000> ;

https://twitter.com/Sapir_SLAM/status/1790049348065055039 ;

<https://twitter.com/ElishaYered/status/1790815866738671858> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/21/israeli-soldiers-and-police-tipping-off-groups-that-attack-gaza-aid-trucks> ;

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/26/west-bank-aid-trucks-gaza-settlers/>

²⁷⁹ <https://x.com/nirhasson/status/1792286756395462866> ; <https://x.com/nirhasson/status/1792293566686884266> ;

<https://x.com/nirhasson/status/1792291838310727996> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sjflvy00x0> ; on police interference:

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-20/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-9268-d212-abcf-d66d978d0000>

²⁸⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-13/ty-article/0000018f-73a1-ddbe-addf-77af249a0000> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-05-17/ty-article-live/0000018f-833f-dd4f-ab8f-97bfb030000?liveBlogItemId=738950520#738950520> ; <https://x.com/Mistaclim/status/1791402493173203356>

(including once in which the truck was not involved in bringing aid to Gaza).²⁸¹ Action against allowing humanitarian aid to Gaza extends beyond fringe groups. According to a *Guardian* investigation, Israeli soldiers and police tip off the groups that attack the trucks.²⁸² The deputy speaker of the Israeli Knesset claimed he blocked aid trucks with his private car.²⁸³ In mid June, the Israeli Chief of Police claimed in a letter that the Minister of National Security – a figure closely associated with settler groups – attempted to cancel the police escorts meant to accompany the trucks.²⁸⁴

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).²⁸⁵ As of December, fuel prices had increased by over 500 percent.²⁸⁶ In April, the price of a liter of gasoline reached 150 shekels (~\$40).²⁸⁷ 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.²⁸⁸ 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.²⁸⁹

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),²⁹⁰ but this number decreased to less than one liter on average in February.²⁹¹ Even basic medical supplies are in short supply. Gauze, for example, is sterilized and reused for the next patient.²⁹² Some have begun to die from treatable diseases such as hepatitis.²⁹³

The lack of medical supplies has resulted in the conduction of medical operations, including C-sections and amputations, without anesthesia or blood supplies.²⁹⁴ An online video shows a Gazan doctor who had to amputate his daughter's foot on the dining table in their home without anesthesia.²⁹⁵ 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.²⁹⁶ A British surgeon who visited al-Aqsa hospital recounted in the UN the story of a girl burned so badly

²⁸¹ <https://twitter.com/adinitay/status/1790799451856015791> ; <https://twitter.com/JoshBreiner/status/1790802070817091935> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-05-17/ty-article-live/0000018f-833f-dd4f-ab8f-97bfba030000?liveBlogItemId=738950520#738950520>

²⁸² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/21/israeli-soldiers-and-police-tipping-off-groups-that-attack-gaza-aid-trucks>

²⁸³ <https://twitter.com/lirishavit/status/1790723920221311015>

²⁸⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hj6opjuba>

²⁸⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/page/gaza-strip-electricity-supply>

²⁸⁶ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000154766/download/>

²⁸⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-04-04/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-a379-d315-ab9f-aff98d4b0000>

²⁸⁸ <https://www.care.org/news-and-stories/press-releases/care-warns-84-of-gazas-lights-extinguished-people-left-sick-and-starving/>

²⁸⁹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/specials/gaza-universities-destroyed-israel-military-war/index.html>

²⁹⁰ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000154766/download/>

²⁹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/27/un-israel-food-starvation-palestinians-war-crime-genocide>

²⁹² <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israel/palestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

²⁹³ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1783398458004578791>

²⁹⁴ <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.juzoor.org/cached_uploads/download/2023/11/11/maternal-health-report-final-1699726911.pdf ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-05-09/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018f-5840-d348-a7bf-fee9cea00000>

²⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1746887014337671410> ; a group of strangers volunteered to help her reach the US and fit a prosthetic leg: <https://x.com/SkyNews/status/179790977286090998>

²⁹⁶ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1763960723695185934>

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.²⁹⁷ There are many similar stories. These stories have long-term implications. For example, by January there were already over 1,000 Gazan children amputees, each of which will require 8-12 more surgical interventions as they grow up.²⁹⁸

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.²⁹⁹ 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".³⁰⁰ Miscarriages in Gaza have increased by 300% compared to the pre-war situation.³⁰¹ 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.³⁰² Women in Gaza also have difficulties finding menstrual pads, with some using alternatives such as the corners of their tents to manage their periods.³⁰³

Gaza's health system

Gaza's health system has all but collapsed. 84% of all health facilities have been damaged or destroyed.³⁰⁴ At times, less than a third of Gaza's hospitals and a quarter of its primary health centers were even partially operational.³⁰⁵ As of writing, about half of the hospitals in the Strip are partially operational.³⁰⁶ 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.³⁰⁷ There are over a million reported cases of diseases in Gaza so far.³⁰⁸ As of mid June, there have been over 865,000 cases of acute respiratory infections.³⁰⁹ Over 485,000 cases of diarrhea have been reported, over 113,000 of which are among

²⁹⁷ <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1770677587670684039> ; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/single-worst-top-oxford-surgeon-horrors-gaza-hospital/>

²⁹⁸ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/the-children-who-lost-limbs-in-gaza> ; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/terror-and-security/gaza-conflict-is-creating-a-generation-of-child-amputees/>

²⁹⁹ https://www.juzoor.org/cached_uploads/download/2023/11/11/maternal-health-report-final-1699726911.pdf

³⁰⁰ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/babies-dying-preventable-causes-besieged-gaza-oxfam> ; also <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gazas-silent-killings-destruction-healthcare-system-rafah>

³⁰¹ <https://jezebel.com/miscarriages-in-gaza-have-increased-300-under-israeli-1851168680>

³⁰² <https://twitter.com/abierkhatib/status/1771451982500229193>

³⁰³ <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2024/01/11/1224201620/another-layer-of-misery-women-in-gaza-struggle-to-find-menstrual-pads-running-wa>

³⁰⁴ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf>

³⁰⁵ <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

³⁰⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

³⁰⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REnN_dLtrLA ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-05-09/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018f-5840-d348-a7bf-fee9cea00000>

³⁰⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

³⁰⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

children aged 5 or less.³¹⁰ In a single week in mid-December, 3,200 cases of diarrhea were reported every day (compared to some 500 per week before the war).³¹¹ On average, there is one shower in Gaza for every 4,500 people, and a toilet for every 220.³¹² 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 Minister³¹³ – have spoken in favor of allowing diseases to decimate the civilian population in Gaza.³¹⁴ 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.³¹⁵ Exposure to high temperatures within refugee tents has also killed Palestinians sheltering inside them.³¹⁶

Israel has systematically dismantled the health system in Gaza, making it inoperable.³¹⁷ In late February, the head of MSF stated that “there is no health system to speak of left in Gaza”.³¹⁸ 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”.³¹⁹ 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”.³²⁰ 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).³²¹ An MSF report from April about conditions in Rafah revealed upward trends in the number of cases of acute malnutrition and concluded that the level of exposure of the population to traumatic events “has left the mental health of Gaza’s population in tatters”. The health system in Gaza “stands shattered”, and its long and uncertain road to recovery would take years if not decades.³²²

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 preventable health causes and the collapse of the medical system”.³²³ Other academics reached similar and more detailed conclusions.³²⁴

³¹⁰ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

³¹¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-86>

³¹² <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).

³¹³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r1zlcnoga>

³¹⁴ <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001462900>

³¹⁵ <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inflicting-unprecedented-suffering-and-destruction-seven-ways-the-government-of-621591/>

³¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1783397508154052793>

³¹⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/world/middleeast/gaza-israel-hospitals-medical-system.html>

³¹⁸ <https://www.msf.org/msf-briefing-gaza-un-security-council>

³¹⁹ <https://www.msf.org/msf-briefing-gaza-un-security-council>

³²⁰ <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/>

³²¹ <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

³²² <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gazas-silent-killings-destruction-healthcare-system-rafah>

³²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/29/health-organisations-disease-gaza-population-outbreaks-conflict>

³²⁴ https://gaza-projections.org/gaza_projections_report.pdf

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, first and foremost those living in Gaza, discussed in this section, as well as the language and practice that makes them distant, inaccessible or absent to the Jewish Israeli population (on this see the section on the media and propaganda below).³²⁵ 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",³²⁶ stated that "this war is civilization against barbarism"³²⁷ and defined the war as a battle against the Biblical Amalek in both a speech and in a letter he sent to IDF soldiers.³²⁸ The Bible directs to annihilate Amalek completely: men, women, children and livestock.³²⁹ Israel's President has stated that Israel did not distinguish between militants and civilians, "it's an entire nation out there that is responsible".³³⁰ He also personally wrote a message on an artillery shell to be shot into Gaza.³³¹ Israel's Minister of Defense has described the Palestinians in Gaza as "human animals". At least five other government ministers have made similar statements as late as May.³³² Israel's National Security minister told Border Police troops they should shoot terrorists even if the terrorists do not threaten them, against procedure.³³³ 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.³³⁴ In late March, she stated that Israel's was fighting against the Amalekites "of our times" in explicit context of the religious obligation to exterminate Amalek.³³⁵ 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".³³⁶ Other politicians have done the same.³³⁷ 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.³³⁸ In March, a former general described the people in three areas from which Israel retreated (Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon) as "human animals".³³⁹ As late as mid April, Israel's Finance Minister stated that "There are 2 million Nazis in Gaza who want to slaughter, rape and murder every Jew".³⁴⁰ In early May, a Likud official stated that "there are no uninvolved [civilians] there, you have to go in and kill, and kill, and kill".³⁴¹ In mid June, Israel's Foreign Ministry placed an ad that claimed that "there are no innocent civilians there [in Gaza]".³⁴²

³²⁵ <https://humanityjournal.org/blog/discourses-of-palestinian-disappearance/>

³²⁶ <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/children-post-deleted-netanyahu/>

³²⁷ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-to-dutch-leader-this-war-is-civilization-vs-barbarism/

³²⁸ <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>

³²⁹ 1 Samuel 15.2-3.

³³⁰ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/israel-gaza-isaac-herzog_n_65295ee8e4b03ea0c004e2a8

³³¹ <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>

³³² <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-amas-animals-must-be-destroyed>;

<https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1798525376462725150>

³³³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkxx1alft>

³³⁴ <https://twitter.com/GolanMay/status/1759675501424042329>; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1760354792663142557>

³³⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771246005368861008>

³³⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMxnNkQSfmQ>

³³⁷ <https://twitter.com/AmirHetsroni/status/1743063371551822292> (speaker is Moshe Feiglin);

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

³³⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQtqvSYjMlc>

³³⁹ <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1773260052683469178>

³⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1781995666593456397>; <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1779764062433284213>

³⁴¹ <https://twitter.com/MacaesBruno/status/1787573947690819907>

³⁴² <https://x.com/MaxBlumenthal/status/180174535628962225>

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.³⁴³ 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.³⁴⁴ Reservists have claimed that the IDF brought rabbis in uniform to speak to soldiers. At least one stated that all Gazans must be destroyed and shot.³⁴⁵ A similar attitude, calling for the extermination of all Gazans, including children, or alternatively ethnically cleansing the Gaza Strip, has been voiced by dozens of middle-ranking officers in their social media accounts – sometimes claiming it is the moral thing to do.³⁴⁶ 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.³⁴⁷ 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.³⁴⁸ The decision was delayed after a petition by the charity Physicians for Human Rights to Israel's Supreme Court.³⁴⁹ In April, the IDF scattered fake money bills in the Strip with a portrait of the local Hamas leader depicted as a rat.³⁵⁰

In May, the IDF began an open campaign to blackmail Gazans through airdropped pamphlets and a dedicated website. The campaign targeted Gazans who provided information about their neighbors – including their sexual orientation or extra-marital affairs – to the Hamas security forces. The pamphlets contained the images and IDs of 130 males who were such supposed informants (some were clearly minors). It called upon other informants to reach out to the IDF, and in the meanwhile began publishing the supposed personal information of these Gazan informants. The website provided information to Gazans about whether they were the targets of such surveillance. The information itself was said to be sourced from hundreds of thousands of internal records of Hamas.³⁵¹

De-humanization in the IDF

The dehumanization of Palestinians is now normative, pervasive and obvious in many hundreds³⁵² of images and videos, almost all of which were uploaded by IDF soldiers to social media.³⁵³ These

³⁴³ 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>

³⁴⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/literature/2024-03-26/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-7ad9-d96c-af9f-7ed9e9fa0000>

³⁴⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-05-15/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018f-7c03-d808-a9bf-ff1745530000>

³⁴⁶ Running list here (34 officers as of mid June): <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794826941209702699>; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1795152167457751511>; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796122820683891010>; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798073737893511506>; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798998289456799978>; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801344353375555936>; also <https://zeteo.com/p/gaza-israel-genocide-soldier-rhetoric-instagram>; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801316437794963578>

³⁴⁷ https://ynet-pic1.yit.co.il/picsserver5/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/>

³⁴⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/health/article/h17117hua6>

³⁴⁹ <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

³⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/N12News/status/1780977153166688378>

³⁵¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-21/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-9b46-dce9-a1cf-ffc6dcee0000>; <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/05/israels-extortion-leaflets-and-namecheap-how-to-do-corporate-accountability-during-a-genocide/>

³⁵² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAT9NQ4WkEQ> (hundreds; see below for many others)

videos and images present shooting civilians waving white flags,³⁵⁴ abuse of individuals,³⁵⁵ captives and corpses,³⁵⁶ gleefully damaging or destroying houses³⁵⁷, various structures and institutions,³⁵⁸ religious sites³⁵⁹ and looting of personal belongings,³⁶⁰ as well as randomly firing their weapons,³⁶¹

³⁵³ <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-98IjZVX2BOV4k> . 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> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1790108960927719626> (collection) ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772964772629111095> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1791770589985640847> (collection) ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1792656511510143472> (collection) ; https://www.mako.co.il/news-n12_magazine/781730bdada5e810/Article-979e397c1ea9f81027.htm ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1795042539084345829/> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798765503940530377> . More coverage at: <https://zeteo.com/p/israel-soldier-gaza-genocide-instagram-facebook>

³⁵⁴ <https://twitter.com/middleeasteye/status/1744351540435935525> ; <https://twitter.com/muhammadshahad2/status/1750601287102542296> ; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1749971465422745729> ; see also <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf> , paragraphs 208-218.

³⁵⁵ <https://www.mistacim.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> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1786440756573680082>

³⁵⁶ 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/Aboujahjah/status/1769867124103598146> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1774197948487725476> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1795048143261724958> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801560741138350491>

³⁵⁷ <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> ; <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> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1787814577033375768> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794648644920238114> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1795114456936063484> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796840765189988723> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796999248841453615> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798325368023384423> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798685435356393524> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801743066497212733>

³⁵⁸ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1742346460559995063> ; <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1743626241104543942> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760038133872095300> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772713480140865594> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1780594979230109978> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1793934222341611526> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794012735228825939> ; <https://x.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1798056593218760839> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1800455049296191612>

³⁵⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=if_Z2eqrN8 ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1754458148276990180> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1757054593656103198> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1777799671647191117> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1789978344311648368> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798393141021553018> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1799879016436093021> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1800841913349894346>

³⁶⁰ <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-7ddee313c00> ; <https://twitter.com/adinivay/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>

shooting local animals,³⁶² destroying private property,³⁶³ burning books within libraries,³⁶⁴ defacing Palestinian³⁶⁵ and Islamic symbols³⁶⁶ (including burning Qurans³⁶⁷ and turning mosques into dining spaces³⁶⁸) and declaring a new Nakba.³⁶⁹ More videos are covered by *The New York Times*³⁷⁰ and *CNN*.³⁷¹

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”.³⁷² 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.³⁷³ A Gazan detainee said that IDF soldiers placed women detainees from Gaza in the men’s section while being completely naked, and cut the hair of some of the women detainees.³⁷⁴ 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.³⁷⁵ A Palestinian woman claimed that IDF soldiers carved a Star of David on her husband’s back during his time in detention.³⁷⁶ One soldier filmed a dog eating the corpse of a Gazan, exclaiming that it “took [the corpse of] the terrorist apart”, then moved his camera to discuss the beauty of the view and the sunset.³⁷⁷

Looting has become normalized³⁷⁸ to the extent that one case was featured approvingly in a popular Friday evening news segment,³⁷⁹ 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”.³⁸⁰ Soldiers shared an image of themselves with tens of thousands of shekels (thousands of

³⁶¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1769705371935912186> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1769359560131657965> ; <https://twitter.com/abierkhatib/status/1776475339595628838> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1789265125720920243> ; <https://x.com/arixegal/status/1793722854346990066>

³⁶² https://twitter.com/Sarah_Hassan94/status/1754620276271149451

³⁶³ <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/adiniday/status/1772903912867016869> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1776955769553867178> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1788192609900380361> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1786848576674443715> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1789325679525249441> ; <https://x.com/NicoleNonya/status/1793681516846788943> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796232276818424251> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796239229779062919> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801555895878361567> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801747288328479222> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801740747453940209>

³⁶⁴ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1793628894245118205> ; <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/israeli-soldier-burning-books/>

³⁶⁵ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1742273606699106542> ; <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1743712184725594564> ; <https://twitter.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1787892635186712737>

³⁶⁶ <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1769378368431047090>

³⁶⁷ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1793032057649512671> ; also <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1793756431881294035>

³⁶⁸ <https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1801193479470534674>

³⁶⁹ <https://x.com/YousefMunayyer/status/1791807669797347571> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1793047312115040450>

³⁷⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/06/world/middleeast/israel-idf-soldiers-war-social-media-video.html>

³⁷¹ <https://twitter.com/amanpour/status/1758204651927744784>

³⁷² <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1752433175320478060>

³⁷³ <https://twitter.com/adham922/status/175606805779245412>

³⁷⁴ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1756605167946899965>

³⁷⁵ <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%84-%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A> ; <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1773318803075531136>

³⁷⁶ https://www.instagram.com/landpalestine/p/C4qQ6pltu5N/?img_index=1

³⁷⁷ <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1766132416899420637>

³⁷⁸ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/132092> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-05-15/ty-article-magazine-highlight/0000018f-7c03-d808-a9bf-ff1745530000>

³⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1756438313899024862>

³⁸⁰ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1760599708857237838>

dollars).³⁸¹ A military doctor noted disapprovingly that looting had become “almost institutionalized”.³⁸² An IDF soldier attempted to sell online a Gazan passport and other items he had looted while serving in Gaza.³⁸³ Another filmed himself sifting what appears to be flour originally delivered to Gaza by humanitarian aid organizations, and cynically thanking them as well as the UN and UNRWA.³⁸⁴

Revenge is a common theme in this content.³⁸⁵ Some IDF soldiers shared social media content that explicitly compared Gazans to the biblical Amalek (see above),³⁸⁶ as well as stating that they have fulfilled the religious commandment to annihilate the memory of Amalek.³⁸⁷ 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.³⁸⁸ Other soldiers upload much revenge content and relate it to the destruction of the Gaza Strip, including the destruction they themselves caused.³⁸⁹ 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”.³⁹⁰ High ranking officers have said similar things.³⁹¹ 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.³⁹² 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).³⁹³ Soldiers preparing to enter Rafah in early May called for “let’s take Rafah apart” as their battle cry.³⁹⁴

Many soldiers release videos that portray their experience and destruction in Gaza as fun and humorous,³⁹⁵ treating their experience like a video game,³⁹⁶ or content that ignores the war, such as

³⁸¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772972625532207265> ; also <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796637726835446048> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1802082633679090163>

³⁸² <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra13792905>

³⁸³ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/rjytktkra

³⁸⁴ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796133135400210700>

³⁸⁵ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1750219568428036237> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1756652152607457781>

³⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1762185882994425961> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772965195683336261> ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1792891418370781395>

³⁸⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1779808804751757387>

³⁸⁸ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1765386577855791185>

³⁸⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1767900767313182897>

³⁹⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772304727457317039>

³⁹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqEj3DzadiM>

³⁹² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-31/ty-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>

³⁹³ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1771197890829898017>

³⁹⁴ <https://twitter.com/ofercass/status/1787791098095534223>

³⁹⁵ <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/175342253455427299> ; <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> ;

conducting a yoga class in an abandoned home in Gaza,³⁹⁷ or a soldier holding up a sign advertising a barber shop in Israel with corpses of dead Palestinians around him.³⁹⁸ A group of armed soldiers in uniform held signs with the message “We, soldiers of the Jewish People’s Army from the [political] Right and Left will not disarm until we erase and annihilate Gaza”.³⁹⁹ One soldier expressed his will to poison the flour on the trucks bringing humanitarian aid to Gazans.⁴⁰⁰ Other photos include soldiers posing near election banners for local (Israeli) politicians and restaurant chains “coming soon” to Gaza.⁴⁰¹ Recurring types of content include humorously presenting the lingerie of Gazan women⁴⁰² or posing with items (often toys) from abandoned Gazan houses.⁴⁰³ *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.⁴⁰⁴ N12 has featured a story about the graffiti Israeli soldiers leave in Gazan homes, presenting it positively and even comparing one soldier to the artist Banksy.⁴⁰⁵ The IDF has even brought influencers to mockingly “review” a “hotel” in Gaza.⁴⁰⁶ An IDF soldier reflected that other soldiers went into the Gaza Strip as a form of tourism to see the destruction.⁴⁰⁷

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.⁴⁰⁸ I have seen almost no reporting on such disciplinary processes within the IDF since the beginning of the war, and in the few

<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> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1782212698953990238> ; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1785074198844453223> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1789942261209325757> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1789587485955072233> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1791167455731048886> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1792923935824048336> ;
<https://x.com/ShaykhSulaiman/status/1792940664193470525> ; <https://x.com/Partisangirl/status/1793446435935211536> ;
<https://x.com/NicoleNonya/status/1793684246512746500> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794346305571184910> ;
<https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1794102771026723277> ; <https://x.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1795879315155910854> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796228939251343652> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798801765845897336> ;
<https://x.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1800979476961984982> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801359465419055210> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801379681423245664> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801700803251695684> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801966059886399640> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801973888529678428> ;
<https://x.com/QudsNen/status/1802266606564675886>
³⁹⁶ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1800822593777545634> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1802060863731319253>
³⁹⁷ <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>
³⁹⁸ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1755129771825000637>
³⁹⁹ <https://twitter.com/ozleisraelaza/status/1780525230064058757>
⁴⁰⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1780159773981220987>
⁴⁰¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760407071747719357> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761039679212671105>
⁴⁰² <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> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794433825591738491> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798797098801824165> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801978091654279226>
⁴⁰³ <https://twitter.com/grapesofwhat/status/1761332020402118799> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1762556002711289987> ;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1763682787054211217> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1782216567431872723> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1784575504667890128> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1797962472399532407>
⁴⁰⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/food/2024-02-13/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018d-82c5-d6dc-ab9f-cffd1ebc0000>
⁴⁰⁵ https://www.mako.co.il/news-n12_magazine/781730bdada5e810/Article-979e397c1ea9f81027.htm
⁴⁰⁶ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1743296706576269446> ; <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1739728935779234254> ;
also the similar <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801625890633159060>
⁴⁰⁷ <https://twitter.com/WarWatchs/status/1783121782557352320>
⁴⁰⁸ <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>

cases where such process took place the impact on the IDF soldiers committing the acts was negligible.⁴⁰⁹ In mid May during another round of ICJ hearings, for example, the IDF moved one soldier whose destruction videos went viral on social media away from the Gaza Strip.⁴¹⁰ In late May, Israel's chief military advocate stated that since the beginning of the war the Military Advocate General had opened 70 investigations on cases that included the deaths of Palestinian detainees (on this see below) and looting.⁴¹¹ As the evidence in this document indicates, this is a miniscule number of investigations compared to the evidence for committed crimes.

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).⁴¹² Similar calls appear in public space, for example in graffiti.⁴¹³ In October, an adviser to Israel's Prime Minister called for torturing Hamas militants in a graphic way.⁴¹⁴ In November, 90 Israeli doctors signed a letter calling to bomb hospitals in Gaza,⁴¹⁵ while the president of Israel's largest university compared Hamas to Amalek.⁴¹⁶ A popular singer used a long series of expletives against Gaza during a show for Israeli soldiers.⁴¹⁷ In early January, a long list of rabbis, academics and ten MPs have called for the cessation of all humanitarian aid to Gaza.⁴¹⁸ 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.⁴¹⁹ The Rabbi of Tzefat compared the Gazans to Amalek and claimed that they should be eradicated.⁴²⁰

In April, 42% of Israeli Jews claimed that Israel should not follow international humanitarian law.⁴²¹ 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.⁴²² Another prominent Israeli journalist stated on live TV: "there are no innocent people in the Gaza Strip, there are none... and the fact that they are now enjoying themselves on the beach instead of being starved, instead of being jerked around, instead of being severely tormented, instead of hiding from bombing... We should have seen there a lot more revenge, a lot more rivers of Gazans' blood".⁴²³ Similar sentiments appear on Israel's main TV channels.⁴²⁴ Similar messages are directed at Arabs/Palestinians in general. An Israeli model/influencer stated that all Palestinians with Israeli citizenships should be annihilated,⁴²⁵ a sentiment followed by a cameraman for the Israeli Channel 14.⁴²⁶ When three members of a family

⁴⁰⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-11/tv-article/0000018e-2c36-d682-a9df-edbe2df50000> ;

https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/riytkkra

⁴¹⁰ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/750891/>

⁴¹¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkrbsjbcv>

⁴¹² <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-war-rhetoric.html>

⁴¹³ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1790031034408394798>

⁴¹⁴ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-war-sara-netanyahu-advisor-torture-gazans-rant>

⁴¹⁵ <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/11/israeli-doctors-urge-the-bombing-of-gaza-hospitals/>

⁴¹⁶ <https://www.hidabroot.org/article/1188125>

⁴¹⁷ <https://www.ice.co.il/social/news/article/988380> "Gaza, you daughter of a bitch, Gaza, you Black, you garbage can, Gaza, you whore..."

⁴¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/shilofreid/status/1742919348401135788>

⁴¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1757837275830907052>

⁴²⁰ <https://www.yeshiva.org.il/midrash/52638>

⁴²¹ <https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/swords-of-iron-15/>

⁴²² https://twitter.com/itamar_green/status/1741504115874627765

⁴²³ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1782029404916285857> ;

https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%99%D7%94%D7%95%D7%93%D7%94_%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%96%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%92%D7%A8 ;

also: <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1795012044699079164>

⁴²⁴ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1790909070708285910>

⁴²⁵ https://x.com/z_00plz/status/1791336664666603703

⁴²⁶ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1794698212206653773>

of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship died in a car accident, large numbers of Israelis voiced their joy on social media.⁴²⁷ An Israeli DJ played the melody of the racist chant “May your village burn”, directed at Palestinians. The crowd at the party began chanting and dancing to the tune.⁴²⁸

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.⁴²⁹ 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.⁴³⁰ A popular Israeli stand-up comedian mocked Gazans who were killed from faulty airdropped humanitarian aid, declaring that they were “such morons”.⁴³¹ 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).⁴³² 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”).⁴³³ A senior journalist asserted that Gazans “have earned that hell fairly, and I don’t have a milligram of empathy”.⁴³⁴ A senior commentator stated that “to destroy Hamas... you have to bring Gaza to a humanitarian disaster”.⁴³⁵ Many other media workers and artists have said similar things.⁴³⁶ Voices on the street speak openly and positively about the killing of civilians in Gaza in interviews.⁴³⁷ One t-shirt in Israel features the text “May your [i.e. Arab] village burn”.⁴³⁸ 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.⁴³⁹ When the IDF killed three sons and four grandchildren of Ismail Haniyeh, one of Hamas’s leaders,⁴⁴⁰ an Israeli journalist cited the religious commandment to erase the memory of Amalek.⁴⁴¹ Another Israeli journalist attached to an image of the Israeli bombing of civilians in Rafah in late May, which killed dozens, the text “the central lighting [i.e. of bonfires for Lag BaOmer, which took place that day] this year in Rafah”.⁴⁴² Some Israeli police officers apparently believe that there are no innocents in Gaza, including a fetus in his mother’s womb.⁴⁴³

Israeli demonstrators have repeatedly attempted to block humanitarian aid from entering Gaza, including holding a rave/protest just outside the border wall.⁴⁴⁴ After the “flour massacre” on 29 February, Israel’s Minister of National Security called to “completely support” all IDF troops while

⁴²⁷ https://x.com/Ahmad_tibi/status/1801934557723419012; https://x.com/z_00plz/status/1802321259188920411

⁴²⁸ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1794351306028839298>

⁴²⁹ <https://twitter.com/CensoredMen/status/1765773664325075354>

⁴³⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sy3bfhu6p>; also <https://olam-katan.co.il/archives/12261>

⁴³¹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1769159335299485732>; also

<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1784224046562816158>

⁴³² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVOpEUXMz6M>

⁴³³ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1768989430084227090>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rk3n9V-aQs>;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfZOJYA7EOg>

⁴³⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2023-12-19/tv-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-7d09-de44-a9be-7d9d47790000>

⁴³⁵ <https://twitter.com/frevisrael1/status/1769996721591877793>

⁴³⁶ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1768045698350465445>; <https://twitter.com/bokeralmog/status/1782777513678196933>;

see also <https://x.com/IsraelGaley/status/1799689832257749110>

⁴³⁷ <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C5YJhgslsvz/>

⁴³⁸ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1780222143445205191>

⁴³⁹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1775162156792631334>

⁴⁴⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/three-sons-hamas-leader-haniyeh-killed-israeli-airstrike-2024-04-10/>

⁴⁴¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1778072422530400755>

⁴⁴² <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794826941209702699>; also <https://x.com/idanlandau/status/1794956280504930630>

⁴⁴³ <https://twitter.com/AlissaShira/status/1787096840216654241>

⁴⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/LowkeyOnline/status/1757326323712774650>; <https://twitter.com/loffredojeremy/status/1762480372963508266>

; <https://twitter.com/mekomit/status/1768220704833446359>

also calling for stopping all humanitarian aid to Gazans.⁴⁴⁵ Some IDF soldiers have also called to stop all humanitarian aid.⁴⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁴⁷ In early May, an Israeli crowd attempted twice to set fire to UNRWA's main building in Jerusalem, calling "let your UN burn" as well.⁴⁴⁸ When a teacher was suspended for participating in a Nakba commemoration, the children of her school demonstrated against her, repeatedly shouting "may your village burn".⁴⁴⁹

The de-humanization of Palestinians is closely associated with a sharp increase in Israeli militarism. Israeli dating practices attest to both these changes.⁴⁵⁰ 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.⁴⁵¹ One Tinder bio, for example, stated that "We are not only here to fuck Hamas".⁴⁵² 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).⁴⁵³ 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.⁴⁵⁴ Many of these Palestinians (as much as 85-90% according to Israeli media) are detained without any concrete connection to Hamas.⁴⁵⁵ 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.⁴⁵⁶ Many

⁴⁴⁵ <https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1763196768458604583>

⁴⁴⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1785410517823046018>

⁴⁴⁷ <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-7f5518fc0000>; <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>

⁴⁴⁸ <https://twitter.com/UNLazzarini/status/1788643951945150790>

⁴⁴⁹ <https://x.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1791788316943106366>

⁴⁵⁰ <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>

⁴⁵¹ <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>

⁴⁵² <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>

⁴⁵³ <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>

⁴⁵⁴ <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>; an UNRWA report mentioned 1,506 detainees released through a single crossing point by April 4: https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_on_detention_and_alleged_ill-treatmentupdated.pdf; <https://x.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1793359108147728835>. In late May the number was supposedly 4,000, with more than 1,500 released, which seems like an undercount in light of the UNRWA number above:

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-27/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-ba6b-dfb0-a7af-fb7b4c150000>. Gaza's Government Media Office estimates that at least 5,000 citizens were detained: <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6342/Hostages-of-Israeli-revenge-in-the-Gaza-Strip-Testimonies-of-100-released-Palestinian-detainees-reveal-crimes-of-torture,-cruel-treatment>

⁴⁵⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-12-10/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-542b-df2f-adac-fe2f4bf80000>; but see also the numbers here: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-27/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-ba6b-dfb0-a7af-fb7b4c150000>

⁴⁵⁶ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/01/01/a-palestinian-poets-perilous-journey-out-of-gaza>

others have shared similar stories, including on the torture they experienced.⁴⁵⁷ One NGO wrote a report based on interviews with 100 released Palestinian detainees, revealing various kinds of torture and abuse and concluding that “the Israeli army routinely and widely commits crimes of arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, willful killing, torture, inhumane treatment, sexual violence, and denial of a fair trial.”⁴⁵⁸ For example, several Palestinians claimed that the IDF brought groups of 10-20 Israeli civilians to watch the torture they underwent when they were detained.⁴⁵⁹ Online videos provide more evidence for the torture.⁴⁶⁰ 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.⁴⁶¹ The official position of Israel’s medical directorate recommends such blindfolding and handcuffs.⁴⁶²

At least 8 Palestinian prisoners and captives have died in Israeli jails since the beginning of the war,⁴⁶³ where conditions are appalling as well.⁴⁶⁴ The IDF has admitted that additional detained Palestinians from Gaza have died but refused to supply additional details,⁴⁶⁵ until in early March *Ha’aretz* revealed that 27 Gazans died in IDF detention.⁴⁶⁶ By late May, the number increased to 35 including two who died en route to the detention facility after soldiers beat them, and two who died because of poor medical treatment.⁴⁶⁷ By early June, the number of Palestinians who died in potentially criminal circumstances according to the IDF increased further to 48.⁴⁶⁸ For comparison, in the notorious American Guantánamo prison, 9 prisoners died over more than 20 years of operation.⁴⁶⁹ The IDF refused to answer whether it opened Military Police investigations for the deaths of these Gazans.⁴⁷⁰ In late March, Physicians for Human Rights Israel examined 10 cases of Palestinians who died in detention facilities, and participated in the autopsies of five. In two cases, the autopsies found severe signs of violence and assault, four people suffered from medical issues, and in one case the specific cause of death was medical neglect.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁵⁷ <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>; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-10-23/ty-article/premium/0000018b-5be6-d473-a5fb-7fed68c0000>; <https://twitter.com/Kahlissee/status/1783737956026454347>; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1785941575157067916>; <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1786857586098155534>; <https://x.com/EuroMedHR/status/1794349445498421495>; <https://x.com/ihcentoo/status/1797391918172659737>. Many accounts here: <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6342/Hostages-of-Israeli-revenge-in-the-Gaza-Strip:-Testimonies-of-100-released-Palestinian-detainees-reveal-crimes-of-torture,-cruel-treatment>; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6367/Killing,-torture,-and-injections-of-unknown-substances:-Intl.-community-must-act-on-Israeli-violations-of-Gaza-detainees>

⁴⁵⁸ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6342/Hostages-of-Israeli-revenge-in-the-Gaza-Strip:-Testimonies-of-100-released-Palestinian-detainees-reveal-crimes-of-torture,-cruel-treatment>

⁴⁵⁹ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6153/>

⁴⁶⁰ 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>; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1780281723424547297>

⁴⁶¹ <https://twitter.com/ReneeLevant/status/1754269959927079245>

⁴⁶² <https://img.mako.co.il/2023/12/20/MEDIC.pdf>

⁴⁶³ <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>

⁴⁶⁴ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1759571535637954816>

⁴⁶⁵ <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/>

⁴⁶⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-07/ty-article/premium/0000018e-1240-df16-a58e-1ffedcf70000>; also 2 more here: <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1781018819961454697>; and one more here: <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1789930610783408368>

⁴⁶⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-28/ty-article/premium/0000018f-bbb6-dc1f-abef-ffbf9de50000>; for examples see: <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1781018819961454697>; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1789930610783408368>

⁴⁶⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-06-03/ty-article/premium/0000018f-dab1-db0d-a98f-def9186a0000>

⁴⁶⁹ <https://reprieve.org/uk/campaign/guantanamo/faq/>

⁴⁷⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-02/ty-article/premium/0000018c-c6e1-d6c4-ab8d-e7f5fd670000>

⁴⁷¹ <https://www.phr.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Death-in-Israeli-Prisons-28.03.24-Ver.pdf>

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 can be delayed for up to 75 days (or half a year, if a judge approves).⁴⁷² The same law was used, for example, to detain and imprison an 82-year old woman with Alzheimer disease for almost two months.⁴⁷³ Israel has declared that families of detainees can receive no information about them for the first 90 days of their detention, after which they can send an email to a generic email address to attempt to schedule an appointment between the detainee and a lawyer.⁴⁷⁴ As a result of these policies, for example, 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.⁴⁷⁵

Early details from 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.⁴⁷⁶ The released UNRWA report added details, referring for example to some detainees being forced into cages and attacked by dogs (several released detainees, including a child, had dog bite marks).⁴⁷⁷ Detainees were threatened with prolonged detention, injury or the killing of their family members if they did not provide information.⁴⁷⁸ One detainee stated that the soldiers shot nails on his knee, and that those nails were kept there for about 24 hours. Other forms of abuse include drinking from toilets, keeping at least one group of detainees naked, and sticking an electric probe up the anus of male detainees (one person is said to have died after such treatment).⁴⁷⁹ An ABC report interviewed one Palestinian who described how Israeli forces would bring dogs on a leash to pee on the detainees and feed detainees rotten food and salted water.⁴⁸⁰ Another detainee recounted he lost 37 kilograms during his period in detention and described experiencing electric shocks as a form of torture.⁴⁸¹ One released detainee recounted that he could use the restroom for only four minutes, after which he would be electrocuted.⁴⁸² One British doctor returning from Gaza recounted the case of a Gazan who had to use a wheelchair and had been detained for a few weeks during which he was handcuffed and developed pressure sores on both sides. When he was released, his hip bones were visible on both sides.⁴⁸³ 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”,⁴⁸⁴ while the UNICEF spokesperson revealed the extent of destruction in the then-empty hospital.⁴⁸⁵ As of June, according

⁴⁷² <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/>

⁴⁷³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-02-01/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-5f18-d0af-a3af-7fbcea840000>

⁴⁷⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-3945-d516-afbf-ffc73dd00000>

⁴⁷⁵ <https://twitter.com/Hanine09/status/1769258663837827582>

⁴⁷⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/03/world/middleeast/unrwa-gaza-detention-israel.html>

⁴⁷⁷ https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_on_detention_and_alleged_ill-treatmentupdated.pdf

⁴⁷⁸ https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_on_detention_and_alleged_ill-treatmentupdated.pdf

⁴⁷⁹ https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_on_detention_and_alleged_ill-treatmentupdated.pdf

⁴⁸⁰ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-04-19/allegations-of-gaza-abuse/103692464>

⁴⁸¹ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-04-19/allegations-of-gaza-abuse/103692464>

⁴⁸² <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6367/Killing,-torture,-and-injections-of-unknown-substances:-Intl.-community-must-act-on-Israeli-violations-of-Gaza-detainees>

⁴⁸³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEBcDUYtMts>

⁴⁸⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68513408>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68546268>

⁴⁸⁵ https://twitter.com/1james_elder/status/1770440852717912117

to one NGO, international press reports documented at least 7 cases of rape against Palestinian prisoners and detainees.⁴⁸⁶

In early April, an Israeli doctor in the hospital in the detention facility Sde Teiman described in a letter the harsh conditions in which the detained Gazans are held. His letter stated 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 handcuffed⁴⁸⁷ (even before the war, 95% of prisoners were restrained when they received medical treatment)⁴⁸⁸. Another doctor reported the same and added that the detainees are naked except for the diapers. He believed that "even the medical treatment at the base amounted to torture".⁴⁸⁹ A medical source described the situation as "it's like a different world or a black hole. There's a disease incubator there".⁴⁹⁰ In mid-April Physicians for Human Rights Israel called to "Shut down the Sde Teiman Facility Now", stating that it reflects "a moral and professional low point".⁴⁹¹ A further investigation by CNN in May confirmed the aforementioned findings based on three Israeli whistleblowers who worked at the camp. It also added descriptions such as that "the air is filled with the smell of neglected wounds left to rot". Gazans were regularly beaten "out of revenge", while the Gazans were "stripped down of anything that resembles human beings".⁴⁹² A *New York Times* report in June provided additional similar evidence, adding details about the rape of male Gazan detainees.⁴⁹³ An Israeli medic said that he was ordered to perform medical procedures outside his area of expertise, and that he was ordered to perform these medical procedures without anesthesia.⁴⁹⁴ 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),⁴⁹⁵ but Israel began phasing out the camp in early June.⁴⁹⁶

The number of women detained in Gaza (and the West Bank) since Oct. 7 has been in the hundreds (140 in Gaza in mid-December⁴⁹⁷). 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.⁴⁹⁸ One Palestinian detained woman stated that "For the most of the interrogations, I and the majority of the detainees were repeatedly threatened with rape".⁴⁹⁹ Another Palestinian woman has spoken about the sexual, emotional and physical abuse she has

⁴⁸⁶ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6367/Killing,-torture,-and-injections-of-unknown-substances:-Intl.-community-must-act-on-Israeli-violations-of-Gaza-detainees> ; see also below.

⁴⁸⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-04/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9ac3-dd2b-ad9f-dadb900f0000>

⁴⁸⁸ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/health/article/14391915>

⁴⁸⁹ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-04-19/allegations-of-gaza-abuse/103692464>

⁴⁹⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-28/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-bbb6-dc1f-abef-ffb9de50000>

⁴⁹¹ <https://www.phr.org.il/en/shut-down-the-sde-teiman-facility-now/>

⁴⁹² <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/10/middleeast/israel-sde-teiman-detention-whistleblowers-intl-cmd/index.html>

⁴⁹³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/06/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-detention-base.html>

⁴⁹⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/10/middleeast/israel-sde-teiman-detention-whistleblowers-intl-cmd/index.html> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-10/ty-article/0000018f-622a-d9a0-a38f-ee2f1f8e0000>

⁴⁹⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-04/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9ac3-dd2b-ad9f-dadb900f0000>

⁴⁹⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/05/middleeast/israel-top-court-sde-teiman-hearing-intl/index.html> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-06-05/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-e1b1-db29-a3ef-edbb381c0000> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-06-11/ty-article/00000190-0719-da02-a1dc-ff5b23460000>

⁴⁹⁷ <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>

⁴⁹⁸ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/israelopt-un-experts-appalled-reported-human-rights-violations-against>

⁴⁹⁹ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6342/Hostages-of-Israeli-revenge-in-the-Gaza-Strip:-Testimonies-of-100-released-Palestinian-detainees-reveal-crimes-of-torture,-cruel-treatment> (p. 45).

experienced for over a month in which she was detained.⁵⁰⁰ Other women have said similar things.⁵⁰¹ In late March, an Israeli former general claimed that a US official accused the IDF of “systematically” abusing Palestinian women.⁵⁰² In late May, an NGO report described that women detainees were sometimes kept nude in front of male soldiers and were threatened with rape, as well as undergoing the same forms of torture that men detainees underwent.⁵⁰³

Ethnic cleansing

Ethnic cleansing is openly discussed in Israeli discourse, including by ministers in the ruling government. This includes the ministers of Finance,⁵⁰⁴ National Security (who also stated he would like to live in Gaza),⁵⁰⁵ Heritage (who also called to drop a nuclear bomb on Gaza),⁵⁰⁶ Agriculture (who claimed that another Nakba was ongoing),⁵⁰⁷ the former Minister of Information⁵⁰⁸ and a former Minister of Justice.⁵⁰⁹ Israel MPs have also participated in the discussion.⁵¹⁰ Other state officials have said similar things. The head of a local council, for example, proposed to send all Gazans to Lebanon, flatten the whole Strip so “it becomes an empty museum like Auschwitz”.⁵¹¹ Some IDF officers and soldiers fighting in Gaza support the same idea.⁵¹² A Israeli government plan proposal to repopulate all Gazans to the Sinai Peninsula (part of Egypt) has been leaked.⁵¹³ Israel has also attempted to get the US to pressure Egypt into accepting Gazan refugees,⁵¹⁴ and has attempted to convince several countries including Congo to accept Palestinian refugees.⁵¹⁵ Other locations members of Israel government suggested as potential resettlement locations include Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the European Union and Chile.⁵¹⁶ According to Israeli media, Chad and Rwanda have expressed interest to accept tens of thousands of Palestinians in exchange for generous financial

⁵⁰⁰ <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1762502752184467495>

⁵⁰¹ <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/by115igc0a>

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

⁵⁰² <https://www.ipost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-793420>

⁵⁰³ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6342/Hostages-of-Israeli-revenge-in-the-Gaza-Strip-Testimonies-of-100-released-Palestinian-detainees-reveal-crimes-of-torture,-cruel-treatment>

⁵⁰⁴ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-call-for-resettling-gazas-palestinians-building-settlements-in-strip/> ; <https://x.com/N12News/status/1798769743119167566>

⁵⁰⁵ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-call-for-resettling-gazas-palestinians-building-settlements-in-strip/> ; <https://www.kikar.co.il/%D7%94%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%90%D7%99%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%95%D7%AA/sdtn3> ; <https://x.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1798729352412319874>

⁵⁰⁶ https://twitter.com/Eliyahu_a/status/1772645094295830643 ; <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/596470/>

⁵⁰⁷ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-11-12/ty-article/israeli-security-cabinet-member-calls-north-gaza-evacuation-nakba-2023/0000018b-c2be-dea2-a9bf-d2be7b670000>

⁵⁰⁸ <https://www.hidabroot.org/article/1187840>

⁵⁰⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEU-dQW0IL4>

⁵¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/tzvisuccot/status/1754822778950148138> ; see also

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf>, paragraphs 138-141.

⁵¹¹ <https://www.ipost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-778367>

⁵¹² <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794113236708573451> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794826941209702699>

⁵¹³ <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%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/>

⁵¹⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/12/21/biden-netanyahu-dispute-palestinian-state/>

⁵¹⁵ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/israeli-officials-said-in-talks-with-congo-others-on-taking-in-gaza-emigrants/

⁵¹⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/01/04/gaza-displaced-civilians-resettlement-israel/>

support that included military support.⁵¹⁷ 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”.⁵¹⁸ In mid-February a local human rights organization revealed that Egypt was building a high-security area for the reception of Palestinian refugees,⁵¹⁹ and in late March an Egyptian source claimed Egypt was preparing for the entrance of 150,000 Palestinians during an Israeli invasion of Rafah.⁵²⁰ 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”.⁵²¹ According to estimates, the number of Palestinians who left to Egypt by April was 30-50 thousand.⁵²² 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”.⁵²³ In late April, Israel’s Minister of Finance described the upcoming battle in the southern Gaza Strip as against Amalek, and called for absolute destruction of the cities there.⁵²⁴

The absence of clear war plans,⁵²⁵ 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.⁵²⁶ Over 30 right-wing organizations have supported this goal in a late January conference.⁵²⁷ A total of 11 ministers and 15 MPs (of a total of 120) participated in the conference.⁵²⁸ Several IDF soldiers have stated their will to resettle Gaza while uniformed and within Gaza.⁵²⁹ In March, the commander of an armored battalion did the same during an interview with Israeli TV.⁵³⁰ A poll from December found that 58% of Israelis (likely Jews) believe that the entire population of Gaza should be transferred away from the Gaza Strip.⁵³¹ Other polls from January, February, March and April reveal that some 20-25% of Israeli Jews believe that Israel should resettle Gaza.⁵³² A poll from March-April revealed that 50% of Israeli Jews thought that Israel should govern the Gaza Strip after the war.⁵³³

⁵¹⁷ <https://www.zman.co.il/453910/popup/>

⁵¹⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-02-05/ty-article-live/0000018d-762a-dd6e-a98d-f62a9c200000?liveBlogItemId=310435701#310435701>

⁵¹⁹ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-egypt-building-buffer-zone-palestinian-refugees>

⁵²⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hk1144rkc> ; <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>

⁵²¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/mar/19/jared-kushner-gaza-waterfront-property-israel-negev>

⁵²² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-04-04/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-a379-d315-ab9f-aff98d4b0000>

⁵²³ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1777360030380986803>

⁵²⁴ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1785075803870404644> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-30/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-2e6c-d502-a5bf-eeeeeb50000>

⁵²⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/18/biden-israel-gaza-rafah-palestinians/>

⁵²⁶ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2023_q4/Article-9f47fed9563eb81027.htm ; <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-794770>

⁵²⁷ <https://twitter.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1746855797328433438> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/09/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-settlers.html>

⁵²⁸ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2024_q1/Article-7ce65d03aa05d81027.htm

⁵²⁹ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1746854844818681861> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1745907053426565605> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1781809245312180237> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1788897079642689855> ;

<https://x.com/abierkhatib/status/1793720981607071831> ; several images in this thread:

<https://x.com/YehudaShaul/status/1737112308672016760>

⁵³⁰ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/727102/> ; he was reprimanded as a result.

⁵³¹ <https://www.now14.co.il/%D7%A1%D7%A7%D7%A8-%D7%94%D7%A6%D7%99%D7%91%D7%95%D7%A8-%D7%AA%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%9A-%D7%91%D7%A4%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%95%D7%99-%D7%94%D7%A8%D7%A6%D7%95%D7%A2%D7%94-%D7%92%D7%9D-%D7%91%D7%9E%D7%97%D7%99/> ; a similar question in the

same poll had higher support. Also: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rvals5f00p>

⁵³² <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> ; <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/53666>

⁵³³ <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/05/30/israeli-views-of-the-israel-hamas-war/>

Anecdotal evidence from Gaza and Israeli society provides more indications: A video from late February presents an Israeli civilian tractor sowing fields within the Gaza Strip as a “victory photo”.⁵³⁴ In early March, Jewish activists were able to briefly enter the Gaza Strip in an attempt to build a settlement there.⁵³⁵ 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.⁵³⁶ 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.⁵³⁷ A former MP claimed on TV in June that “we [Israeli Jews] could not live in this land if even one such Islamo-Nazi remains in Gaza, and not before we return to Gaza and turn it into Hebrew Gaza”.⁵³⁸

Inside the Gaza Strip, IDF soldiers appear to have constructed “the first synagogue in Khan Younis”,⁵³⁹ another synagogue there,⁵⁴⁰ as well as inaugurated a Torah scroll in at least four occasions (Sheikh Radwan in Gaza City, the Islamic University in Gaza, Khan Younis, and the Netzarim Corridor).⁵⁴¹ One soldier filmed himself spray painting the Temple in Jerusalem on the ruins of a destroyed mosque in Gaza.⁵⁴² 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.⁵⁴³ 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.⁵⁴⁴ 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.⁵⁴⁵ Many of these initiatives, it seems, were relatively short-lived. In late March, it appears that soldiers recorded themselves reading the Scroll of Esther in al-Shifa hospital.⁵⁴⁶ Videos from April show that soldiers took over the Turkish Palestinian Friendship Hospital, turned it into a barracks and celebrated a large Passover feast (seder?) in it.⁵⁴⁷ A different unit took over a Gazan school, transforming it into its base.⁵⁴⁸ In May, a journalist showcased the first military synagogue in the area of Rafah,⁵⁴⁹ while soldiers from an IDF unit prepared a makeshift sign declaring a new settlement in the Gaza Strip.⁵⁵⁰

All the evidence I have seen indicates that Israel is systematically destroying Gaza to make it unlivable in the future. In the first week of fighting, Israel dropped 6,000 bombs on Gaza – over the annual total used by the US in Afghanistan.⁵⁵¹ 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. 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

⁵³⁴ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760758994350588388>

⁵³⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r11oner3a>; <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-settlers-gaza-outpost-erez-crossing/>

⁵³⁶ <https://twitter.com/VermimusM/status/1774080556701245486>

⁵³⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkXJwErm8DM>; also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqRzfb2oMaM>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68650815>; also <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-26/ty-article/premium/0000018f-15e8-da70-a7bf-7deb81b40000>

⁵³⁸ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1802435990251848148>

⁵³⁹ <https://twitter.com/yanivkub/status/1742189448006127715>

⁵⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1745979741931282775>

⁵⁴¹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1743588216630919271>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750793042850664750>; <https://twitter.com/KhalilAsslan/status/1753364384800252200>; <https://x.com/moshebs11/status/1766830282219372906>

⁵⁴² <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1756666882331988140>

⁵⁴³ <https://twitter.com/arixegal/status/1747704367145201666>

⁵⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1759534834710352030>

⁵⁴⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1753547113638604865>; also <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1765450350549487672>

⁵⁴⁶ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1771974813491360211>

⁵⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1778864079995568598>; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1784694240921989320>

⁵⁴⁸ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1785413134011838765>

⁵⁴⁹ <https://twitter.com/YakiAdamker/status/1787846143096828303>

⁵⁵⁰ https://twitter.com/T_Nachala/status/1786806755374084274

⁵⁵¹ <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>

billion.⁵⁵² 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).⁵⁵³ In mid May a UN official stated that rebuilding could cost around \$50 billion over two decades.⁵⁵⁴ The amount of debris created by the destruction of residential areas (estimates ranged between 26 and 37 million tons in April) will take many years to remove.⁵⁵⁵ A top UN demining official claimed that simply clearing the debris could take as much as 14 years.⁵⁵⁶ An expert on the warfare-related destruction pointed out that the case of Gaza 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.⁵⁵⁷

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.⁵⁵⁸ 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,⁵⁵⁹ as well as the fights against ISIS in Mosul (2016-7) and Raqqa (2017).⁵⁶⁰

Over 60 percent of Gaza’s housing units have been destroyed or damaged.⁵⁶¹ As of mid-January experts estimate based on satellite imagery that between 142,900 to 176,900 buildings have been damaged.⁵⁶² 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).⁵⁶³ By early June, the amount increased to 58.5%.⁵⁶⁴ Drone videos reveal the extent of the destruction.⁵⁶⁵ 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.⁵⁶⁶ Some of the destruction is purposeful, as indicated in videos by IDF troops.⁵⁶⁷ As a result of the war and

⁵⁵² <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542> ; https://twitter.com/NRC_MiddleEast/status/174134134311110950

⁵⁵³ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf> ; also the estimate of \$20 billion in mid-February: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/gaza-post-war-reconstruction-estimated-20-billion-un-trade-body-2024-02-15/>

⁵⁵⁴ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-05-02/rebuilding-gaza-to-cost-50-billion-over-two-decades-un-says>

⁵⁵⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-150>;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/26/gazas-37m-tonnes-of-bomb-filled-debris-could-take-14-years-to-clear-says-expert> ; 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>

⁵⁵⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/26/gazas-37m-tonnes-of-bomb-filled-debris-could-take-14-years-to-clear-says-expert> ; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1149051>

⁵⁵⁷ <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>

⁵⁵⁸ <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/>

⁵⁵⁹ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-bombs-destruction-death-toll-scope-419488c511f83c85baea22458472a796>

⁵⁶⁰ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/14/gaza-war-israel-civilian-deaths-urban-warfare-hamas/>

⁵⁶¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

⁵⁶² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2024/jan/30/how-war-destroyed-gazas-neighbourhoods-visual-investigation>

⁵⁶³ 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).

⁵⁶⁴ <https://www.conflict-damage.org/>, accessed June 17 (the number is updated to June 1).

⁵⁶⁵ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1777786701768708193>

⁵⁶⁶ <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>

⁵⁶⁷ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796232276818424251>

destruction, 89% of Gazan workers lost their jobs by December.⁵⁶⁸ As of April, all staff of at least one hospital have not been paid since October 7.⁵⁶⁹ According to estimates, the GDP of Gaza has decreased by some 80%.⁵⁷⁰

Israel has destroyed not only buildings whose connection to Hamas militants is weak or non-existent,⁵⁷¹ but also a long list of cultural institutions,⁵⁷² historical and archaeological sites,⁵⁷³ dozens of governmental buildings (including the parliament⁵⁷⁴ and the main courthouse)⁵⁷⁵, religious buildings (over 233 mosques and 3 churches⁵⁷⁶), 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),⁵⁷⁷ hospitals,⁵⁷⁸ educational facilities (88% of school buildings sustained some level of damage; 13 public libraries were destroyed or damaged),⁵⁷⁹ archives,⁵⁸⁰ and UN offices.⁵⁸¹ Already in early December, Israeli attacks destroyed or damaged more than 100 heritage sites, including buildings from Gaza's medieval, Byzantine and Roman periods⁵⁸² (by mid April the number rose to 195 such sites).⁵⁸³ 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 that claimed that some of those antiquities were taken to Israel and presented in the Knesset (the post was later deleted).⁵⁸⁴ An investigative report by an NGO followed a single unit's path within Gaza, raising serious concerns regarding the justification of the many explosions it was responsible for.⁵⁸⁵ 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.⁵⁸⁶ In this reality, even a simple shelter

⁵⁶⁸ <https://gisha.org/almost-89-of-gaza-residents-have-lost-their-jobs-heb/>; according to another report from late March, 74% of Gazas were unemployed: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf>

⁵⁶⁹ https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/11/surgeons_in_gaza

⁵⁷⁰ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148296>

⁵⁷¹ <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1790901748346867875>; https://x.com/JalalAK_joio/status/1797296916763418747

⁵⁷² E.g. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israeli-army-says-it-struck-islamic-university-of-gaza/3015542>

⁵⁷³ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-26/tv-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>

⁵⁷⁴ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542>

⁵⁷⁵ <https://www.newarab.com/news/israel-destroys-gaza-courthouse-dozens-govt-buildings>

⁵⁷⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

⁵⁷⁷ <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; example:

<https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1786005107986841626>

⁵⁷⁸ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760766861279391872>

⁵⁷⁹ <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>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

⁵⁸⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCNftkL7cx4>

⁵⁸¹ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771195504883339683>

⁵⁸² <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>

⁵⁸³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>

⁵⁸⁴ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240122-israel-army-displays-artefacts-stolen-from-gaza-in-the-knesset/>;

<https://twitter.com/EmekShavehHeb/status/1749030636529008651>

⁵⁸⁵ <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2024/04/29/weve-become-addicted-to-explosions-the-idf-unit-responsible-for-demolishing-homes-across-gaza>

⁵⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1744195835577921772>; also <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2024/04/29/weve-become-addicted-to-explosions-the-idf-unit-responsible-for-demolishing-homes-across-gaza>; and an interview with an IDF soldier who fought there: <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798462630736396472>

such as a tent is sold for more than \$800. Those who cannot afford such an expense improvise a shelter from simple materials.⁵⁸⁷ An alternative is to rent half destroyed and burnt apartments. One such apartment in Khan Younis cost \$330/month.⁵⁸⁸

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.⁵⁸⁹ Some 88% of all school buildings have sustained damage.⁵⁹⁰ 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.⁵⁹¹ Using an ATM or attempting to get access to one's money through money changers have high commissions (e.g. 17%).⁵⁹² At least 16 cemeteries have been desecrated by the IDF, often by bulldozing.⁵⁹³ One video shows a bulldozer driving within a cemetery,⁵⁹⁴ while another shows the results of such an operation, with corpses left scattered across the landscape.⁵⁹⁵ The IDF has also bulldozed burial sites at Nasser hospital.⁵⁹⁶ The IDF further bulldozed broad areas in the Gaza Strip.⁵⁹⁷ An online video depicts the torching of the Shujjaiya neighborhood in a military operation.⁵⁹⁸ Satellite images reveal the massive extent of destruction of Khan Younis.⁵⁹⁹ 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".⁶⁰⁰

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".⁶⁰¹ This buffer zone will take over 16% of the territory of the Gaza Strip.⁶⁰² 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 convention and a war crime".⁶⁰³ 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.⁶⁰⁴ In early March, its construction was completed,⁶⁰⁵ and it enables rapid movement and will be held by Israel for "at least another year" according to the IDF.⁶⁰⁶ At least 750 buildings have been destroyed to create a buffer zone on both sides of the road.⁶⁰⁷ In subsequent months, Israel built bases within the

⁵⁸⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-economy.html>

⁵⁸⁸ <https://x.com/liamibrahim21/status/1797521016702550496>

⁵⁸⁹ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf>

⁵⁹⁰ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

⁵⁹¹ <https://twitter.com/ryangrim/status/1774422433736393207>

⁵⁹² <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-economy.html>

⁵⁹³ <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>

⁵⁹⁴ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771125186370101561>

⁵⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1743386378606412188>

⁵⁹⁶ <https://news.sky.com/story/israel-bulldozed-mass-graves-at-gaza-hospital-sky-news-analysis-shows-13121638>

⁵⁹⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750443193575886945>

⁵⁹⁸ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1767698980127838474>

⁵⁹⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-14/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-3bab-db12-a9ef-fbfb627d0000>

⁶⁰⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/22/unicef-official-utter-annihilation-gaza>

⁶⁰¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1758376261628436523>

⁶⁰² <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-hamas-war-buffer-zone-explained-2a7347af> ;

<https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/135417/>

⁶⁰³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/widespread-destruction-israeli-defence-forces-civilian-infrastructure-gaza>

⁶⁰⁴ <https://twitter.com/YairWallach/status/1759572148559962424>

⁶⁰⁵ <https://news.sky.com/story/israel-completes-construction-of-road-which-cuts-across-gaza-strip-13089556>

⁶⁰⁶ 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>

⁶⁰⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/17/gaza-israel-netzarim-corridor-war-hamas/>

Gaza Strip by taking over civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and schools, as well as watchtowers and outposts.⁶⁰⁸

The destruction in Gaza has resulted in the displacement of some 75 percent of Gaza's population.⁶⁰⁹ An investigation of Israel's evacuation orders to Gazans revealed numerous unclarities and inconsistencies within the IDF's official orders.⁶¹⁰ This included, for example, five different geographical definitions of the al-Mawasi "safe zone", which was itself bombed and invaded by IDF ground troops.⁶¹¹ Other supposed "safe zones" were not safe. An NBC investigation examined seven airstrikes that took place in areas the IDF declared as safe, killing civilians.⁶¹² Some of the evacuation orders were given online during periods of full communication outages.⁶¹³ Already by early February, 67% of the Gaza Strip's area was under evacuation orders.⁶¹⁴ As a result of these repeated orders and the general overcrowdedness of the Strip, many Palestinians have been displaced several times.⁶¹⁵

Hostages

Within this context, the Israeli government has refrained from making serious moves to release the 120+ Israeli hostages that remain in Gaza.⁶¹⁶ To date, seven hostages out of some 250 taken on October 7 have been released by military operations.⁶¹⁷ The military operation that released two of them in February also killed 74 Gazans (or about 100), mostly civilians.⁶¹⁸ Another military operation that freed four hostages in June also killed 274 Gazans, many of which were women and children, and wounded hundreds.⁶¹⁹ Three other Israeli hostages were killed by IDF forces within Gaza despite

⁶⁰⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/17/gaza-israel-netzarim-corridor-war-hamas/>; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-04-18/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-f03c-d240-a19f-f43f6da50000>; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1795129920902873557>; <https://inews.co.uk/news/world/israel-gaza-superhighway-watchtower-post-war-plans-3090909>

⁶⁰⁹ <https://twitter.com/UNHumanRights/status/1742863747683668418>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

⁶¹⁰ For example: <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/01/26/middleeast/hala-khreis-white-flag-shooting-gaza-cmd-intl/index.html>; <https://x.com/marcoweniones/status/1795063041513402446>

⁶¹¹ <https://gaza.forensic-architecture.org/displacement>; https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Humanitarian-Violence_Report_FA.pdf; https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Inhumane-Zones-Report-Forensic-Architecture_WEBSITE.pdf; also <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf>, paragraph 96.

⁶¹² <https://twitter.com/NBCNightlyNews/status/1784001112124932600>

⁶¹³ https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Humanitarian-Violence_Report_FA.pdf (e.g. p. 28)

⁶¹⁴ https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/israel-s-evacuation-covers-67-of-gaza-leaves-palestinians-crammed-124020600748_1.html

⁶¹⁵ <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/>; <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/israel-ried-starve-gaza-palestine>; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/135043/>; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/135923/>

⁶¹⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

⁶¹⁷ <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-ffcdcbdc0000>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/11/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-hostages-rescued.html>

⁶¹⁸ <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>

⁶¹⁹ <https://x.com/ofercass/status/1799425838397395195>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-rescues-four-hostages-gaza-palestinians-say-50-dead-israeli-assault-2024-06-08/>; <https://www.haaretz.com/news/politics/2024-06-08/ty-article/0000018f-f7e1-d084-abef-f7e94fff0000>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-pounds-central-gaza-palestinian-death-toll-hostage-rescue-raid-rises-274-2024-06-09/>; also <https://www.972mag.com/nuseirat-camp-israeli-hostages-massacre-gaza/>

waving white flags and calling for help.⁶²⁰ Another was killed during an attempted rescue operation.⁶²¹ Three others were supposedly killed by gas that the IDF flooded the tunnels with.⁶²² 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.⁶²³ In late March a senior journalist specializing in military intelligence shared an estimate that only 60-70 of the hostages are still alive.⁶²⁴ US intelligence assessments seem to suggest a similar number.⁶²⁵ The number appears to have decreased as of late May.⁶²⁶

On the other hand, a temporary ceasefire has resulted in the release of 105 hostages.⁶²⁷ 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.⁶²⁸ 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".⁶²⁹ 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.⁶³⁰ 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.⁶³¹ Similar feelings have been expressed within Israel's security apparatus.⁶³² Several government members scorned the hostages' family members.⁶³³ 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.⁶³⁴ 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.⁶³⁵ A former spokesperson for the families of the hostages agreed that Israel's Prime Minister was preventing a deal for personal political reasons.⁶³⁶ Several domestic and foreign sources – including from Qatar – said similar things.⁶³⁷ In May, coalition MPs ramped up their explicit attacks against the families of hostages,⁶³⁸ while police and government supporters used violence against them in the streets.⁶³⁹ In late May, an aide to the Israeli Prime Minister said that Israel will not end the war for a deal to free

⁶²⁰ <https://www.ft.com/content/2e299603-2fed-4855-9694-9801008c48dc>

⁶²¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjzpo117da>

⁶²² <https://twitter.com/tomashinyu3/status/1747651031737979233> ; <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-said-their-sons-were-murdered-by-hamas-these-mothers-werent-convinced-15461312>

⁶²³ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/post/revital-host-idf> ; with a high degree of probability also these four hostages:

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/b1e4mwjca> . See also: <https://ynet.co.il/news/article/ry7qkjbic>

⁶²⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/yossimelman/2024-03-26/ty-article/0000018e-7564-d787-a5de-75e616c60000>

⁶²⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/hamas-may-not-have-enough-living-hostages-for-peace-deal-61606c66>

⁶²⁶ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-05-26/ty-article/premium/rafah-operation-advances-as-israel-faces-added-pressure-by-icj-ruling-to-end-the-war/0000018f-b179-dfc6-a3ef-b57daa210000> (less than 64 hostages remain alive)

⁶²⁷ <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2023/12/world/hostage-israel-hamas-deal-dg/>

⁶²⁸ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-1061467>

⁶²⁹ https://twitter.com/Bar_ShemUr/status/1757852992215056477

⁶³⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bikutcon6>

⁶³¹ <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/politics/security/sqpwv-903972705/>

⁶³² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/yossimelman/2024-03-26/ty-article/0000018e-7564-d787-a5de-75e616c60000>

⁶³³ <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>

⁶³⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/biebbohyc>

⁶³⁵ https://twitter.com/Uvda_tweet/status/1778496650798833931

⁶³⁶ <https://www.zman.co.il/481871/>

⁶³⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-14/ty-article/premium/0000018e-de16-deb6-afee-ded71d110000> ;

<https://twitter.com/selftitled/status/1784272179817041951> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra13937291> ;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hyw3njir0>

⁶³⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hko00u9uma>

⁶³⁹ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/local/article/15767757> ; <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/local/article/15775483>

all hostages, and verbally attacked family members of the hostages who visited him.⁶⁴⁰ In June, a senior Israeli politician and former member of the war cabinet stated that the Prime Minister rejected a deal for political reasons.⁶⁴¹

The West Bank

The West Bank has received less attention in media and public discourse. Israel has long failed to enforce the law on its Jewish settlers. For example, out of more than 1,600 cases of settler violence between 2005 and 2023, only 3% ended in a conviction.⁶⁴² The situation there has deteriorated rapidly since the beginning of the war. At least 18 herding/Bedouin Palestinian settlements there have been abandoned after attacks by Israeli Jewish settlers (968 recorded since October 7).⁶⁴³ About 4,000 Palestinians have been displaced in the West Bank in 2023,⁶⁴⁴ and 2,155 have been displaced since October 7 because of the destruction of their homes.⁶⁴⁵ Jewish settlers have killed several Palestinians, and have wounded, terrorized and abused others.⁶⁴⁶ Settlers conducted periodic larger rampages against Palestinian villages as well.⁶⁴⁷ When a 72 year old Jewish Israeli media photographer was caught by these settlers during such a pogrom they beat him up, stole his belongings and burned some of them, and broke his elbow and a finger. The photographer stated that IDF soldiers accompanied the settlers and refrained from helping him despite his pleas.⁶⁴⁸ Many of the settlers recruited for wartime territorial defense units now operate in uniform with IDF backing, and attack and abuse Palestinians in this context.⁶⁴⁹ In late May the IDF announced it would provide rifles to settlers who are not part of the territorial defense units.⁶⁵⁰

A total of 521 Palestinians have been killed between October 7 and the time of writing.⁶⁵¹ 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.⁶⁵² Since October 7, 5,200 Palestinians have been injured in the West Bank.⁶⁵³ A *Wall Street Journal* investigative report found that after Oct. 7 Israeli settlers have rapidly built both

⁶⁴⁰ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-wont-end-war-for-deal-to-free-all-hostages-pms-aide-said-to-tell-families/> ;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sj118wnin0> ; <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/Article-1103425>

⁶⁴¹ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/760712/>

⁶⁴² <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/magazine/israel-west-bank-settler-violence-impunity.html>

⁶⁴³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-178-west-bank> ;

<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/> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-30/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018f-1068-d97f-abcf-fce987090000> (18)

⁶⁴⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/about-4000-palestinians-displaced-west-bank-2023>

⁶⁴⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-178-west-bank>

⁶⁴⁶ 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> ;

<https://twitter.com/masafering/status/1786353369658839199> ; <https://x.com/Issaamro/status/1796595059259044284> ;

<https://x.com/masafering/status/1802412746572435879>

⁶⁴⁷ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-hamas-west-bank-war-f85997a95d5579159ffe83d2c0cb988e> ;

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

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

⁶⁴⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra13889978>

⁶⁴⁹ <https://x.com/btselem/status/1793384580046565608> ; <https://x.com/nurityohanan/status/1798226333186871622> ;

<https://x.com/QudsNen/status/1801295354840629385>

⁶⁵⁰ <https://x.com/tzvisuccot/status/1796110479816818955>

⁶⁵¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-178-west-bank>

⁶⁵² <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1754079208643420204>

⁶⁵³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-178-west-bank>

illegal roads and settlements in the West Bank. The Israeli government refused to review the evidence the newspaper supplied.⁶⁵⁴ In late March the IDF was still blocking the entrances to West Bank villages, forcing residents to make long detours to enter or leave.⁶⁵⁵ 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.⁶⁵⁶ In some cases, Israel has also prevented Palestinians from working their agricultural lands for many months.⁶⁵⁷

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,⁶⁵⁸ including the single largest land seizure since at least 1993.⁶⁵⁹ A *New York Times* investigative report revealed a document in which the most senior general in command of the West Bank admitted in March that there was a sharp increase in illegal Jewish settlement building, and that in parallel that was de facto no regulation on this illegal building. Both sharply contrasted with Palestinian building, which was heavily regulated.⁶⁶⁰ In May, Israel's Minister of Defense cancelled a law that was originally part of the 2005 disengagement plan and that prohibited settlements in four locations.⁶⁶¹

Evidence for the killing of Palestinians

Several videos depict the killing of unarmed and unthreatening Palestinians.⁶⁶² 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.⁶⁶³ 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.⁶⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁶⁵ Two Palestinian herders were killed by settlers when IDF soldiers were present but did not get involved.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁵⁴ <https://www.wsi.com/video/series/in-depth-features/visual-evidence-shows-illegal-settler-construction-in-west-bank-surgung/BF11225B-45A7-430A-A39C-48336B5B8286>

⁶⁵⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-19/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-50c4-dca4-ad8e-f4fe5f020000>

⁶⁵⁶ <https://news.sky.com/story/the-war-may-be-in-gaza-but-its-effects-can-mean-starvation-in-the-west-bank-13101929>

⁶⁵⁷ <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/2024-05-25/ty-article/.premium/distance-requirements-and-barriers-how-palestinians-are-being-expelled-from-their-land/0000018f-acf8-df13-a3af-bcfea1270000>

⁶⁵⁸ <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>

⁶⁵⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/22/israel-largest-west-bank-settlement-blinken-visit/>

⁶⁶⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/magazine/israel-west-bank-settler-violence-impunity.html>;

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/05/16/magazine/fox-document-march-24-redacted.html> ;

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

⁶⁶¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkfau7iq0> (immediate implications were symbolic as a different directive temporarily prevented

civilian access to the area). For one of the laws: <https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/legalinfo/disengagement-plan/he/%D7%A6%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%A1%202137%20-%D7%A6%D7%95%D7%91%D7%93%D7%91%D7%A8%20%D7%91%D7%99%D7%98%D7%95%D7%9C%20%D7%97%D7%95%D7%A7%20%D7%94%D7%94%D7%AA%D7%A0%D7%AA%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%AA%20%D7%91%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%97%D7%91%20%D7%97%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%A9.pdf>

⁶⁶² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1746987605034447294> ; https://twitter.com/AJA_Palestine/status/1781371375623536907 ; also

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/twilight-zone/2024-04-20/ty-article-magazine/.premium/a-palestinian-is-shot-dead-by-an-israeli-sniper-for-daring-to-go-up-on-his-roof/0000018e-f9a5-d6a0-a9ef-f9bd171b0000>

⁶⁶³ <https://twitter.com/Kahlissee/status/1767976353532383504> ; <https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1767860298432528673> ;

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

⁶⁶⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-forces-kill-3-gunmen-west-bank-hospital-army-says-2024-01-30/>

⁶⁶⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hym4dpy0t> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hk9p5nact> ;

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

⁶⁶⁶ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/133998/>

Abuse, humiliation and detainment of Palestinians

Multiple videos present Israeli troops abusing and humiliating Palestinians,⁶⁶⁷ hitting or firing at them,⁶⁶⁸ parading them half-naked in the streets,⁶⁶⁹ destroying their property⁶⁷⁰ or public infrastructure,⁶⁷¹ blocking roads,⁶⁷² defacing Palestinian symbols,⁶⁷³ and calling for another Nakba.⁶⁷⁴ One soldier shared an image in which he claimed to have stolen a bag full of money notes.⁶⁷⁵ Another shows a soldier celebrating his birthday(?) with balloons while a handcuffed and blindfolded Palestinian is lying on the ground behind him.⁶⁷⁶ 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.⁶⁷⁷ As in Gaza, here too there are video clips humiliating and de-humanizing Palestinians,⁶⁷⁸ describing them as Amalek,⁶⁷⁹ as well as images of soldiers posing with lingerie inside Palestinian houses they raid.⁶⁸⁰ There are several video clips of settler youths confronting and attacking Palestinians,⁶⁸¹ as well as settlers dressed up as soldiers who detain Palestinians, including on their own lands.⁶⁸² Yet other videos show settlers stealing Palestinian property,⁶⁸³ or soldiers who do not intervene when settlers harm Palestinian civilians and their property.⁶⁸⁴ A deputy mayor of the large Israeli city of Be'er Sheva uploaded content of his own reserve military service, complete with blindfolded and handcuffed Palestinians and revenge content.⁶⁸⁵

More Palestinians, including children,⁶⁸⁶ 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.⁶⁸⁷ Until late May, almost 5,000 people were arrested in the West Bank (the number does not include people arrested and released before

⁶⁶⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/174144511833322937> ; <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/1770529772885483666> ; <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1770320641826169263> ; <https://twitter.com/adinitay/status/1771990979333026009> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1780354741882474980> ; <https://twitter.com/adinitay/status/1781214747104252184> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1781397024417448055> ; <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1783507450643063185> ; <https://twitter.com/ofercass/status/1785416217152344434> ; <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1791485421903401141> ; https://x.com/brown_johnbrown/status/1792560897732341961 ; <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1793287354372825172> ; <https://x.com/LensVeritatis/status/1793454169741033661>

⁶⁶⁸ <https://twitter.com/AdameMedia/status/1761508331598848224> ; <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1781945504240214016> ;

⁶⁶⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1787112612880105776>

⁶⁷⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1743038305581593033> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1756688401233817855> ; <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1776551587885801759> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1781677858953285846> ; <https://x.com/Mistaclim/status/1801853273114116104>

⁶⁷¹ <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1751125745701671025>

⁶⁷² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1782135295204262065>

⁶⁷³ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1768010284860416327>

⁶⁷⁴ <https://x.com/btselem/status/1793384580046565608>

⁶⁷⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1756695309239939117>

⁶⁷⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1758619734809928130>

⁶⁷⁷ <https://twitter.com/TameeOliveFern/status/1752615765092815206>

⁶⁷⁸ <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> ;

⁶⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1790921496421937522>

⁶⁸⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1782837821432082700>

⁶⁸¹ <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?) ; <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1785895596198400359> ; <https://twitter.com/Issaamro/status/1790820035201466412>

⁶⁸² <https://twitter.com/masafering/status/1769453241929011501>

⁶⁸³ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1753732272816029757> ; <https://x.com/Mistaclim/status/1794071598372172056>

⁶⁸⁴ https://twitter.com/YesH_Din/status/1779501559379849229

⁶⁸⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-20/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-9268-d212-abcfd66d978d0000>

⁶⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1775555921151693151>

⁶⁸⁷ <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/>

they were brought in front of a judge).⁶⁸⁸ At that moment, Israel held under arrest or detention (i.e. before their conviction) 7,016 people, of which 4,299 (over 60%) were held without a trial or an indictment (the numbers do not include Gazans).⁶⁸⁹

Many descriptions of released detainees refer to constant abuse by their prison staff.⁶⁹⁰ One said that daily, since Oct. 7 their guards required 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.⁶⁹¹ 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.⁶⁹² Online social media content includes more evidence.⁶⁹³ A senior Palestinian politician, the Speaker of the Legislative Council, was arrested in October. When he was released in June, he recounted some of his experiences – including a prisoner that was allegedly killed because he asked whether there was a ceasefire in Gaza, and another who was killed because he asked the Israeli prison staff not to insult his parents.⁶⁹⁴

The media, propaganda and the war (disclaimer)⁶⁹⁵

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. States and other actors in the 21st century commonly employ propaganda. The propaganda of the Israeli state is often called hasbara (lit. “explaining”).⁶⁹⁶

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.⁶⁹⁷ 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.⁶⁹⁸ 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

⁶⁸⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-05-28/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018f-beff-d0b7-abdf-feff4aa90000> ; according to the Palestinian government, the number was close to 9,000: <https://cda.gov.ps/index.php/en/51-slider-en/17065-on-the-233rd-day-of-genocide-brief-on-detention-campaigns-carried-out-in-the-west-bank-since-october-7-until-may-26-2025>

⁶⁸⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-05-28/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018f-beff-d0b7-abdf-feff4aa90000>

⁶⁹⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/2023-12-30/ty-article/0000018c-b51e-d45c-a98e-bf5e7a340000> ;

<https://twitter.com/RZabaneh/status/1784223150156181904>

⁶⁹¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-c6e5-d6c4-ab8d-e7f561840000>

⁶⁹² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/twilightzone/2024-03-22/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-62b4-d541-a78e-ffff79470000>

⁶⁹³ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761463527489900685> ; <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1801267126956618150>

⁶⁹⁴ <https://x.com/QudsNen/status/1801743540436771252> ; <https://x.com/Palestinecapti1/status/1801781895413555571>

⁶⁹⁵ 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.

⁶⁹⁶

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>

⁶⁹⁷ <https://lib.civics.cet.ac.il/pages/item.asp?item=9260&kwd=2079>

⁶⁹⁸ <https://lib.civics.cet.ac.il/pages/item.asp?item=9260&kwd=2079>

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.⁶⁹⁹ 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.⁷⁰⁰ Israel is unique among self-defined western democracies in that it has a military censorship (see also below), which requires by law that any article about security issues must be first submitted to it.⁷⁰¹ When the censor intervenes in an article, the media outlet cannot convey that information to readers (for example by blacklining excised content).⁷⁰² Israel’s Prime Minister has pressured the chief censor of the IDF to intervene in additional cases, including cases without a security justification.⁷⁰³ In a similar case, a website without formal affiliation that was created by the Israeli Ministry of Hasbara and aimed at international consumption had been blocked from access within Israel.⁷⁰⁴

The state of Israel has been buying positive coverage in international media since 2018, claiming that many other countries have been doing the same.⁷⁰⁵ A long list of local politicians and government offices have been doing the same in national media.⁷⁰⁶ Government offices have sometimes used contracts that allow them to veto the content of the positive coverage that they had bought.⁷⁰⁷ 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.⁷⁰⁸ 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).⁷⁰⁹ The Israeli government had worked with hundreds of these organizations and likely maintains these connections.⁷¹⁰ Israel’s Diaspora Affairs Ministry, for example, oversees several firms that are supposed to carry out such operations to avoid entangling Israel in a diplomatic crisis.⁷¹¹ In January 2024, Israel acquired a technological system for mass influence that can create content suitable for online influence

⁶⁹⁹ <https://firstdraftnews.org/long-form-article/understanding-information-disorder/>

⁷⁰⁰ <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/07/gaza-israel-netanyahu-propaganda-lies-palestinians/>

⁷⁰¹ See for example: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2022-07-26/ty-article-opinion/00000182-39f9-d145-a3df-7dfb21db0000>

⁷⁰² <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/134881/>; but see also: <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2024-05-29/ty-article-opinion/.premium/reason-for-detention/0000018f-c0d3-dade-edef-ecfb884f0000>

⁷⁰³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-11-29/ty-article/.highlight/0000018c-1adf-d4e4-a1df-3edf52340000>

⁷⁰⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-04-02/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018e-9ef0-d9c2-afbe-bef6abb00000> ; <https://saturday-october-seven.com/>

⁷⁰⁵ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/281581>

⁷⁰⁶ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/281581> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/268428> ; many examples in <https://shakuf.co.il/books/critical-reading.html>

⁷⁰⁷ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/281581>

⁷⁰⁸ <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/>

⁷⁰⁹ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/272146>

⁷¹⁰ <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=AOvVaw2FYnze1NfDxOLuPUg-2rX (p. 8).

⁷¹¹ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/security-aviation/2024-06-05/ty-article-magazine/.premium/israel-secretly-targeted-american-lawmakers-with-gaza-war-influence-campaign/0000018f-e7c8-d11f-a5cf-e7cb62af0000>

operations and began using it.⁷¹² In addition to state-led efforts, several start-up companies have attempted to influence discourse on their own both before and during the war.⁷¹³

Outside Israel, many established media outlets whitewash Israel using different means and methods. A former media worker in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation recounted how any reporting on Palestine faced major difficulties, including the cancellation of interviews, allowing the repetition of verifiably false pro-Israel claims on air, refusing to have discussions about difficult issues from Israel's perspective (e.g. whether a genocide might be happening), not providing key context to current events (e.g. the situation pre-Oct. 7), editing out controversial material (e.g. references to genocide and starvation), adding disclaimers about the un-verifiable nature of even personal statements (e.g. the deaths of interviewees' extended family members), removal of names and contact information of Palestinian speakers from internal databases, and ignoring genocidal statements by Israeli officials.⁷¹⁴ This was at least partially related to complaint campaigns by right-wing lobby groups, which produced a chilling effect.⁷¹⁵ Some of the influence on media comes from powerful business elites. A group of these elites discussed a plan to spend some \$50 million on a media campaign that was supposed to frame Hamas as a terrorist organization among Americans.⁷¹⁶

Following a pattern from earlier wars in Gaza,⁷¹⁷ the current war has been enabled and facilitated by massive media efforts⁷¹⁸ to shape discourse in Israel as well as in the West – in countries such as the United States, Canada,⁷¹⁹ the United Kingdom and Germany⁷²⁰. 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”.⁷²¹ 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.⁷²² 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.⁷²³ 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.⁷²⁴ A different review found that in less than two weeks, Israel targeted audiences in Western Europe in

⁷¹² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-01-16/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-e8c1-d765-ab9d-f8fd29800000>

⁷¹³ <https://www.israelhayom.com/opinions/can-ai-help-hasbara/>; <https://wordsofiron.com/>;

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

⁷¹⁴ <https://breachmedia.ca/cbc-whitewashed-israels-crimes-gaza-firsthand/>

⁷¹⁵ <https://breachmedia.ca/cbc-whitewashed-israels-crimes-gaza-firsthand/>

⁷¹⁶ <https://www.semafor.com/article/11/09/2023/billionaires-discuss-50-million-anti-hamas-media-blitz>

⁷¹⁷ Amer, “War Reporting in the International Press: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Gaza War of 2008-2009”, Ph.D Dissertation (Hamburg, 2015).

⁷¹⁸ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/israel-social-media-twitter-messaging-david-saranga-1234874381/>

⁷¹⁹ <https://breachmedia.ca/cbc-whitewashed-israels-crimes-gaza-firsthand/>

⁷²⁰ <https://adamtooze.substack.com/p/chartbook-271-reasons-of-state-memory>

⁷²¹ <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/07/gaza-israel-netanyahu-propaganda-lies-palestinians/>; also <https://newyorkwarcrimes.com/a-continuous-series-of-insults-to-our-understanding>

⁷²² <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/03/11/israel-gaza-hamas-netanyahu-warfare-misinformation/>

⁷²³ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/israel-social-media-twitter-messaging-david-saranga-1234874381/>

⁷²⁴ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israel-social-media-opinion-hamas-war/>

particular with some 88 ads, spending \$7.1 million to reach nearly a billion impressions.⁷²⁵ 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.⁷²⁶ In the first month of the war, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' digital team estimated they had reached 2 billion people.⁷²⁷ 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.⁷²⁸ An Israeli NGO revealed in a report that Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs ran a \$2M pro-Israel covert campaign 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).⁷²⁹

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.⁷³⁰ Most Israeli media chose not to inform the public that these stories had been refuted.⁷³¹ 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."⁷³² 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.⁷³³ The IDF accepted and claimed to have verified evidence of beheaded babies, later found out to be false.⁷³⁴ 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.⁷³⁵ Israeli officials such as Israel's Minister of Economy continued to repeat these falsified stories in international interviews at least as late as April.⁷³⁶

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.⁷³⁷ Other stories during the war, such as the Israeli claim that the central Hamas bunker is

⁷²⁵ <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/>

⁷²⁶ <https://www.eurogamer.net/rovio-blocks-disturbing-pro-israel-ad-found-in-angry-birds-and-other-games>

⁷²⁷ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/israel-social-media-twitter-messaging-david-saranga-1234874381/>

⁷²⁸ <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/12/06/israel-palestinian-advocacy-groups-social-media-spending-00130118>

⁷²⁹ <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 ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/technology/israel-campaign-gaza-social-media.html>

⁷³⁰ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-sexual-violence-zaka-ca7905bf9520b1e646f86d72cdf03244>

⁷³¹ 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

⁷³² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rq5hTirpL9s>

⁷³³ <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-b5fbc24f0000>

⁷³⁴ <https://twitter.com/i/broadcasts/1MYGNorgjLw> ; <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/07/gaza-israel-netanyahu-propaganda-lies-palestinians/>

⁷³⁵ <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).

⁷³⁶ <https://twitter.com/waleedshahid/status/1775934807165272158>

⁷³⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skt8i03rt> ; <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 . For a good critical take of the state of the evidence regarding the rape cases from Oct. 7 see: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-04-18/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-edb5-dbb3-a3bf-fdfd6e0d0000> and <https://www.thetimes.com/magazines/the-times->

located under al-Shifa hospital, were found to be false (see also the discussion of the flour massacre above).⁷³⁸

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.⁷³⁹ When Amnesty International claimed war crimes were conducted by both sides in late October, Israel attacked it as antisemitic.⁷⁴⁰ 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).⁷⁴¹ Greta was subsequently removed from the Ministry of Education’s materials in Israel.⁷⁴² Supporters of a ceasefire in Gaza in November were smeared as “pro-Hamas” or “pro-Palestinians” in both Israel and the US.⁷⁴³ Israeli officials accused photographers who worked for 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.⁷⁴⁴ 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.⁷⁴⁵

When the ICC prosecutor Karim Khan decided to announce his intention to seek arrest warrants for Israel’s Prime Minister and Secretary of Defense in May, Israel’s Prime Minister described Khan as taking his place “among the great antisemites in modern times” and compared him to judges in Nazi Germany who denied Jews basic rights and enabled the Holocaust, while his decision was “a moral outrage of historic proportions”.⁷⁴⁶ To place this harsh criticism in context, Khan was Israel’s preferred candidate for the position back in 2021.⁷⁴⁷ Israel’s Prime Minister also described the issue of warrants as “an antisemitic hate crime”.⁷⁴⁸ A joint investigative report by the *Guardian* and *+972 Magazine/Local Call* found that Israel conducted a long covert operation against the ICC in attempt

[magazine/article/israel-hamas-rape-investigation-evidence-october-7-6kzphszsj](https://www.972mag.com/ihra-antisemitism-israel-inversion-projection/) . On antisemitism see also:

<https://www.972mag.com/ihra-antisemitism-israel-inversion-projection/>

⁷³⁸ <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/>

⁷³⁹ <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/>

⁷⁴⁰ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israel-calls-amnesty-international-antisemitic-and-biased-after-it-criticized-war-crimes-by-all-parties/>

⁷⁴¹ <https://www.dw.com/en/greta-thunberg-faces-backlash-for-pro-palestinian-post/a-67172344>

⁷⁴² <https://www.ynet.co.il/environment-science/article/b1uzeagf6>

⁷⁴³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skttx811ba> ; <https://theintercept.com/2023/11/09/republican-debate-hamas-gaza-ceasefire/>

⁷⁴⁴ https://www.lemonde.fr/en/les-decodeurs/article/2023/11/11/photojournalists-embedded-with-hamas-on-october-7-heavy-but-unsustained-israeli-accusations_6247085_8.html ; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-photographers-attack-200be1ba47361f1c1fc113cdaeb65d04>

⁷⁴⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/12/21/metasp-broken-promises/systemic-censorship-palestine-content-instagram-and> ; and for context: <https://www.972mag.com/meta-arabic-palestine-censorship/> . For more on Meta’s internal censorship of any support for or solidarity with Palestinians: <https://theintercept.com/2024/05/22/whatsapp-security-vulnerability-meta-israel-palestine/> .

On Israel’s Cyber Unit’s work with social media companies to censor content see: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10292> ; on the Biden admin working with social media companies see also: <https://www.kenklippenstein.com/p/biden-admin-working-with-social-media>

⁷⁴⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8O2iOG9qQUM> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cw4490z75v3o> ; also

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-absurd-icc-bid-to-arrest-israeli-leaders-is-the-new-antisemitism/>

⁷⁴⁷ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/uks-karim-khan-elected-next-icc-prosecutor-will-replace-controversial-bensouda/>

⁷⁴⁸ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-04-30/ty-article/.premium/netanyahu-icc-arrest-warrants-against-israeli-leaders-would-be-antisemitic-hate-crime/0000018f-3037-d0b5-a59f-31f78a070000>

to sway its officials and Khan's predecessor from investigating Israel's war crimes and issuing arrest warrants to Israeli officials.⁷⁴⁹ Some of the details were known to an Israeli journalist in 2022, but as he worked on the story he was threatened by two senior officials in Israel's military apparatus, and did not proceed with publishing those details.⁷⁵⁰

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,⁷⁵¹ and hindering investigations of atrocities within the Strip such as the "flour massacre".⁷⁵² 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.⁷⁵³ CNN, for example, has admitted that it runs all its Gaza coverage through its Jerusalem bureau, itself monitored by the censor.⁷⁵⁴ 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.⁷⁵⁵ Already in December, Israeli researchers declared that the media was becoming a propaganda arm of the government.⁷⁵⁶ In 2023, the Israeli censors prevented the publication of 613 articles (almost four times as many as in 2022) and intervened in the text of 2,703 articles (almost three times as many in 2022).⁷⁵⁷ In total, the censors intervened in 31% of the articles sent to it.⁷⁵⁸ In late May, Israel seized the equipment of the Associated Press that was putting out a live video feed of Gaza, and returned it only as a result of American pressure.⁷⁵⁹ In June, after the successful IDF operation to release four Israeli hostages, an anchor on Israeli TV acknowledged that they "cannot show" a video clip of the results of the operation in the Nuseriat refugee camp, in which the IDF killed some 274 Gazans and injured hundreds more.⁷⁶⁰

Rallying the Israeli public around the war

⁷⁴⁹ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/%d7%97%d7%a9%d7%99%d7%a4%d7%94-%d7%94%d7%9e%d7%9c%d7%97%d7%9e%d7%94-%d7%94%d7%9e%d7%9c%d7%95%d7%9b%d7%9c%d7%9b%d7%aa-%d7%a9%d7%9c-%d7%99%d7%a9%d7%a8%d7%90%d7%9c-%d7%a0%d7%92%d7%93-%d7%91%d7%99%d7%aa/> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/28/israeli-spy-chief-icc-prosecutor-war-crimes-inquiry>

⁷⁵⁰ https://www.mako.co.il/news-columns/2024_q2/Article-6736c6e7f3ebf81027.htm

⁷⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/FPAIsPal/status/1777599364568875206> ; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-04-08/ty-article/premium/foreign-press-association-calls-on-israel-to-lift-ban-on-independent-press-in-gaza/0000018e-be21-d92b-adaf-fe6513ea0000>

⁷⁵² <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/17/opinion/gaza-journalists-censorship-israel.html>

⁷⁵³ <https://theintercept.com/2023/12/23/israel-military-idf-media-censor/>

⁷⁵⁴ <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/>

⁷⁵⁵ <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>

⁷⁵⁶ <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>

⁷⁵⁷ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/134881/>

⁷⁵⁸ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/134881/>

⁷⁵⁹ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-05-21/ty-article/israeli-officials-seize-ap-equipment-halt-gaza-live-broadcast-citing-al-jazeera-law/0000018f-9b4e-dce9-a1cf-ffce461c0000>

⁷⁶⁰ <https://x.com/Morpheus1099/status/1799407973791645979> ; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-pounds-central-gaza-palestinian-death-toll-hostage-rescue-raid-rises-274-2024-06-09/> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jun/09/like-the-horrors-of-judgment-day-palestinians-on-israels-hostage-rescue>

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.⁷⁶¹ 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,⁷⁶² 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".⁷⁶³ In another demonstration the police prohibited reading the names of dead Gazans and confiscated both the microphone and the pages with the list of their names.⁷⁶⁴ In April, the police showed up in a 75 year-old protestor's home and beat him to prevent him from using a cardboard tank in an anti-government protest.⁷⁶⁵ The Minister for National Security established a police team to track and remove human rights activists from the West Bank.⁷⁶⁶ The police has repeatedly seized and shredded signs with anti-war messages held in "a long list of demonstrations and vigils".⁷⁶⁷ The Israeli Prime Minister's office did not allow the father of one of the Israelis killed on Oct. 7 to say a short prayer in a memorial ceremony associated with the state based on an earlier op-ed he wrote that was critical against the Prime Minister.⁷⁶⁸ The Israeli Channel 12 decided to minimize attention to protests by the families of the Israeli hostages in Gaza against the government.⁷⁶⁹ In June it was revealed that an elite police unit was tasked with disrupting anti-government or pro-hostage release protests in Jerusalem.⁷⁷⁰

Palestinian citizens of Israel were not allowed to protest early during the war with the support of Israel's Supreme Court,⁷⁷¹ a situation that has only partially improved subsequently.⁷⁷² Freedom of speech, particularly among Palestinian citizens of Israel, has been curtailed significantly.⁷⁷³ A poll found that 76% of Palestinian Israelis stopped publishing content on social media in the first two months of the war, and 63% of Palestinian Israelis did not express their opinions at all in mixed Jewish-Palestinian groups on social media.⁷⁷⁴ Israel has attempted to pressure Palestinian journalists from the West Bank from publishing about the war.⁷⁷⁵ In early April Israel passed a law to shut down the operations of the critical channel Al-Jazeera in the country.⁷⁷⁶ After some deliberation, the government decided to shut down the channel in early May, sending police to immediately raid some of its local offices.⁷⁷⁷ Also in May, an Israeli teacher who attended "a pro Palestinian demonstration" with "Palestinian flags" in Israel (a Nakba commemoration) she was immediately suspended from teaching in her school.⁷⁷⁸ In the same month, the University of Haifa forbade a

⁷⁶¹ <https://www.972mag.com/israel-police-repression-protests-gaza/>

⁷⁶² <https://twitter.com/JoshBreiner/status/1772662679225635054>

⁷⁶³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/b1pggh4yr>

⁷⁶⁴ <https://twitter.com/OmerArvili/status/1776192429709812033>

⁷⁶⁵ <https://twitter.com/RedRevDanny/status/1779844167226609787>

⁷⁶⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra13887273>

⁷⁶⁷ https://www.acri.org.il/post/_1084 ; also <https://twitter.com/ofercass/status/1783896320933036133>

⁷⁶⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkj7dmdv0>

⁷⁶⁹ <https://www.themarket.com/blogs/2024-06-06/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-ecfe-dcb4-a38f-dffdf470000?gift=4cc430b6ec7c45b3adaf05ab9b10ba52>

⁷⁷⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rk0tbkyba>

⁷⁷¹ <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/>

⁷⁷² For example: <https://x.com/nirhasson/status/1796567421412938129>

⁷⁷³ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/ryzhcr0g0

⁷⁷⁴ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/521195>

⁷⁷⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1774836624280473643>

⁷⁷⁶ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-al-jazeera-qatar-hamas-war-gaza-49c2aa4afb3c3b0ee6ac314b63d80716>;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/entertainment/article/r1l7bidy0>

⁷⁷⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rkdg311hfc#autoplay> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/entertainment/article/rj8nuc4fa#autoplay>

⁷⁷⁸ <https://ononews.co.il/news-ganei-tikva/%D7%92%D7%A0%D7%99-%D7%AA%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%95%D7%94-%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%94-%D7%9C%D7%A2%D7%A8%D7%91%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%AA%D7%95%D7%A2%D7%93%D7%94-%D7%91%D7%94%D7%A4%D7%92%D7%A0%D7%94-%D7%A2%D7%9D-%D7%93/> ; https://www.mako.co.il/news-education/2024_q2/Article-cd8e2891d687f81026.htm

student demonstration against the war in its area,⁷⁷⁹ and when a Palestinian citizen of Israel who owns a beauty salon expressed her sadness and solidarity with Rafah victims, she was arrested, zip-tied and blindfolded.⁷⁸⁰ A Palestinian-Israeli TV host who wrote a social media post critiquing the release of one of the Israeli hostages in June at the price of so many dead Gazan civilians was immediately fired from her job.⁷⁸¹

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.⁷⁸² In a more subtle case of media manipulation, the IDF edited out the thanks a released hostage's father expressed to US President Biden, leaving only his gratitude towards the IDF.⁷⁸³

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".⁷⁸⁴

Israeli discourse almost uniformly ignores Palestinian voices. Even before the war, only 4% of interviews or screen time featured Palestinian-Israelis (about 20% of the population), a number that dropped after the beginning of the war.⁷⁸⁵ Instead, the dominant perspective provided to the Israeli public is the official account of the IDF's spokesperson which is rarely challenged despite many examples of falsehoods and misrepresentations of reality by the IDF in the war.⁷⁸⁶ For example, despite Israeli claims to have killed large amounts of Hamas militants (10,000-13,000 as of late February-early March),⁷⁸⁷ 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

⁷⁷⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/2024-05-20/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-91a1-d17a-a9df-91f1247f0000>

⁷⁸⁰ <https://x.com/rafaelshimunov/status/1795813951940202938> ; <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/rasha-kraiem>

⁷⁸¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/gallery-news/2024-06-08/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-f899-df2e-a5df-fefd24c30000>

⁷⁸² <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> ;

⁷⁸³ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/idf-pr>

⁷⁸⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2023-12-28/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018c-aaf0-d22d-a3dd-bff9c4ad0000>

⁷⁸⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/inside-israel-its-a-very-different-war-628097b2>

⁷⁸⁶ <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>

⁷⁸⁷ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/defense/article/15395367> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/blogs/118daysofwar/article/sksjxiv9a> ; <https://www.politico.eu/article/israels-netanyahu-says-he-will-defy-bidens-red-line-and-invade-rafah/>

number in the IDF's own reporting.⁷⁸⁸ For several months, the IDF spokesperson presented the IDF's perspective on prime time every day on all Israeli TV channels with little criticism.⁷⁸⁹

There is almost no attention in Israeli media to the experiences of civilians in Gaza or the horrors of war.⁷⁹⁰ Destruction, when showed, is sanitized through images of buildings destroyed from far away.⁷⁹¹ Nonetheless, in April a poll found that two thirds of Israeli Jews saw few or no pictures or videos about the widespread destruction in Gaza.⁷⁹² For example, the dozens of civilians deaths caused by the military operation that released two hostages in February were barely covered in Israeli media.⁷⁹³ 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.⁷⁹⁴ 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 resources⁷⁹⁵ and are themselves under military censorship⁷⁹⁶ as well as NGOs such as B'Tselem and Gisha.⁷⁹⁷

Israeli media also minimizes the coverage of reports by international institutions, as the common assumption that the media promotes is that these institutions are inherently biased against Israel. For example, 60% of Jewish Israelis believed that the ICC was planning to issue warrants against Israel's Prime Minister and Minister of Defense because of the "continued anti-Israeli bias of the ICC".⁷⁹⁸ In this context, Israel has obstructed external official investigations into the Oct. 7 atrocities, for example one led by the UN Human Rights Council,⁷⁹⁹ and another that aimed to investigate sexual violence on Oct. 7.⁸⁰⁰ When these reports were published, they received little attention in Israeli media, which often focused on discrediting them.

Israeli's media's uncritical pro-war position

Israeli media's pro-war position is rationalized, justified and widely accepted. Already before the war, many Israeli journalists intentionally shifted their coverage to the right or self-censored in recent years.⁸⁰¹ The new CEO of Channel 13 told his employees in mid-March that they should unite

⁷⁸⁸ 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>

⁷⁸⁹ <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>

⁷⁹⁰ <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>; <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/inside-israel-its-a-very-different-war-628097b2>;

https://www.democracynow.org/2024/5/17/amira_hass_israel_palestine_gaza; <https://x.com/the7i/status/1799724456958706071>

⁷⁹¹ <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>

⁷⁹² <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/53666>

⁷⁹³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-03/ty-article/.highlight/0000018e-a04c-ded0-a18f-e2fc22fc0000>

⁷⁹⁴ <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>; while I am unaware of such an analysis being done with Israeli respondents, Gazans who watched videos of Hamas' atrocities on Oct. 7 are 15 times more likely to believe that Hamas committed atrocities in the attack, see: <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/980>

⁷⁹⁵ <https://www.972mag.com/>; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/>

⁷⁹⁶ https://www.democracynow.org/2023/12/1/israel_gaza_war_gospel_artificial_intelligence

⁷⁹⁷ 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/>

⁷⁹⁸ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/54307>

⁷⁹⁹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/government-forbids-doctors-from-speaking-to-un-group-investigating-oct-7-atrocities/>

⁸⁰⁰ <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20231206-un-seeks-israel-access-for-hamas-sexual-violence-investigation>;

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/accounts-sexual-violence-hamas-attack-mount-justice-is-remote-israels-victims-2023-12-05/>

⁸⁰¹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/inside-israel-its-a-very-different-war-628097b2>

the nation by providing entertainment and Israeli hasbara (i.e. public diplomacy/propaganda).⁸⁰² An important Israeli journalist has stated that he believes that journalism should be used to bolster Israeli morale during the war.⁸⁰³ Accordingly, Israeli media amplifies pro-war voices – seen to support the state’s goals – while silencing others. Especially early in the war, Israeli journalists avoided reporting on friendly fire casualties in the IDF.⁸⁰⁴

The Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz* (considered to be leftist by Israeli standards), for example, waited for five months until it called for a ceasefire,⁸⁰⁵ 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 ethnic cleansing in Gaza,⁸⁰⁶ and published only in late March a piece covering a report that estimates excess mortality in Gaza because of famine and disease, which had been published originally in mid February.⁸⁰⁷ An important journalist in the newspaper flipped his own position without any admission of his earlier mistake.⁸⁰⁸ 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 antisemitic⁸⁰⁹ while *Ha’aretz* featured no less than four pieces against him.⁸¹⁰ 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’.⁸¹¹

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.⁸¹² 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.⁸¹³ 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.⁸¹⁴ 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?”,⁸¹⁵ while the popular news

⁸⁰² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2024-03-13/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-38a2-d21d-a3ef-3be6160f0000>

⁸⁰³ <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>

⁸⁰⁴ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/503392>

⁸⁰⁵ <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>

⁸⁰⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2024-03-27/ty-article-opinion/0000018e-7bc4-d680-a1cf-ffc775940000>

⁸⁰⁷ <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>

⁸⁰⁸ <https://twitter.com/idanlandau/status/177753047789117499>

⁸⁰⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2024-02-26/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-e6ee-d7f4-a3dd-e6ee92270000>

⁸¹⁰ <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>

⁸¹¹ Discussion of her speaking in another podcast at: <https://youtu.be/WHCMVqNOre0?si=PIZXwSpzeJ4boVvR&t=2430>

⁸¹² <https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/6361323ddea5a810/Article-831cb8cdf6d6b81026.htm>,

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

⁸¹³ <https://twitter.com/FakeReporter/status/1761696937256853788>

⁸¹⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-21/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-2bb4-daf5-a1bf-aff41ac80000>

⁸¹⁵ https://twitter.com/kann_news/status/1770492431990956343

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.⁸¹⁶

American media

In American media, several studies and experts have pointed out that there has been a pervasive bias against Palestinians for a century.⁸¹⁷ 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.⁸¹⁸ The media coverage of the beginning of the war remained strongly pro-Israeli.⁸¹⁹ A *Newsweek* editor, for example, called for large parts of Gaza to be flattened to resemble a parking lot.⁸²⁰ *The New York Times* supplied direct quotes from Israeli government and military officials four times as much as the equivalent Palestinian quotes.⁸²¹ In another example, an investigation by *The Guardian* demonstrated that *CNN*’s coverage is heavily biased towards Israel,⁸²² a critique that surfaced within the channel as well.⁸²³ 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.⁸²⁴ A different investigation found a similar effect continuing throughout February in *The New York Times*.⁸²⁵ A third investigation found that until March the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal* used the term ‘brutal’ far more often to refer to Palestinians and their actions (77% of cases) than Israel despite the lopsided death toll between both sides.⁸²⁶ 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.⁸²⁷ Similar editorial guidelines at the global news syndicate AFP were similarly pro-Israeli.⁸²⁸

While Israeli casualties are individuated in reporting, the far greater number of Palestinian casualties is frequently described collectively and in passive terms.⁸²⁹ An examination of 5 leading media outlets reveals how Palestinians are dehumanized and often reduced to numbers, which are then doubted.⁸³⁰ 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.⁸³¹ As a result, for example, a February poll found that half of Americans do not know whether

⁸¹⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sys5qltaa> ; for context:

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

⁸¹⁷ Many references here: <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/new-york-times-implicit-plausible-genocide/> ;

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

⁸¹⁸ <https://www.972mag.com/us-media-palestinians>. The Nation included a higher ratio (10.5%); the New Republic had no pieces authored by Palestinians.

⁸¹⁹ <https://www.columblog.com/p/massacred-vs-left-to-die-documenting>

⁸²⁰ https://twitter.com/josh_hammer/status/1711185635229282605

⁸²¹ <https://newyorkwarcimes.com/the-times-quotes-israeli-and-american-sources-more-than-3-times-as-much-as-palestinians>

⁸²² <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/feb/04/cnn-staff-pro-israel-bias>

⁸²³ <https://theintercept.com/2024/03/01/cnn-christiane-amanpour-israel-gaza-coverage/>

⁸²⁴ <https://theintercept.com/2024/01/09/newspapers-israel-palestine-bias-new-york-times/>

⁸²⁵ <https://newyorkwarcimes.com/the-times-quotes-israeli-and-american-sources-more-than-3-times-as-much-as-palestinians>

⁸²⁶ <https://fair.org/home/brutal-is-a-word-mostly-reserved-for-palestinian-violence/>

⁸²⁷ <https://theintercept.com/2024/04/15/nyt-israel-gaza-genocide-palestine-coverage/>

⁸²⁸ <https://www.declassifieduk.org/analysis-how-the-uk-and-us-media-dehumanise-palestinians/>

⁸²⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/11/a-new-abyss-gaza-and-the-hundred-years-war-on-palestine/> ;

<https://newyorkwarcimes.com/the-times-quotes-israeli-and-american-sources-more-than-3-times-as-much-as-palestinians>

⁸³⁰ <https://www.declassifieduk.org/analysis-how-the-uk-and-us-media-dehumanise-palestinians/> . For an exception:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/04/18/world/middleeast/gaza-university-class.html>

⁸³¹ <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/new-york-times-implicit-plausible-genocide/> ;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1763453379811098672>; <https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1764012307385053635>;

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).⁸³² 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.⁸³³

American media has also largely avoided investigations of events that could make Israel appear negatively. As at least some of these investigations, especially those concerning the events on Oct. 7, have been covered in Israeli media, it appears that this is an explicit pattern that corresponds with the decisions of the political class in the US. 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 in Israeli media.⁸³⁴ Notably, Ronen Bergman, a journalist working for both the Israeli *Yediot Ahronot* and *The New York Times*, has investigated these incidents in his *Yediot Ahronot* publications but not in his *New York Times* ones.⁸³⁵ *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.⁸³⁶ 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 interviews⁸³⁷ – 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”.⁸³⁸ After its release, independent media as well as *The Intercept* found a long list of fundamental problems with the account.⁸³⁹ The *New York Times* itself had to admit that some of the information it had published was false,⁸⁴⁰ and later cut its ties with the reporter.⁸⁴¹ *The Nation* described the piece as “the biggest failure of journalism” at the *Times* in the past two decades,⁸⁴² while *Ha’aretz* compared the collapse of the *Times*’ piece to its October 7.⁸⁴³ In late April, 59 journalism and news media professors from top universities called upon the *New York Times* to address open questions about the piece.⁸⁴⁴ Despite all these questions, in early May the *New York Times* received a Pulitzer in international reporting for its coverage of the Israel-Gaza war.⁸⁴⁵

The treatment of UNRWA as a case of media misrepresentation

<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. See also: <https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1799543857539108962>

⁸³² <https://www.pewresearch.org/2024/03/21/emotions-news-and-knowledge-about-the-israel-hamas-war/>

⁸³³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/opinion/israel-military-aid.html>

⁸³⁴ <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/>

⁸³⁵ <https://fair.org/home/shielding-us-public-from-israeli-reports-of-friendly-fire-on-october-7/>

⁸³⁶ <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/new-york-times-complicit-plausible-genocide>

⁸³⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/28/world/middleeast/oct-7-attacks-hamas-israel-sexual-violence.html>

⁸³⁸ <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.

⁸³⁹ <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>

⁸⁴⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/25/world/middleeast/video-sexual-assault-israel-kibbutz-hamas.html>

⁸⁴¹ <https://www.ynetnews.com/culture/article/rkoh8h8ya>

⁸⁴² <https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/new-york-times-intercept-hamas-rape/>

⁸⁴³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/galleryfriday/2024-03-28/tv-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-7ab6-de80-a78f-7bf747280000>

⁸⁴⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/media/2024/04/29/new-york-times-oct-7-journalism-professors-letter/>;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/entertainment/article/bk8ntgcw0>; https://www.democracynow.org/2024/5/8/nyt_investigation; the letter is at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/documents/ad3c143c-ec7-477f-8a38-a76308b18cca.pdf>

⁸⁴⁵ <https://twitter.com/PulitzerPrizes/status/1787561713291645419>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/06/business/pulitzer-prize-winners.html>

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.⁸⁴⁶ Almost immediately, 16 of UNRWA's donors – western countries – declared they would suspend their funding of UNRWA.⁸⁴⁷ 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,⁸⁴⁸ 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.⁸⁴⁹ A different intelligence dossier released by Israel contains no evidence either.⁸⁵⁰ 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.⁸⁵¹ Other claims made by Israel were never made to UNRWA but directly to the media.⁸⁵² 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".⁸⁵³ The weak evidence supporting the Israeli claim has led to several of the countries that stopped funding to resume it in March and April.⁸⁵⁴ Other countries did so subsequently or expressed plans to do so, and some even increased their humanitarian support for Gaza.⁸⁵⁵ 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.⁸⁵⁶ According to UNRWA's own leaked 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.⁸⁵⁷ In late March an Israeli organization released a report that revealed a pro-Israeli influence operation that targeted US Black Democrat legislators, in attempt to sway their opinion against UNRWA and the Palestinians.⁸⁵⁸ A few months later it was revealed that the operation was orchestrated by Israel's Diaspora Affairs

⁸⁴⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/world/middleeast/un-aid-israel-oct-7-attacks.html> . As of late May, allegations have been made against 19 UNRWA staff members. The investigation is being conducted by the top investigative body in the UN (the Office of Internal Oversight Services). One case was closed because there was no evidence, 4 cases were suspended because of insufficient evidence, and another 14 cases remain under investigation, see <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/30/opinion/israel-gaza-un-unrwa.html> .

⁸⁴⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/01/unrwa-funding-pause-employees-october-7-hamas-attack-claims-no-evidence-un>

⁸⁴⁸ 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/>

⁸⁴⁹ <https://twitter.com/DrSakriKaia/status/1754685268454785074>

⁸⁵⁰ <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/>

⁸⁵¹ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-02-20/ty-article-magazine/.premium/unrwa-chief-waiting-for-israels-evidence-on-hamas-infiltration-of-gaza-employees/0000018d-c5fc-db3b-a9cf-cdfdf5a0000> ; <https://twitter.com/UNLazarini/status/1760764594644013287>

⁸⁵² <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-press-release-26feb2024/>

⁸⁵³ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-finds-claims-that-u-n-aid-agency-staff-took-part-in-hamas-attack-credible-957b747e>

⁸⁵⁴ <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> ;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/24/germany-to-resume-funding-of-unrwa-aid-operations-in-gaza>

⁸⁵⁵ <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>

⁸⁵⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/no-evidence-israel-back-unrwa-accusations-says-eu-humanitarian-chief-2024-03-14/>

⁸⁵⁷ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/unrwa-report-says-israel-coerced-some-agency-employees-to-falsely-admit-hamas-links/

⁸⁵⁸ <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

Ministry and run by a political campaigning firm.⁸⁵⁹ In late April, an independent review by a former French foreign minister and three research institutions mentioned again that the Israeli government has not yet substantiated its claims that UNRWA's staff has had links to Hamas or Islamic Jihad. It added that UNRWA regularly supplied Israel and other countries with lists of its employees for vetting, and that the Israeli government has not informed UNRWA of any concerns regarding its staff since 2011.⁸⁶⁰

Israeli officials have long stated that they want to shut UNRWA down.⁸⁶¹ Israel has recently stated again this aim,⁸⁶² and has acted upon it,⁸⁶³ going as far as proposing a bill that designated UNRWA as a terrorist organization in late May.⁸⁶⁴ These indicate that Israel has been weaponizing its allegations against UNRWA for this purpose.⁸⁶⁵ 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,⁸⁶⁶ 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.⁸⁶⁷ UNRWA also fired several employees who were found to be linked to Hamas in the past.⁸⁶⁸ 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 (polls in late March and late May found that UNRWA oversaw the provision of assistance for 62% and 53%, respectively, of respondents in shelters in south Gaza, in parallel to complaints for discrimination in those shelters⁸⁶⁹).

Another case of successful propaganda: doubting the Palestinian death toll⁸⁷⁰

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

⁸⁵⁹ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/security-aviation/2024-06-05/ty-article-magazine/.premium/israel-secretly-targeted-american-lawmakers-with-gaza-war-influence-campaign/0000018f-e7c8-d11f-a5cf-e7cb62af0000>; <https://fakejournalist.net/pdf/pro-Israeli-influence-network-new-findings-0624.pdf>

⁸⁶⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/22/israel-unrwa-staff-terrorist-links-yet-to-provide-evidence-colonna-report>; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/22/unrwa-israel-hamas-report-palestinians/>; https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/unrwa_independent_review_on_neutrality.pdf. See also on this the report by the three research institutions and a following analysis twitter thread: https://www.passblue.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2024_04_20_UNRWA-final-technical_report.pdf; <https://twitter.com/MartinKonecny/status/1783445318329147400>

⁸⁶¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0bMANfCOBQ>; <https://jewishcurrents.org/the-campaign-to-abolish-unrwa>

⁸⁶² <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-2fbdabafa0000>

⁸⁶³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/31/israel-plan-un-dismantle-palestinian-relief-agency-unrwa>; <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/mar/26/israel-unrwa-palestine>

⁸⁶⁴ <https://www.msf.org/israeli-proposal-designate-unrwa-terrorist-organisation-outrageous>

⁸⁶⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-24/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-1017-d361-a3ef-52f798500000>

⁸⁶⁶ <https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are/frequently-asked-questions> [under oversight of UNRWA spending]; https://youtu.be/LA_xtBh3eLw?si=DXUkq3gct46VbE9O&t=445

⁸⁶⁷ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-press-release-26feb2024/>; <https://jewishcurrents.org/the-campaign-to-abolish-unrwa>

⁸⁶⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/10/world/middleeast/unrwa-hamas-gaza.html>

⁸⁶⁹ <http://pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/Poll%202091%20English%20press%20release%2020%20March%202024.pdf> (pp. 7-8); <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/980>

⁸⁷⁰ 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.

the number of casualties in a well-covered speech on Oct. 25 in which he stated he had “no confidence” in these numbers.⁸⁷¹ 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. Superficial doubts of the death count continue to appear periodically in Israeli Hebrew-speaking media as well as strongly pro-Israel think tanks groups.⁸⁷²

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.⁸⁷³ To the best of my knowledge, nobody, including Israel who holds the population registry for Gaza, has doubted the veracity of this list.⁸⁷⁴ Subsequently, Biden himself apologized for casting public doubt on the Palestinian death toll.⁸⁷⁵ 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.⁸⁷⁶ Although several experts and observers quickly refuted it as a case of shoddy statistics,⁸⁷⁷ a series of Israeli media outlets (as well as AIPAC) attempted to boost this message without any criticism to sow doubt.⁸⁷⁸

Another attempt to cast doubt on the Gaza Health Ministry took place in mid May, after the UN Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs, which publishes summary reports every few days, changed the source of data it used for reporting on the composition of deaths (moving from over 9,500 women deaths and over 14,500 children deaths according to vague estimates by the Gaza Media Office, to more concrete 4,959 identified women, 7,797 identified children, and some 10,000 unidentified deaths according to data by the Gaza Ministry of Health).⁸⁷⁹ Although the total number of reported casualties did not change, and the identification of individuals by their name and full demographic information represented a step forward in the granularity and reliability of the data coming from Gaza, the media reporting on the issue – which began only several days after the publication of the numbers – mainly served to cast doubt on the reported data as well as the UN (and again this was led by openly pro-Israel media outlets).⁸⁸⁰ Although the “halving” narrative was

⁸⁷¹ <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>

⁸⁷² <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2024/04/09/hamas-run-gaza-health-ministry-admits-to-flaws-in-casualty-data/> ; <https://twitter.com/petersavodnik/status/1778620648551829969> ; for the FDD: <https://web.archive.org/web/20191116031839/https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/11/anti-iran-advocacy-group-fdd-registers-to-lobby.html> ; Seliktar, Ofira, and Farhad Rezaei. *Iran, Israel, and the United States: The Politics of Counter-Proliferation Intelligence*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2018, pp. 162, 168.

⁸⁷³ <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/10/this-is-a-list-of-the-names-of-more-than-6000-palestinians-that-israel-has-killed-in-gaza/>

⁸⁷⁴ <https://theintercept.com/2023/10/31/gaza-death-palestine-health-ministry/>

⁸⁷⁵ <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>

⁸⁷⁶ <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/how-gaza-health-ministry-fakes-casualty-numbers/>

⁸⁷⁷ 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>

⁸⁷⁸ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-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-hamas-s-gaza-death-toll-exaggerated-or-faked> ; <https://www.ins.org/hamas-fakes-casualty-figures-the-numbers-are-not-real/> ; <https://twitter.com/AIPAC/status/1769387362289655835>

⁸⁷⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-213> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-215>

⁸⁸⁰ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-800772> ; <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2024/05/13/un-cuts-estimates-women-children-deaths-gaza/73669560007/> ; <https://www.foxnews.com/world/un-revises-gaza-death-toll-50-less-women>

soon refuted by the Deputy Spokesperson for the UN's Secretary-General as well as several media outlets,⁸⁸¹ the information warfare damage has been done.⁸⁸²

The Gaza Health Ministry reported mortality does contain some methodological challenges. The most serious problem is the division of the death count into three separate categories. The first includes reports of mortality through hospitals (20,976, or 61% of the total in the report from May 3). The second includes Gazans own reporting of deaths they know of (3,715, or 11% of the total). Both categories include full demographic information, and people listed in them appear on the Ministry's lists of mortality (last published on April 30). The third category is currently listed as deaths about which only 'partial information' is known (9,963, or 29% of the total). According to earlier reports by the Ministry, these were collected from "reliable media sources" (unclear which) in areas where the Health Ministry has no communications or where the health system has broken down.⁸⁸³

Several serious media outlets have accepted the Gaza death count⁸⁸⁴ and declared that "the figure is widely viewed as the most reliable one available".⁸⁸⁵ 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.⁸⁸⁶ The Gaza Health Ministry has provided reports of deaths to several media outlets, for example to *al-Jazeera* (a list of several thousand children who were identified as killed, published)⁸⁸⁷ and to *NPR* (a report on the death count, unpublished).⁸⁸⁸ 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."⁸⁸⁹ In late April, both a UN official and IDF military officials agreed that the number is reliable.⁸⁹⁰

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.⁸⁹¹ An Israeli investigative journalist report revealed that the IDF itself is using the official Gaza death count, updating it daily in its own internal briefings.⁸⁹² This has been confirmed by the *Wall Street Journal*.⁸⁹³ Israel's Prime Minister himself has claimed in an

[children-killed-previously-reported](https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/13/gaza-ministry-revises-figures-for-women-and-children-killed) . Also <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/13/gaza-ministry-revises-figures-for-women-and-children-killed> ; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-says-gaza-death-toll-still-over-35000-not-all-bodies-identified-2024-05-13/>

⁸⁸¹ <https://x.com/marcowenjones/status/1790086787764715922> ; <https://www.newsweek.com/fact-check-did-un-halve-gaza-death-toll-1900325>

⁸⁸² For example: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2024/05/gaza-death-count/678400/>

⁸⁸³ 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 . As of early April, the Ministry also opened a website in which people could report their dead family members: <https://www.wsi.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694> (according to the Ministry of Health, the form opened in January and is accessible here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScndnMojlJoffSPTD25uqkZSzUH--G05AMwcbbyJB42bNQcw/viewform>)

⁸⁸⁴ <https://time.com/6909636/gaza-death-toll/>

⁸⁸⁵ <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/29/1234159514/gaza-death-toll-30000-palestinians-israel-amas-war>

⁸⁸⁶ [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)

⁸⁸⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NICzT9_YE9Y

⁸⁸⁸ <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/29/1234159514/gaza-death-toll-30000-palestinians-israel-amas-war>

⁸⁸⁹ <https://time.com/6909636/gaza-death-toll/>

⁸⁹⁰ <https://www.wsi.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694>

⁸⁹¹ <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/25/1208577490/biden-says-hes-worried-about-civilian-deaths-in-gaza-but-questions-death-toll-st>

⁸⁹² <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/>

⁸⁹³ <https://www.wsi.com/politics/national-security/u-s-and-israels-unprecedented-intelligence-sharing-draws-criticism-a85979b4>

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 10.⁸⁹⁴ This range includes the Palestinian death count the next day, 31,112.⁸⁹⁵ 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).⁸⁹⁶ In late April, IDF officials estimated that the death toll was around 36,000 (the Ministry estimate was more than 34,000).⁸⁹⁷ In early May, Israel's Prime Minister estimated a total death toll of about 30,000 (again about 14% less than the Ministry's estimate, 35,091).⁸⁹⁸

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 deaths⁸⁹⁹ whereas the Palestinian Ministry of Health counted 2,310 Palestinian deaths⁹⁰⁰ (the UN Human Rights Committee's count reached 2,251⁹⁰¹). 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.⁹⁰² The death toll does not include more than 10,000 people missing under the rubble.⁹⁰³ Gaza's own electronic system for counting the dead was disrupted already on Nov. 12.⁹⁰⁴ By April there were clear indications that the Ministry was unable to reach many of the dead.⁹⁰⁵

Estimates of Hamas militant deaths by Israelis are often exaggerated, as is natural and unsurprising in military engagements on both sides.⁹⁰⁶ 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".⁹⁰⁷ The overall Palestinian count back then was only 9,770.⁹⁰⁸ The exaggerations on the Israeli side have been strongly suggested, for example, by a BBC fact checking analysis of all IDF videos.⁹⁰⁹

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

⁸⁹⁴ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israels-netanyahu-says-he-will-defy-bidens-red-line-and-invade-rafah/>

⁸⁹⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-136>

⁸⁹⁶ <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>

⁸⁹⁷ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694>. The estimates were that 11,000-13,000 Hamas militants were killed, and that the ratio of militants to civilians is roughly 1 to 2.

⁸⁹⁸ <https://www.barrons.com/news/netanyahu-hamas-fighters-comprise-almost-half-gaza-s-death-toll-42cfe029>

⁸⁹⁹ <https://mfa.gov.il/ProtectiveEdge/Documents/PalestinianFatalities.pdf>

⁹⁰⁰ <https://web.archive.org/web/20150111023729/http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=751290>

⁹⁰¹ http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/ColGaza/A_HRC_CRP_4.doc

⁹⁰² <https://twitter.com/BalouxFrancois/status/1743019663913537943>

⁹⁰³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>; See also:

<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>

⁹⁰⁴ <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/29/1234159514/gaza-death-toll-30000-palestinians-israel-hamas-war>

⁹⁰⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694>

⁹⁰⁶ 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.

⁹⁰⁷ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/thpk0eg15

⁹⁰⁸ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-death-toll-numbers-injured-5c9dc40bec95a8408c83f3c2fb759da0>

⁹⁰⁹ <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.

US involvement in the war

The US has played a crucial role in the Israel-Gaza war since its beginning by providing support for Israel. This support took several forms: military aid (actual weapons) and funding to purchase such weapons from the US; protecting Israel by deploying US military assets defensively and offensively; diplomatic support; and largely freeing Israel from American oversight and accountability. Each form is discussed in a separate subsection below. The fifth subsection examines the significant changes in American rhetoric over the war which became more critical as the war continued. The overall trend is clear – the US overwhelmingly supported Israel through its actions. Its more critical remarks towards Israel led to almost no changes in its policy towards Israel. The final section briefly deals with notable cases of visible internal dissent in the US – in both the administration and in broader society. A later section, “Zoom-in 2”, examines the campus protests in the US over April and May.

US military aid to Israel

The US has been supporting Israel for long before the war, to the extent that “Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of US foreign assistance since World War II”, with a total of \$158 billion provided until 2023 (more than \$260 billion and up to \$317.9 billion if adjusted for inflation).⁹¹⁰ In 2016, the US and Israeli governments agreed that over the ten years between 2019 and 2028 the US would provide Israel with a total of \$38 billion in military aid (in the previous two decades, the US had provided Israel with a total of \$30 and \$21.3 billion in military aid).⁹¹¹ Over the decade before the war (2013-2022), 68% of Israel's weapon imports came from the US.⁹¹²

The US began providing military support to Israel with hours of the Oct. 7 attack. In the next ten days, the US sent five shipments of military aid to Israel.⁹¹³ In the first two months of the war, the US may have sent some 200 planes carrying a total of some 10,000 tons of military equipment.⁹¹⁴ In the first three months of the war, the US provided Israel with at least 15,000 bombs, including more than 5,000 unguided bombs and more than 5,400 two-thousand pound bombs, as well as over 57,000 155mm artillery shells⁹¹⁵ (Israel used over 100,000 artillery shells in less than two months of fighting).⁹¹⁶ Additional munitions requested include kamikaze drones, dive-bombing drones, missiles, rockets and mortar rounds.⁹¹⁷ Subsequent months saw more sales of the same and similar items.⁹¹⁸

⁹¹⁰ <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf> ; <https://usafacts.org/articles/how-much-military-aid-does-the-us-give-to-israel/> ; <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2023-10-10/how-much-aid-does-the-u-s-give-to-israel>

⁹¹¹ <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>

⁹¹² <https://theconversation.com/where-do-israel-and-hamas-get-their-weapons-220762>

⁹¹³ <https://web.archive.org/web/20231110173047/https://time.com/6325247/us-military-assistance-israel/> ; for example:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-10-10/boeing-sped-1-000-smart-bombs-to-israel-after-the-hamas-attacks>

⁹¹⁴ <https://www.now14.co.il/%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%91%D7%AA-%D7%90%D7%95%D7%95%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%9C%D7%A6%D7%94%D7%9C-%D7%9E%D7%98%D7%95%D7%A1-%D7%94%D7%97%D7%99%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A9-%D7%94-200-%D7%A0%D7%97%D7%AA-%D7%91%D7%99/> ; this piece refers to 140 US airplanes landing in Israel in the first five months of the war: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-07/ty-article/0000018e-1947-d7d3-abce-79ef48310000>

⁹¹⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-sends-israel-2-000-pound-bunker-buster-bombs-for-gaza-war-82898638> ; some of the artillery shells were supposed to be sent to Ukraine: <https://www.axios.com/2023/10/19/us-israel-artillery-shells-ukraine-weapons-gaza>

⁹¹⁶ <https://www.ipost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-775523>

⁹¹⁷ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/security-aviation/2023-11-16/ty-article/.premium/shells-laser-guided-missiles-and-bunker-busters-the-munitions-the-u-s-supplied-israel/0000018b-d3b9-dffa-ade-f7b990750000>

In early March it was revealed that the US approved more than 100 separate military sales to Israel since the beginning of the war, as the Biden administration bypassed Congress to approve the packages, avoiding reporting on them by drawing from existing US stockpiles, accelerating previously approved deliveries and sending the weapons in smaller batches that fall below the minimum dollar threshold that requires the administration to notify Congress.⁹¹⁹ Only two approved sales to Israel had been made public by that point.⁹²⁰ At the same time, officials claimed there were 600 active cases of potential military transfer or sales to Israel, worth more than \$23 billion.⁹²¹ In subsequent weeks and months the US continued to sign off on more military sales to Israel. In late March, for example, it authorized the transfer of another 1,800 two-thousand pound bombs as well as another 500 five-hundred-pound bombs, and authorized the transfer of 25 fighter jets and engines.⁹²² In early April, the US administration authorized the transfer of over 2,000 smaller bombs (five-hundred pounds or smaller) to Israel.⁹²³

Although the US provided an enormous amount of military aid to Israel throughout the war, the flow of munitions slowed down after a few months as the US began running short on munitions it could quickly provide to Israel while also meeting Ukraine's needs and maintaining's the US's own supplies.⁹²⁴ The US continued selling weapons to Israel during April, considering a deal of more than \$18 billion to sell up to 50 fighter jets.⁹²⁵ In April, the US House of Representatives approved \$26.3 billion of aid to Israel (direct military aid, but also funding to replenish US stockpiles, support for US operations in the region and humanitarian aid).⁹²⁶ In early May, the US admitted that it delayed sending one shipment of weapons to Israel (6,500 JDAMs, kits that turn "dumb" bombs into precision bombs).⁹²⁷ Almost in parallel, however, it continued to push existing deals – including one worth over \$1 billion – through the pipeline.⁹²⁸

All of the above demonstrate the US' continued strong support of Israel militarily.

Active deployment of US military

The US has also supported Israel through the active deployment of US military assets in the Middle East region since the beginning of the war. In the first few days after October 7, the US sent two aircraft carrier groups to the area. Subsequently more aircraft were sent to the region.⁹²⁹ Other assets, such as some of the US' most powerful missile defense systems were also deployed to the Middle East.⁹³⁰ In mid October, the US prepared about 2,000 US troops for possible deployment to Israel.⁹³¹ All of these signaled its commitment to support Israel and to deter any widening of the war. In case the war escalated out of control, the US military also had plans to evacuate all US citizens

⁹¹⁸ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-plans-to-send-weapons-to-israel-amid-biden-push-for-cease-fire-deal-184e75bc>

⁹¹⁹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/how-the-u-s-arms-pipeline-to-israel-avoids-public-disclosure-e238de75>

⁹²⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/03/06/us-weapons-israel-gaza/>

⁹²¹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/how-the-u-s-arms-pipeline-to-israel-avoids-public-disclosure-e238de75>

⁹²² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/03/29/us-weapons-israel-gaza-war/> . These sales had been approved years before.

⁹²³ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/04/politics/us-israel-bombs-transfer/index.html>

⁹²⁴ <https://www.wsj.com/world/how-the-u-s-arms-pipeline-to-israel-avoids-public-disclosure-e238de75>

⁹²⁵ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/01/politics/biden-administration-f15-fighter-jets-israel/index.html>

⁹²⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-house-vote-long-awaited-95-billion-ukraine-israel-aid-package-2024-04-20/>

⁹²⁷ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-delays-sending-precision-weapons-to-israel-253f12f0>

⁹²⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r1wdjobma> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/14/us/politics/biden-arms-sale-israel.html>

⁹²⁹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20231110173047/https://time.com/6325247/us-military-assistance-israel/>

⁹³⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/22/world/middleeast/patriot-israel-hamas-iran-gaza-eisenhower-pentagon.html>

⁹³¹ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/10/16/politics/us-marines-pentagon-israel/index.html>

from Israel (more than 600,000 people).⁹³² In addition, the US sent a general and several other officers to help advise Israel's military leadership in the war.⁹³³

Some US forces operated within Israel. At least two US bases are known within Israel.⁹³⁴ Media coverage revealed that the US was using contractors in "multiple military bases" in Israel, ostensibly to support US Special Operation forces within the country.⁹³⁵ There were also Delta Force troops in Israel early in the war.⁹³⁶ According to the Pentagon, these troops provided intelligence and planning as well as advice to the IDF on hostage recovery efforts, and they participated at least in these manners in the Israeli operation that ended up releasing four hostages in June.⁹³⁷ Other personnel involved in the war and in Israel include CIA officers, FBI agents, and DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency) personnel.⁹³⁸ Biden's National Security Adviser said the intelligence the US was passing to Israel was not limited and that the US is "not holding anything back. We are providing every asset, every tool, every capability".⁹³⁹

As the war continued, the US was drawn more closely into actual combat, often in the form of bombing targets that were aggressive or critical toward Israel and the role the US played in the war. In the Red Sea in particular, US ships shot down many missiles sent by the Houthis in Yemen, beginning in mid-October.⁹⁴⁰ When the Houthis began attacking Israeli-affiliated ships and ships sailing to Israel,⁹⁴¹ the US began to bomb them as well, with strikes beginning in mid January and continuing as of the writing of this document.⁹⁴² American support for Israel during the war led to over 170 attacks against US bases in Iraq and Syria.⁹⁴³ After three US service members were killed in an attack on a base in or near Jordan in late January,⁹⁴⁴ the US proceeded with a widespread campaign of air attacks and assassinations on targets in the region (attacking in Yemen, Iraq and Syria) that continued in subsequent months.⁹⁴⁵

The US briefly became directly involved in the broader Middle East conflict when it participated in shooting down drones and missiles that Iran fired towards Israel in mid April in response to the Israeli attack on the Iranian embassy in Syria (which Israel did not inform the US about).⁹⁴⁶ After allegedly shooting down more than half of the Iranian missiles and drones of what was one of the largest drone strikes in history,⁹⁴⁷ the US quickly declared that it would not join Israel in counterattacking Iran.⁹⁴⁸ As such, it likely played an important role in deescalating the subsequent immediate tensions between Israel and Iran.

⁹³² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/10/23/us-evacuation-plans-israel-lebanon-hamas-war/>

⁹³³ <https://www.axios.com/2023/10/23/israel-gaza-war-marine-general-ground-operation>

⁹³⁴ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-first-us-establishes-permanent-military-base-in-israel/>;

<https://theintercept.com/2023/10/27/secret-military-base-israel-gaza-site-512/>

⁹³⁵ <https://theintercept.com/2023/12/11/tiktok-military-contractor-recruiting-israel/>

⁹³⁶ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/us/news/2023/10/20/white-house-shares-identities-secret-special-ops-israel/>

⁹³⁷ <https://web.archive.org/web/20231110173047/https://time.com/6325247/us-military-assistance-israel/> ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/middleeast/gaza-hostage-rescues-israel.html>

⁹³⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/06/14/us-israel-intelligence-cia-hostages/>

⁹³⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/06/14/us-israel-intelligence-cia-hostages/>

⁹⁴⁰ <https://abcnews.go.com/International/security-incident-involving-us-navy-destroyer-red-sea/story?id=104147141>

⁹⁴¹ For example <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/houthi-missile-drone-attack-red-sea-shipping-vessels-uss-gravelly-dwight-eisenhower/>

⁹⁴² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-uk-strike-yemen-to-retaliate-houthi-attacks/> ; <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3776858/may-15-us-central-command-update/>

⁹⁴³ <https://www.understandingwar.org/background/iran-update-january-28-2024>

⁹⁴⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/29/us/politics/us-troops-drone-attack-jordan-iran.html>

⁹⁴⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/us-strike-iraq-milita.html>

⁹⁴⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/04/11/israel-damascus-strike-iran/> ; or informed just before the attack,

according to: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/17/world/middleeast/iran-israel-attack.html>

⁹⁴⁷ <https://theintercept.com/2024/04/15/iran-attack-israel-drones-missiles/> ; <https://www.foxnews.com/world/us-military-shoots-down-dozens-iranian-drones-fired-israel-jewish-state-air-defense-system-excels>; <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/what-irans-drone-attack-ports-for-the-future-of-warfare/>

⁹⁴⁸ <https://www.axios.com/2024/04/14/biden-netanyahu-iran-israel-us-wont-support>

Diplomatic support

Throughout the war, the US provided Israel with strong diplomatic support which became indispensable for Israel's conduct of its war in Gaza. The clearest indication of this diplomatic support was a series of US vetoes in the UN Security Council, the only UN body with executive power. Other indications include the use of US leverage to influence international institutions such as the International Criminal Court.

The US reinforced its diplomatic support by attempting to prevent de-escalation talk already at the beginning of the war. An internal memo in mid October discouraged diplomats from making public statements that the US wants to see less violence, stating that high-level officials do not want press materials to use specific phrases: "de-escalation/ceasefire", "end to violence/bloodshed" and "restoring calm".⁹⁴⁹ A few days earlier, the US Secretary of State used such a phrase on Twitter/X, then deleted his tweet and replaced it with a more militaristic version.⁹⁵⁰ This move removed pressure from Israel at the beginning of the war, which was its bloodiest stage as of writing, and allowed it more freedom to act as it willed.

The US reinforced its diplomatic support for Israel in the United Nations. In mid October, it vetoed a Security Council resolution calling for "humanitarian pauses" in the fighting (12 countries voted in favor, the US voted against, 2 other countries abstained).⁹⁵¹ In late October, it rejected a General Assembly non-binding resolution calling for a humanitarian ceasefire (which passed by 121 to 14, with 44 abstentions).⁹⁵² In early December the US vetoed a second Security Council resolution that called for "an immediate humanitarian ceasefire" (13 countries voted in favor, the US voted against, one other country abstained).⁹⁵³ In late February, the US vetoed a third resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire (13 countries voted in favor, the US voted against, one other country abstained).⁹⁵⁴ In a fourth Security Council vote in late March calling for an immediate ceasefire during Ramadan the US chose to abstain (14 other countries voted in favor), causing those present at the Security Council to applause in hope that the war was about to end.⁹⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the US quickly declared that the resolution was not binding.⁹⁵⁶ This resolution had no impact.

The US was also involved in stopping other motions from moving forward.⁹⁵⁷ Therefore, for example, it vetoed the Palestinian request for full UN membership in mid April (12 countries in favor, the US against, 2 abstentions).⁹⁵⁸ According to the executive director of the American Arab Chamber of Commerce, the US Secretary of State threatened that if Palestine would become a state, the US will defund the UN, which would lead to famine ("the world would have to starve as the Gazans are").⁹⁵⁹ The US's own attempt to propose a temporary ceasefire – incidentally the first time it used the term "ceasefire" – was vetoed by Russia and China in March.⁹⁶⁰ In June the US made more serious efforts

⁹⁴⁹ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/state-department-internal-emails-gaza-israel_n_65296395e4b0a304ff6ff95d

⁹⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/RobbieGramer/status/1711366571665342603>

⁹⁵¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142507>

⁹⁵² <https://www.reuters.com/world/un-overwhelmingly-calls-aid-truce-between-israel-hamas-2023-10-27/>

⁹⁵³ https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-12-08-23/h_a7ad699a7e1acbc51205feb2276cdf29

⁹⁵⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/20/us-vetoes-un-resolution-ceasefire-israel-gaza>

⁹⁵⁵ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147951>; <https://twitter.com/tparsi/status/1772281999358648553>

⁹⁵⁶ <https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1772315270880866802>; https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/us-says-ceasefire-resolution-non-binding-less-influential-security-council-members-object/;

⁹⁵⁷ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-blocks-security-council-motion-blaming-israel-for-deadly-gaza-aid-convoy-incident/>

⁹⁵⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/apr/18/us-veto-palestine-membership-request-united-nations-council>

⁹⁵⁹ <https://x.com/halalflow/status/1792944530389393422>

⁹⁶⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/22/world/middleeast/us-cease-fire-resolution-vetoes.html>

to reach a ceasefire, but as of writing was unable to get Israel or Hamas to accept its proposal publicly.

Israel itself implied that the US had some kind of clout with the International Criminal Court (ICC). In April, amidst rumors that the ICC will issue warrants for Israeli leaders including its Prime Minister, Israel announced to the US that it will punish the Palestinian Authority, potentially causing its collapse.⁹⁶¹ The move was a signal to the Americans to pressure the ICC and try to prevent the issue of warrants. In parallel, 12 Republican senators wrote a letter to the ICC Prosecutor threatening him personally as well as his employees and associates and their families if he issued a warrant for Israel's leaders ("Target Israel and we will target you... You have been warned.").⁹⁶²

When the ICC did, in fact, begin the process of putting out arrest warrants against Israeli leaders, Biden rejected the ICC's application and stated that "What's happening is not genocide".⁹⁶³ The US administration followed by signaling that it will censure the ICC with sanctions,⁹⁶⁴ and the US House passed a sanctions bill that would apply economic sanctions and visa restrictions to individuals and judges associated with the ICC as well as their family members.⁹⁶⁵

US oversight and Israeli accountability

In parallel to its strong support of Israel, the US state apparatus minimized its oversight of Israeli actions in what was almost certainly a political decision by the US administration. De facto, the US state apparatus preferred not to know or to feign ignorance of clear evidence coming out from Gaza. At the same time, the US did not seriously hold Israeli accountable for past and present misconduct. As a result, Israel was not accountable for its actions even within the US' own frameworks and mechanisms for overseeing aid and its use.

In the first three months of the war the US had not formally assessed whether Israel's actions in Gaza violated human rights, despite many indications that raised that possibility.⁹⁶⁶ Its Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated that South Africa's genocide charge against Israel – deemed to be plausible by the ICJ at the time – was "meritless".⁹⁶⁷ The outright rejection of such allegations prevented a more serious assessment of Israel's conduct, which could have had more serious consequences for the US support of Israel. There are clear indications that the top officials in the US preferred to stall any such assessments.⁹⁶⁸

According to the 1997 "Leahy laws" (named after the senator who sponsored them) in the US, the US is required to cut off assistance to any foreign military or law enforcement units that are credibly accused of flagrant human right violations. This credible information standard is intentionally low and does not require proof or clear and convincing evidence.⁹⁶⁹ Israel, however, has long been

⁹⁶¹ <https://www.axios.com/2024/05/01/us-israel-palestinian-authority-icc-arrest-warrant>

⁹⁶² <https://twitter.com/mehdirhasan/status/178750302299332951>. The prosecutor also noted that "a senior leader" told him that the ICC was "built for Africa and for thugs like Putin" and not for the West or its allies:
<https://x.com/RnaudBertrand/status/1792748783996207206>

⁹⁶³ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/live/2024/may/20/biden-trump-democrats-immigration-latest>

⁹⁶⁴ <https://www.ft.com/content/6700a246-e0cd-49d8-b5ef-d2379e86290f>

⁹⁶⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/jun/04/us-house-icc-sanctions-netanyahu-?>

⁹⁶⁶ <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2024/01/04/us-hasnt-formally-assessed-if-israel-violating-human-rights-00133799>

⁹⁶⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/blinken-says-daily-toll-gaza-too-high-israel-genocide-charge-meritless-2024-01-09>

⁹⁶⁸ <https://www.propublica.org/article/israel-gaza-blinken-leahy-sanctions-human-rights-violations?taid=662030f9d453a400011f6bcc>

⁹⁶⁹ <https://www.iustsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

treated leniently on this issue.⁹⁷⁰ A review by the *Guardian* found that special mechanisms were used to shield Israel from the Leahy laws, and that no similar special arrangements exist for any other US ally (as one former state department official stated “everyone knew the rules were different for Israel”).⁹⁷¹ A former director of the State Department office responsible for Leahy laws vetting said the same.⁹⁷² Despite several letters by Leahy himself that refer to gross violations of human rights by the IDF, no unit had been punished for that reason.⁹⁷³

A similar case has to do with intelligence sharing. According to US laws, the recipient of the intelligence is supposed to be compliant with international law. In the case of Israel, internal reviews found evidence that its assurances of compliance with international law were insufficient and that there was little independent oversight to confirm that the intelligence that the US supplied was not contributing to civilian deaths.⁹⁷⁴ Some officials and lawmakers expressed the same concerns.⁹⁷⁵ As noted above, there were no indications that the US limited its intelligence sharing with Israel in response.⁹⁷⁶

In late April, a week-long media story reflected the Biden administration’s approach to Israeli accountability. The so-called “Leahy laws” were central in this case as well. On April 18, *ProPublica* published a story about Blinken ignoring a special State Department panel’s recommendation to disqualify some Israeli units from US military aid for abuses such as extrajudicial killings and an allegation that interrogators tortured and raped a Palestinian teenager accused of throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails.⁹⁷⁷ On April 20 (the same day the US House voted to pass \$26 billion in Emergency Israel Aid),⁹⁷⁸ the website *Axios* published a scoop according to which the US was expected to sanction a specific IDF unit for its human rights violations in the West Bank. Most of these violations took place well before the current war,⁹⁷⁹ and include, for example, a case in which soldiers from the said unit captured a 78 year old Palestinian-American, handcuffed and gagged him and left him on the ground. He was found dead a few hours later (no criminal charges were pressed in the case).⁹⁸⁰ Two other military units and two civilian units were accused of “human rights violations” but the US administration was content to resolve the issue with those four units through Israeli “remediation” efforts.⁹⁸¹ The same day that the *Axios* scoop was released, the Israeli Prime Minister responded with outrage to the idea of sanctions on an IDF unit (“If anyone thinks they can impose sanctions on a unit of the IDF – I will fight it with all my strength”; he also called it “the height of absurdity and a moral low”).⁹⁸² The story drew much attention for a few days,⁹⁸³ after which Blinken wrote in an internal letter that was leaked to ABC that Israel has presented new information about the unit and that he opted for a process of “effective remediation” as the way

⁹⁷⁰ <https://www.propublica.org/article/israel-gaza-blinken-leahy-sanctions-human-rights-violations?taid=662030f9d453a400011f6bcc>

⁹⁷¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/18/us-supply-weapons-israel-alleged-abuses-human-rights>

⁹⁷² <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

⁹⁷³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/18/us-supply-weapons-israel-alleged-abuses-human-rights> ;

<https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

⁹⁷⁴ <https://www.wsi.com/politics/national-security/u-s-and-israels-unprecedented-intelligence-sharing-draws-criticism-a85979b4>

⁹⁷⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/06/14/us-israel-intelligence-cia-hostages/>

⁹⁷⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/06/14/us-israel-intelligence-cia-hostages/>

⁹⁷⁷ <https://www.propublica.org/article/israel-gaza-blinken-leahy-sanctions-human-rights-violations>

⁹⁷⁸ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/house-overwhelmingly-passes-26-billion-aid-israel-gaza-tensions-iran-escalate>

⁹⁷⁹ <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

⁹⁸⁰ <https://www.axios.com/2024/04/20/us-israel-sanctions-idf-west-bank> ; <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3659530> ;

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/what-is-israeli-netzah-yehuda-battalion-accused-2024-04-22/> ;

<https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

⁹⁸¹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/us-sanctions-idf-unit-netzah-yehuda-west-bank-human-rights-abuses-rcna149549> ;

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/biden-sanction-israeli-military-units-accused-human-rights/story?id=109651562>

⁹⁸² <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-04-20/ty-article/.premium/u-s-set-to-sanction-ultra-orthodox-israeli-army-battalion-based-in-the-west-bank/0000018e-fd0b-d140-a3ee-fddf9a1c0000> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/21/us-poised-impose-sanctions-israel-defense-force-netzah-yehuda-battalion>

⁹⁸³ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/what-is-israeli-netzah-yehuda-battalion-accused-2024-04-22/> ;

<https://theconversation.com/netzah-yehuda-the-violent-and-aggressive-idf-unit-the-us-is-thinking-of-sanctioning-228436>

forward rather than sanctions.⁹⁸⁴ A former director of the State Department office responsible for Leahy vetting later said this approach was unprecedentedly lenient.⁹⁸⁵

The same day (April 26), a leaked confidential US paper revealed that in an internal document sent to Blinken, according to USAID (10 USAID officials cleared the paper) Israel was violating international humanitarian law, partially by blocking US-funded humanitarian support to Gaza.⁹⁸⁶ As was revealed the next day, the document also included four State Department bureaus that assessed that Israel's assurances were "neither credible nor reliable" and that Israel repeatedly attacked protected sites and civilian infrastructure, took little action to investigate violations, killed humanitarian workers and journalists at an unprecedented rate, and arbitrarily restricted humanitarian aid.⁹⁸⁷ A few weeks later in mid-May, the State Department released its official report in response to the NSM-20 memorandum that required that the administration report to the US Congress on whether there were credible reports or allegations that undercut Israel's assurances that it was complying with humanitarian law.⁹⁸⁸ The report concluded that Israel likely used US weapons in "incidents that raise concerns" about its legal compliance, but also concluded that Israel was not currently blocking humanitarian aid, that there was no direct indication of Israel intentionally targeting civilians, and pointed out that Israel was overall committed to international law.⁹⁸⁹ An independent task force published a detailed account that strongly disputed the conclusions of the report.⁹⁹⁰ Shortly after the report was published, a 20-year veteran of the US State Department, who was one of the subject matter experts that drafted the report (until taken off of it in late April), resigned in protest and said that the report's conclusion went against the overwhelming view of experts consulted on the report, and that it was clear that Israel was playing a role in limiting the amount of food and medical supplies crossing into Gaza.⁹⁹¹

As the war continued, the US eventually placed sanctions on representatives of extreme right-wing movements within Israel but these were generally symbolic. In February, the US targeted four individuals accused of attacking Palestinians and Israeli peace activists in the West Bank. The four were blocked from using the US financial system and barred US citizens from dealing with them.⁹⁹² This took place as Biden visited Michigan, a key state for the upcoming election that had a large Arab-American population critical of his support of Israel.⁹⁹³ The sanctions were a sign that Biden was attempting to placate his critics. In mid-March, the US announced new sanctions against two illegal outposts which served as a base for attacks by settlers against Palestinian civilians, as well as three other settlers.⁹⁹⁴ Although at first Israeli banks blocked the seven settlers from using their personal and business bank accounts,⁹⁹⁵ Israeli media reported that the US eased the sanctions after a threat by Israel's Finance Minister to cause the collapse of the Palestinian economy (the US

⁹⁸⁴ <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/biden-sanction-israeli-military-units-accused-human-rights/story?id=109651562>

⁹⁸⁵ <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

⁹⁸⁶ <https://www.devex.com/news/exclusive-usaid-officials-say-israel-breached-us-directive-on-gaza-aid-107545>

⁹⁸⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/some-us-officials-say-internal-memo-israel-may-be-violating-international-law-2024-04-27/>

⁹⁸⁸ <https://theintercept.com/2024/05/10/israel-human-rights-gaza-report/>

⁹⁸⁹ <https://theintercept.com/2024/05/10/israel-human-rights-gaza-report/>; for the unclassified version of the report: <https://www.justsecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Report-to-Congress-under-Section-2-of-the-National-Security-Memorandum-on-Safeguards-and-Accountability-with-Respect-to-Transferred-Defense.pdf>

⁹⁹⁰ <https://www.justsecurity.org/94980/task-force-national-security-memorandum-20/>; <https://www.justsecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/NSM20-TF-Report--Final.pdf>

⁹⁹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/30/stacy-gilbert-us-state-department-israel-gaza-aid>;

https://www.democracynow.org/2024/5/31/stacy_gilbert_state_dept_resignation_gaza

⁹⁹² <https://apnews.com/article/biden-west-bank-israeli-settlers-palestinians-80f9e6be6f6a7bb75dc86360ac2fa6ce>

⁹⁹³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-68173904>

⁹⁹⁴ <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/14/us-settler-sanctions-west-bank>

⁹⁹⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-banks-heed-us-anti-settler-sanctions-far-right-ministers-object-2024-02-05/>

claimed the ease of sanctions was consistent across other sanctions programs).⁹⁹⁶ A third round of sanctions in mid April targeted an ally of Israel’s National Security Minister as well as two entities that had raised funds for settlers targeted in earlier rounds of sanctions.⁹⁹⁷ A fourth round of sanctions in mid June was directed at a settler organization that attacked humanitarian aid convoys to Gaza.⁹⁹⁸ The sanctions themselves, especially in their moderated version, remain limited in scale and ineffective.⁹⁹⁹ The settlers themselves, as well as local rights groups and Palestinians in the West Bank, described the sanctions as having minimal impact.¹⁰⁰⁰ The few individuals involved so far suggests that the US administration used the sanctions in attempt to signal displeasure – more to domestic US voters than to Israeli or international audiences – but refrained from meaningfully doing something to change the situation during the war.

US-Israeli relations

Although the US continued to support Israel throughout the war, it also reprimanded it verbally for its conduct of the war in increasingly serious terms. Some of this approach likely aimed at limiting the significant hit to the US’s international reputation because of its support of Israel as well as appease domestic voters in the upcoming elections. At the same time, US has set certain limitations on Israel’s conduct since the beginning of the war. Some of these limitations have been successful in preventing Israel from opening an extra front in Lebanon, or slowing down and reducing the scale of the Israeli invasion into Rafah. At the same time, however, the US government refrained from taking serious action following its statements and declarations. This section of the document touches upon the relations on a monthly basis, generally with a paragraph for every month after October and focusing on what high US officials such as President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.

The US administration’s messaging in early and mid-October emphasized the US’s complete support of Israel. Already on Oct. 7, Biden stated that the “the United States stands with Israel. We will not ever fail to have their back”. The president promised coordination with Israel, material, military and diplomatic support, which he described as “rock solid”.¹⁰⁰¹ In mid-October, Biden visited Israel, stating that “I come to Israel with a single message: You’re not alone,” Biden said. “As long as the United States stands — and we will stand forever — we will not let you ever be alone.”¹⁰⁰²

Beginning in late October, however, the rising Palestinian death toll led the US administration to shift its message to include Palestinian civilians. Both Biden and Blinken spoke explicitly about humanitarian aid for Palestinians and the need to protect them during Israel’s ground invasion.¹⁰⁰³ Biden expressed confidence that “Israel is going to act under the measure... the rules of war” and

⁹⁹⁶ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/15507010> ; <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/15425756> ; <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240329-us-pushes-back-against-claims-it-eased-west-bank-settler-sanctions>

⁹⁹⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-slaps-sanctions-entities-that-raised-funds-west-bank-settlers-2024-04-19/> ; for the fundraising see also: <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-sanctions-settlers-biden-west-bank-85cee76d68c17091d9b4d3e14f3eeb74>

⁹⁹⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-impose-sanctions-israeli-group-that-attacked-gaza-aid-2024-06-14/>

⁹⁹⁹ <https://jacobin.com/2024/03/biden-sanctions-israeli-settlers-palestine>

¹⁰⁰⁰ <https://apnews.com/article/us-sanctions-israeli-settlers-west-bank-palestinians-354f8b0a44b70c25bf013614b4775900> ; also <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-06-13/ty-article/.premium/israel-finances-west-bank-outpost-owned-by-settlers-placed-under-u-s-u-k-eu-sanctions/00000190-1105-db28-a995-559d87720000>

¹⁰⁰¹ <https://www.c-span.org/video/?530992-1/president-biden-remarks-situation-israel>

¹⁰⁰² <https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-israel-hamas-gaza-palestinians-a85cb682fdc61b80285cf4ab354354ce> ;

<https://www.npr.org/2023/10/19/1206997120/biden-israel-politics-democrat-republican-middle-east-hamas>

¹⁰⁰³ <https://www.reuters.com/world/behind-bidens-shift-israel-hamas-war-gaza-deaths-international-pressure-2023-10-27/>

that “the innocents in Gaza [would] be able to have access to medicine and food and water”,¹⁰⁰⁴ and pressed Netanyahu to get more humanitarian aid into Gaza.¹⁰⁰⁵ Blinken stated that Palestinian civilians were victims of Hamas and that “the lives of Palestinian civilians must be protected”, among others through allowing essential humanitarian aid into Gaza.¹⁰⁰⁶ The Biden administration also urged its Israeli counterparts to think about an exit strategy before launching its ground invasion, and to exercise caution in its conduct of the war.¹⁰⁰⁷ As discussed above US support has not changed in a meaningful way despite the Israeli conduct that has generally ignored these prescient early warnings, which remain relevant until the present time of writing.

In November, the US continued to urge Israel to restrain its military response, at the same time that Israeli officials – sometimes giving speeches in the same time and place – rejected the idea.¹⁰⁰⁸ Biden and his top advisers warned Israel that international backlash would soon erode support for Israel with dire consequences to the IDF and Israel.¹⁰⁰⁹ The US President reiterated that the two-state solution was the only way to resolve the broader conflict,¹⁰¹⁰ said that al-Shifa hospital “must be protected” in the context of the first Israeli raid on it in November,¹⁰¹¹ and also noted that extremist settlers in the West Bank must be held accountable for their violent acts.¹⁰¹² Blinken criticized Israel for not doing enough to minimize harm to civilians in Gaza, stating that “far too many” Palestinians have died and suffered.¹⁰¹³ He even compared the Palestinian children he saw pulled from the wreckage to his own children, because “how can we not?”.¹⁰¹⁴ More than 500 appointees and staff members criticized Biden’s unwavering support for Israel in a letter and demanded a ceasefire, and over 1,000 staffers at USAID called upon the administration to make better use of its leverage to limit the civilian death toll in Gaza.¹⁰¹⁵ Despite these warnings, the US did not establish any red lines for Israel.¹⁰¹⁶

In December, Biden warned that Israel was losing international support because of its “indiscriminate bombing” of Gaza, and suggested that Netanyahu had “to change his government”.¹⁰¹⁷ Blinken reiterated the need for Israel to protect civilians and sustain humanitarian assistance,¹⁰¹⁸ and pointed out the gap between Israel’s “declared intentions to protect civilians [sic] and the mounting casualties seen on the ground”.¹⁰¹⁹ He added that “there must be no enduring internal displacement” in the Strip.¹⁰²⁰ At meetings in one of his visits to Israel, Blinken clarified that Israel would have until early January to finish its ground operation,¹⁰²¹ although Israel’s army chief

¹⁰⁰⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/15/politics/biden-60-minutes-interview-gaza-israel/index.html>

¹⁰⁰⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/30/politics/biden-netanyahu-aid-gaza/index.html>

¹⁰⁰⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/10/31/antony-blinken-biden-aid-ukraine-israel-gazans/>. Blinken also said that Israel’s leaders supported the US’ provision of humanitarian assistance to Gaza.

¹⁰⁰⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/behind-bidens-shift-israel-hamas-war-gaza-deaths-international-pressure-2023-10-27/>

¹⁰⁰⁸ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-11-03/blinken-shifts-israel-message-as-backlash-grows-over-gaza-deaths>

¹⁰⁰⁹ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/02/politics/biden-administration-warning-israel-gaza-civilians/index.html>

¹⁰¹⁰ <https://apnews.com/article/biden-revitalized-palestinian-authority-israel-hamas-war-bf8defe81079d6e6371f228157f9be10>

¹⁰¹¹ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/watch-al-shifa-hospital-in-gaza-must-be-protected-biden-says>

¹⁰¹² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/11/06/readout-of-president-bidens-call-with-prime-minister-netanyahu-of-israel-8/>

¹⁰¹³ <https://apnews.com/article/blinken-israel-gaza-hamas-850cf28c13d8df087f75c0536462b604>

¹⁰¹⁴ <https://x.com/Channel4News/status/1720452839435038986>

¹⁰¹⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/nov/14/biden-letter-israel-gaza-war-ceasefire>

¹⁰¹⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/02/politics/biden-administration-warning-israel-gaza-civilians/index.html>

¹⁰¹⁷ <https://apnews.com/article/biden-israel-hamas-oct-7-44c4229d4c1270d9cfa484b664a22071>

¹⁰¹⁸ <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-remarks-to-the-press-18/>; <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-and-united-kingdom-foreign-secretary-david-cameron-at-a-joint-press-availability/>; <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-with-jake-tapper-of-cnn-state-of-the-union-3/>

¹⁰¹⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/08/us-israel-hamas-war-gaza-civilian-protection-anthony-blinken>

¹⁰²⁰ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/blinken-said-to-warn-war-cabinet-it-may-not-have-months-to-topple-hamas/>

¹⁰²¹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/us-pressures-israel-to-end-war-against-hamas-in-a-month-3vzb52wf9>

stated that the war will continue for “many more months”.¹⁰²² Blinken also said that bringing the war to an end “as quickly as possible” was a top priority for the US administration.¹⁰²³

In January, both Biden and Blinken attempted to discuss regional peace within the framework of the two state solution,¹⁰²⁴ and even reviewed the options for the US to recognize a Palestinian state after the war.¹⁰²⁵ Although Netanyahu stated that he would not allow the creation of a Palestinian state, Biden said it could still move forward with Netanyahu in office.¹⁰²⁶ US officials claimed that Biden was “running out” of patience with Netanyahu, that there were deep frustrations on the US side, and that Biden told Netanyahu that he did not want a year of war in Gaza.¹⁰²⁷ Blinken stated that Palestinians must be allowed to return to their homes in Gaza and must not be displaced from the Gaza Strip.¹⁰²⁸ On a different occasion he described the conflict as “gutwrenching” and that “the suffering breaks my heart”.¹⁰²⁹

In February, Biden described Israel’s military campaign as “over the top” and claimed he was “pushing very hard now to deal with this hostage cease-fire”.¹⁰³⁰ The White House spokesman said that an operation in Rafah in the current circumstances “would be a disaster for those people [i.e. Palestinians] and we would not support it.”¹⁰³¹ A few days later, Biden told Netanyahu in a phone call that a military operation in Rafah should not proceed without a “credible and executable plan for ensuring the safety of and support for the more than one million people sheltering there”.¹⁰³² At the same time, three US officials admitted that the US will not punish Israel if it launches such a military campaign into Rafah.¹⁰³³ Blinken stated that “Israel must ensure that the delivery of life-saving assistance to Gaza is not blocked for any reason, by anyone” and urged Israel “to do more to help civilians”.¹⁰³⁴ Although both Biden and Blinken pushed for a ceasefire plan (with Biden hoping for a ceasefire within a week), Netanyahu openly stated that the war will continue until Israel was completely victorious.¹⁰³⁵ Perhaps in response, Blinken stated that Israel’s expansion of settlements in the West Bank was “inconsistent with international law”, returning to US policy before the Trump administration.¹⁰³⁶

Early March saw the continuation of the ceasefire narrative, when Biden’s Vice President Kamala Harris called for an “immediate ceasefire for at least the next six weeks” in Gaza because of “the immense scale of suffering in Gaza”.¹⁰³⁷ To date no such ceasefire has materialized. As the US admitted that the entire population of Gaza was experiencing “severe levels of acute food

¹⁰²² <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67824421>

¹⁰²³ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/biden-presses-netanyahu-on-protecting-gaza-civilians-discusses-phasing-of-war/>

¹⁰²⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/01/19/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-call-with-prime-minister-netanyahu-of-israel-2/>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/blinken-discuss-way-forward-gaza-he-meets-israeli-leaders-2024-01-09/>

¹⁰²⁵ <https://www.axios.com/2024/01/31/palestine-statehood-biden-israel-gaza-war>

¹⁰²⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/1/19/israels-war-on-gaza-live-us-support-for-israel-ironclad-despite-rebuff?update=2635028>

¹⁰²⁷ <https://www.axios.com/2024/01/14/biden-netanyahu-israel-gaza-war-tensions>; <https://www.axios.com/2024/01/26/biden-netanyahu-israel-hamas-war-gaza-timetable>

¹⁰²⁸ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/09/politics/blinken-israel-gaza-war-talks/index.html>

¹⁰²⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/blinken-says-us-demand-he-mourns-gutwrenching-scenes-gaza-2024-01-17/>

¹⁰³⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/02/08/biden-israel-gaza-speech-netanyahu/>

¹⁰³¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/02/08/biden-israel-gaza-speech-netanyahu/>

¹⁰³² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/2/11/israels-war-on-gaza-live-leaders-warn-of-catastrophe-if-rafah-invaded?update=2700975>

¹⁰³³ <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2024/02/13/us-wont-punish-israel-for-rafah-op-that-doesnt-protect-civilians-00141013>

¹⁰³⁴ <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-a-press-availability-46/>

¹⁰³⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/blinken-netanyahu-israel-hamas-gaza-saudi-arabia-qatar-palestinians-48ff7a3bbab5d92841df2949c29d9e72>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68410226>;

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/biden-walks-back-prediction-monday-ceasefire-deal-gaza-hopeful-probabl-rcna141161>

¹⁰³⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/23/blinken-oppose-new-israeli-settlements>

¹⁰³⁷ <https://x.com/KamalaHarris/status/1764409522553082344>

insecurity”,¹⁰³⁸ the US began airdropping aid into Gaza and began work on a temporary pier (see above for both).¹⁰³⁹ In mid March, the US Senate Majority Leader criticized Netanyahu, declaring that he was “a major obstacle to peace” that “lost his way”.¹⁰⁴⁰ Biden later praised the “good” speech.¹⁰⁴¹ Biden himself said that Netanyahu was “hurting Israel more than helping Israel”,¹⁰⁴² and asserted that “Humanitarian assistance cannot be a secondary consideration or a bargaining chip... Protecting and saving innocent lives has to be a priority”.¹⁰⁴³ The US administration also focused on the future Rafah campaign. The month also marked Biden’s first use of the idea of a red line with regards to an invasion of Rafah (“It is a red line, but I’m never going to leave Israel”), although many chose to interpret it in a limited manner that did not completely reject all Israeli military operations in Rafah.¹⁰⁴⁴ Blinken declared that “a major military ground operation [i.e. in Rafah] is not the way to do it. It risks killing many more civilians... it risks further isolation of Israel around the world and jeopardizing its long-term security and standing”.¹⁰⁴⁵ Biden’s Vice President Harris said that the US did not rule out any action against Israel in case it would attack Rafah.¹⁰⁴⁶ Netanyahu, however, declared that if the US will not support an attack on Rafah, “we’ll do it by ourselves”.¹⁰⁴⁷

In early April Biden stated that Israel “has not done enough to protect aid workers” or civilians in Gaza and said he was “outraged and heartbroken by the deaths of the World Central Kitchen workers”.¹⁰⁴⁸ He reiterated that Israel had to take specific and concrete steps to address civilian harm, humanitarian suffering, and aid worker safety, and claimed that US policy on Gaza was contingent on Israel following those steps.¹⁰⁴⁹ Biden also said that Netanyahu was making a “mistake” in his approach to Gaza.¹⁰⁵⁰ Blinken warned that Israel risked becoming indistinguishable from Hamas if it didn’t protect Gazan civilians.¹⁰⁵¹ The US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, however, maintained that the US did not have “any evidence” that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza (but did not completely reject the idea).¹⁰⁵² The Iranian attack in mid-April – in which the US took a major role in the defense of Israel – disrupted the trend of critical US statements. By the end of the month, the US administration reverted to merely calling upon Israel to allow more humanitarian aid into Gaza (for context – April was the month that saw the most supplies entering Gaza as of writing).¹⁰⁵³ The US administration also began calling for a ceasefire deal that Israel supposedly accepted, despite no indications that Israel was actually supporting such a deal.¹⁰⁵⁴

In early May, Biden conditioned aid for the first time, specifically saying that he would stop sending bombs and artillery shells to Israel if it launched a major invasion of Gaza: “I made it clear that if they

¹⁰³⁸ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/blinden-says-all-of-gaza-facing-unprecedented-food-insecurity/>

¹⁰³⁹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/biden-announces-us-will-airdrop-food-aid-gaza-rcna141436> ; <https://time.com/6898685/biden-israel-pressure-gaza-aid-pier-in-state-of-the-union/>

¹⁰⁴⁰ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/biden-schumer-speech-netanyahu-gaza/>

¹⁰⁴¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/18/politics/joe-biden-netanyahu-phone-call/index.html>

¹⁰⁴² <https://apnews.com/article/biden-netanyahu-red-line-frustration-gaza-0f23fa8d02288c1b9d862ddc4035872e>

¹⁰⁴³ <https://time.com/6898685/biden-israel-pressure-gaza-aid-pier-in-state-of-the-union/>

¹⁰⁴⁴ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/how-israel-avoided-bidens-red-line-ad715144>

¹⁰⁴⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/3/22/israels-war-on-gaza-live-the-choice-is-clear-a-2-state-solution?update=2790517> ; <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/22/israel-gaza-netanyahu-blinken-insurgency-warning>

¹⁰⁴⁶ <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/harris-us-ruled-consequences-israel-invades-rafah/story?id=108431225>

¹⁰⁴⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/22/israel-blinken-hamas-doha-negotiations/>

¹⁰⁴⁸ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/04/02/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-the-death-of-world-central-kitchen-workers-in-gaza/>

¹⁰⁴⁹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/04/04/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-call-with-prime-minister-netanyahu-of-israel-3/> ; <https://apnews.com/article/biden-netanyahu-3591fb5f82b22cf8e5d1060fcaef115> ; <https://www.axios.com/2024/04/05/biden-netanyahu-us-support-israel>

¹⁰⁵⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68766592>

¹⁰⁵¹ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/blinden-warns-israel-risks-becoming-indistinguishable-from-hamas-if-it-doesnt-protect-gaza-civilians/

¹⁰⁵² <https://www.axios.com/2024/04/09/israel-genocide-gaza-us-austin-palestinians>

¹⁰⁵³ <https://apnews.com/article/blinden-israel-hamas-war-gaza-saudi-arabia-c0425791dc59e745021d3dd726dc8f09>

¹⁰⁵⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/blinden-israel-hamas-war-gaza-saudi-arabia-c0425791dc59e745021d3dd726dc8f09>

go into Rafah – they haven’t gone in Rafah yet – if they go into Rafah, I’m not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah, to deal with the cities – that deal with that problem.”¹⁰⁵⁵ The Rafah invasion did take place, and not only did Biden not openly halt shipments of weapons to Israel according to what US media described as an “ultimatum” to Israel (an anonymous official claimed one shipment was held),¹⁰⁵⁶ but a few days later his administration pushed forward a \$1 billion arms sale to Israel.¹⁰⁵⁷ In late May, the US administration clarified that it will not change its Israel policy,¹⁰⁵⁸ as the Israeli operation in Rafah expanded.¹⁰⁵⁹ Furthermore, the bipartisan leadership of the United States House of Representatives and Senate invited Netanyahu to address a Joint Meeting of Congress.¹⁰⁶⁰ At the same time, Biden called for a permanent ceasefire, making public an earlier proposal and urging both Israel and Hamas to agree.¹⁰⁶¹ In parallel to this inconsistent messaging, the US nonetheless ramped up its critique of Israel. Biden admitted that Israeli forced used US bombs to kill Palestinian civilians,¹⁰⁶² and anonymous top officials described Israel’s strategy in Gaza as “self-defeating”.¹⁰⁶³ In response, some Israeli voices attempted to draw links between the US and Hamas based on some of their shared interests,¹⁰⁶⁴ while Israel’s Minister of National Security declared that “Hamas ❤️ Biden” in a tweet.¹⁰⁶⁵

In June, Biden stated in an interview that “there is every reason for people to draw [the] conclusion” that Netanyahu was prolonging the war for his own political gain.¹⁰⁶⁶ His statement fitted a CIA assessment that concluded that Netanyahu would defy pressure to define an “end state” for Gaza.¹⁰⁶⁷ At the same time, the Biden administration concluded that Israel had not “crossed a red line on Rafah”, presenting the Israeli operation as “an uptick”.¹⁰⁶⁸ For context, a Palestinian poll found that 51% of the respondents in the Gaza Strip claimed that the Rafah attack specifically displaced them.¹⁰⁶⁹

Dissent in the US administration and society

Over the course of the war many American officials chose to voice their dissent, some under their own name and others anonymously. Some eight or nine officials resigned publicly until late May.¹⁰⁷⁰ In early May, officials who resigned said they identified an uptick in non-public resignations.¹⁰⁷¹

¹⁰⁵⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/08/politics/joe-biden-interview-cnntv/index.html>

¹⁰⁵⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/08/politics/joe-biden-interview-cnntv/index.html#>; <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/09/politics/inside-bidens-public-ultimatum/index.html>; for the held aid, see: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sinzeopogr>, also <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-05-07/ty-article-live/0000018f-4fbc-d17f-adcf-ffffc4fa0000?liveBlogItemId=1873160451#1873160451>; <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/05/politics/war-israel-palestine-gaza-biden-weapons/index.html>

¹⁰⁵⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/14/us/politics/biden-arms-sale-israel.html>

¹⁰⁵⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-vp-harris-says-israels-deadly-strike-rafah-was-beyond-tragic-2024-05-28/>

¹⁰⁵⁹ https://www.democracynow.org/2024/5/30/headlines/israel_seizes_entire_gaza_egypt_border_continues_deadly_invasion_of_rafah

¹⁰⁶⁰ <https://x.com/SpeakerJohnson/status/1796628344269623520>

¹⁰⁶¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/31/us/politics/biden-israel-remarks-speech.html>

¹⁰⁶² <https://theintercept.com/2024/05/10/israel-human-rights-gaza-report/>

¹⁰⁶³ <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/05/21/biden-admin-hammering-israel-military-strategy-gaza-00159262>

¹⁰⁶⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-05-09/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018f-5d88-d1d4-afcf-fd8aae1d0000>

¹⁰⁶⁵ <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1788458123436433783>; <https://www.ipost.com/breaking-news/article-800531>

¹⁰⁶⁶ <https://time.com/6984968/joe-biden-transcript-2024-interview/>

¹⁰⁶⁷ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/07/politics/cia-netanyahu-assessment/index.html>

¹⁰⁶⁸ <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/biden-administration-israel-crossed-red-line-rafah-110739181>

¹⁰⁶⁹ <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/980>

¹⁰⁷⁰ <https://x.com/SanaSaeed/status/1796202013044138221>. For examples:

<https://twitter.com/amanpour/status/1773415507732947348>; <https://transcripts.cnn.com/show/ampr/date/2023-12-04/segment/01>

¹⁰⁷¹ <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2024/05/07/more-resignations-over-israel-and-a-failed-policy-00156536>; for 9: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/may/30/two-more-us-officials-resign-over-biden-administrations-position-on-gaza-war>

According to one of those who resigned publicly, over 24 people may have resigned privately.¹⁰⁷² Others used different channels. In one letter in February, over 800 civil servants from the EU and the US dissented from their government's support for the war in Gaza.¹⁰⁷³ In April, 90 lawyers in the US and abroad – including 20 that work in the Biden administration – called upon the president to stop military aid to Israel (by May the number increased to 130 in total).¹⁰⁷⁴ Several senior US officials noted in an internal memo that they doubted the credibility of Israel's assurances on its use of US weapons.¹⁰⁷⁵ Others anonymously described Biden's policy on Israel as "a blatantly horrific and stupid mistake".¹⁰⁷⁶

The war has polarized Americans. While support for Israel remained stronger among Republican voters, a large number of polls indicates that Biden's policy towards the war found little support among Democrat voters, who voiced their displeasure through different means as the war progressed. While 50% of Americans approved Israel's military action in November, in March the number dropped to 36%.¹⁰⁷⁷ Already in January, 35% of Americans thought that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza (49% Democrats, 18% of Republicans).¹⁰⁷⁸ The ratio increased in May to 39% (56% Democrats, 23% Republicans).¹⁰⁷⁹ In March, 52% of Americans (62% of Biden voters, 30% Trump voters) agreed that the US government should stop weapon shipments to Israel until Israel stops its attack on Gaza.¹⁰⁸⁰ When the question was framed as sending military aid to Israel to help in its war against *Hamas*, 36% of Americans supported the policy, and 35% opposed it.¹⁰⁸¹ In May, 51% of American Jews supported Biden's decision to withhold arms shipments to Israel if it continued its Rafah offensive (see above).¹⁰⁸² In May, 70% of likely voters supported a permanent ceasefire in Gaza.¹⁰⁸³ The most visible public form of dissent to date was a series of campus protests in American universities that peaked over April and May. These are described in more detail in the Zoom-in 2 section below.

Zoom-in 1: The Second Israeli invasion of al-Shifa hospital (18 March-1 April)¹⁰⁸⁴

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.

¹⁰⁷² <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/may/30/two-more-us-officials-resign-over-biden-administrations-position-on-gaza-war>

¹⁰⁷³ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vTbqPLjzDpGdamN2LWL1a-ILCkgsOnDOmgBN3MT-U-3-t5D1gJgrc5KORsHfO9nEluOBdCnD-5tDKX/pub>

¹⁰⁷⁴ <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/04/29/lawyers-israel-arm-sales-biden-00154958> ;

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2024/05/01/does-israel-dissent-matter-to-biden-00155488>

¹⁰⁷⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/some-us-officials-say-internal-memo-israel-may-be-violating-international-law-2024-04-27/>

¹⁰⁷⁶ <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/04/03/biden-israel-strike-aid-workers-gaza-00150356>

¹⁰⁷⁷ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/642695/majority-disapprove-israeli-action-gaza.aspx>

¹⁰⁷⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/jan/24/americans-believe-israel-committing-genocide-poll>

¹⁰⁷⁹ <https://zeteo.com/p/gaza-israel-genocide-poll-ceasefire-us-voters>

¹⁰⁸⁰ <https://cepr.net/press-release/poll-majority-of-americans-say-biden-should-halt-weapons-shipments-to-israel/>

¹⁰⁸¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/04/02/younger-americans-stand-out-in-their-views-of-the-israel-hamas-war/>

¹⁰⁸² <https://www.ipost.com/diaspora/article-804548>

¹⁰⁸³ <https://zeteo.com/p/gaza-israel-genocide-poll-ceasefire-us-voters>

¹⁰⁸⁴ The raid is the topic of a documentary which documents the testimonies of survivors and touches upon many of the issues below, see here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilerY4M9kQc>

In mid-late March, the IDF conducted another military operation in the al-Shifa hospital.¹⁰⁸⁵ Early reports from within the Strip asserted that the IDF had killed or executed some 150 young men.¹⁰⁸⁶ 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.¹⁰⁸⁷ 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.¹⁰⁸⁸ Several doctors and other health practitioners have been killed or executed,¹⁰⁸⁹ including a pharmacist who was among those executed in front of patients.¹⁰⁹⁰ People who escaped provide similar testimonies,¹⁰⁹¹ 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.¹⁰⁹² Footage of released detainees shows them in their underwear.¹⁰⁹³ Some of the released detainees were in wheelchairs.¹⁰⁹⁴ An adjacent hospital to al-Shifa (al-Helu) was bombed in the operation, hitting patient rooms as well.¹⁰⁹⁵ 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.¹⁰⁹⁶ People who did not evacuate when ordered were regarded as suspects and killed.¹⁰⁹⁷ Other eyewitnesses stated that they were not able to move and get food and water for days.¹⁰⁹⁸ An NGO's initial research found evidence for the execution of 13 children,¹⁰⁹⁹ 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.¹¹⁰⁰ Several consistent testimonies also reveal that the IDF used civilians as human shields.¹¹⁰¹

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.¹¹⁰² 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

¹⁰⁸⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/24/world/middleeast/al-shifa-hospital-gaza-israel.html>

¹⁰⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/HossamShabat/status/1770813640251195394> ; the IDF claimed these were "terrorists", <https://twitter.com/ClubReel/status/1770822632725700746>

¹⁰⁸⁷ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6236>

¹⁰⁸⁸ <https://twitter.com/HCWWatch/status/1771307184145502250>

¹⁰⁸⁹ <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>

¹⁰⁹⁰ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1771370478906822877>

¹⁰⁹¹ 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>

¹⁰⁹² <https://twitter.com/trhxianl/status/1771648909753864280>

¹⁰⁹³ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771565663535960309>

¹⁰⁹⁴ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771565663535960309>

¹⁰⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771495855587000429>

¹⁰⁹⁶ <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>

¹⁰⁹⁷ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/04/come-out-you-animals-how-the-massacre-at-al-shifa-hospital-happened>

¹⁰⁹⁸ <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>

¹⁰⁹⁹ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6246/In-a-week-Israeli-army-executes-13-children-in-and-near-Al-Shifa-Hospital>

¹¹⁰⁰ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6254/Al-Shifa-Medical-Complex-Witnesses-One-of-the-Largest-Massacres-in-Palestinian-History>

¹¹⁰¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-israeli-army-uses-palestinian-civilians-human-shields-its-operation-shifa-medical-complex-and-its-neighborhood>

¹¹⁰² <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1772757426887926144>

and civilians were allegedly burned as well.¹¹⁰³ 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.¹¹⁰⁴ Doctors who were in al-Shifa during the siege reported on their extreme experiences.¹¹⁰⁵ At least 22 patients died due to lack of oxygen, food and water.¹¹⁰⁶

After the IDF finally left al-Shifa, hundreds of corpses were found amidst widespread destruction of and in the hospital.¹¹⁰⁷ 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.¹¹⁰⁸ An independent research agency based in academia found evidence that the bodies of those killed during this invasion were bulldozed.¹¹⁰⁹

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.¹¹¹⁰ 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.¹¹¹¹ 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.¹¹¹² Israel's former Prime Minister also claimed that not a single civilian was killed, "unprecedented in urban warfare".¹¹¹³

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.¹¹¹⁴ 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".¹¹¹⁵ 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.¹¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mN1SRUx0R8>

¹¹⁰⁴ <https://twitter.com/PHRIIsrael/status/1771499307478229244> ; also <https://twitter.com/DrTedros/status/1771276290315653372>

¹¹⁰⁵ <https://twitter.com/DrMadsGilbert/status/1774371251881984169>

¹¹⁰⁶ <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>

¹¹⁰⁷ 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/1777726280084963393>

¹¹⁰⁸ <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> ; this

indicates 30 corpses in the relevant mass grave: <https://twitter.com/EuroMedHR/status/1783855639006986260>

¹¹⁰⁹ <https://twitter.com/ForensicArchi/status/1778106742737375471>

¹¹¹⁰ <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>

¹¹¹¹ <https://twitter.com/DrMadsGilbert/status/1775300379967729675>

¹¹¹² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymd23pka>

¹¹¹³ <https://twitter.com/naftalibennett/status/1774663364314091870>

¹¹¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1774816428916412574> ; the number was "over 200" in Israeli media:

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymd23pka>

¹¹¹⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/01/gaza-al-shifa-hospital-israel/>

¹¹¹⁶ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/04/come-out-you-animals-how-the-massacre-at-al-shifa-hospital-happened>

Zoom-in 2: Campus Protests in the US (April 17-May 2024)

Perhaps the most noticeable form of dissent towards American policy on the Israel-Gaza war to date was a series of Gaza solidarity encampments and protests on university campuses that peaked over April and May. Over 150 universities worldwide had encampments, more than 100 of which were in the United States.¹¹¹⁷ *The Guardian* described these protests as “perhaps the most significant student movement since the anti-Vietnam campus protests of the late 1960s”.¹¹¹⁸ The protestors themselves alluded and sometimes explicitly referred to the 1968 protests.

Although students had protested in solidarity with Gaza on campuses from early on, few of these demonstrations drew public attention in the first months of the war.¹¹¹⁹ The campus protests began drawing far more attention in the context of the Columbia encampment and the university’s forceful attempts to remove it in mid and late April. In response, students erected encampments on many other campuses. These encampments often took the form of students putting up tents on campus and holding a position with signs and flags for days or weeks, periodically holding events such as talks or classes, demonstrating and chanting. On some occasions students also took over buildings. As a decentralized movement, encampments in different universities had different demands but most shared sharp criticism towards Israel, especially in context of the war in Gaza. One common student demand was that their university divest from companies that profited from Israel’s occupation, or Israeli companies. Other demands included breaking ties with Israeli institutions of higher education, stopping research that supports the military, supporting Palestinian students or universities, calling for ending military support to Israel, or calling for ceasefire.¹¹²⁰

The protests were mainly an elite college phenomenon,¹¹²¹ at least partially because those universities had larger endowments that could be invested and were more likely to have international connections that included those with Israeli universities, but also perhaps because poorer students at other institutions had other concerns.¹¹²² The elite universities and in particular Columbia University also drew more national attention and had an outsized influence on the perception of the campus protests. The media coverage surrounding these protests was often politicized (see section on media above). An analysis of 553 protests found that 97% of them did not cause serious interpersonal violence (physical violence above pushing or shoving) or property damage (breaking a window or worse). Nearly half of the 3% of protests categorized as violent became so because demonstrators fought with police forces that were sent to clear encampments. Property damage was found in two cases.¹¹²³ Serious clashes between protestors on both sides took place only in UCLA, where video evidence showed pro-Israeli counterprotestors attacking the encampment.¹¹²⁴ Police waited for a few hours before separating both sides, resulting in dozens of injuries among protestors in the Gaza encampment.¹¹²⁵

¹¹¹⁷ These two websites include references and links to the different encampments: <https://students4gaza.directory/>; <https://www.palestineiseverywhere.com/>. This analysis found 123 campuses with encampments and 318 campus with protests: <https://washingtonmonthly.com/2024/05/24/are-gaza-protests-happening-mostly-at-elite-colleges/>

¹¹¹⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/28/us-student-protests-gaza-israel>

¹¹¹⁹ Graph at: <https://theconversation.com/media-coverage-of-campus-protests-tends-to-focus-on-the-spectacle-rather-than-the-substance-229172>

¹¹²⁰ For student demands, organized per university, see <https://students4gaza.directory/>

¹¹²¹ <https://washingtonmonthly.com/2024/05/24/are-gaza-protests-happening-mostly-at-elite-colleges/>

¹¹²² <https://washingtonmonthly.com/2024/05/24/are-gaza-protests-happening-mostly-at-elite-colleges/>

¹¹²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/may/10/peaceful-pro-palestinian-campus-protests>; data and original analysis here: <https://acleddata.com/2024/05/10/us-student-pro-palestine-demonstrations-remain-overwhelmingly-peaceful-aced-brief/>

¹¹²⁴ <https://x.com/BenzionSanders/status/1785681768349118750>; <https://x.com/FilmThePoliceLA/status/1785654963915588036>; <https://forward.com/news/608215/campus-violence-erupts-at-ucla-as-pro-israel-protesters-tries-to-dismantle-encampment/>. For the pro-Israel counterprotestors identity see: <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/16/us/ucla-student-protests-counterprotesters-invs/index.html>; <https://x.com/KyungLahCNN/status/1790908711898165639>. UCLA was otherwise tense as well but violence between protestors was concentrated in the single aforementioned night: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/apr/29/palestinian-israeli-protesters->

Most university administrations opposed the encampments, being pressured by both politicians and their donors. Political pressure was most obvious in a series of hearings in which elite university presidents were brought to Capitol Hill and forced to answer questions about their university policies, mostly surrounding antisemitism and protecting their students.¹¹²⁶ At least two university presidents later lost their jobs as a result.¹¹²⁷ Prominent donors used their donations to apply pressure to universities, publicly or privately threatening and sometimes actually pulling their support.¹¹²⁸ The protests also fed into local politics. At least in the case of New York, a group of dozens of business elites attempted to influence the city's mayor to use the police to deal with protesters in Columbia.¹¹²⁹ Such pressure was likely felt within university as well. As a result of this pressure, many university administrations actively tried to repress student protests in different ways, commonly by using police and campus security who were overwhelmingly associated with using violence on campus. Viral videos from campuses showed heavily armed police forces using rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse protesters.¹¹³⁰ Physical violence was also prevalent, with students and faculty getting beaten up by the police, sometimes on camera.¹¹³¹ As a result, over a month of protests at least 3,025 people were arrested in 61 colleges and universities.¹¹³² Many others were suspended or expelled from their universities. Faculty members were among those arrested as well, sometimes using excessive force.¹¹³³ On many other occasions, university administrations chose less explicit means to deal with the protestors and their voices. These included, for example, moving to online teaching,¹¹³⁴ keeping police on campus,¹¹³⁵ moving ceremonies out of campus, or canceling valedictorian speeches.¹¹³⁶

Some university administrations eventually negotiated with students, sometimes reaching an agreement that fulfilled some student demands.¹¹³⁷ In many other cases, however, universities did not change their policies towards Israel/Gaza. Some universities preferred to resolve the issue by

[clash-university-california](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/30/us/politics/college-encampments.html). It appears that a single pro-Israeli counter-protester was arrested, <https://forward.com/fast-forward/617536/arrest-in-ucla-encampment-violence-edan-on/>

¹¹²⁵ <https://forward.com/opinion/608479/ucla-violence-campus-protests/>; <https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/police-clear-out-pro-palestinian-encampment-at-ucla/>; <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-05-01/la-me-ucla-camp-police>; <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-04-30/ucla-moves-to-shut-down-pro-palestinian-encampment-as-unlawful>

¹¹²⁶ The first hearing in early December included the presidents of Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, and MIT: <https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/11/business/university-leaders-testimony-nightcap/index.html>. The second hearing in mid-April included the president of Columbia: <https://www.cnn.com/business/live-news/columbia-antisemitism-house-testimony/index.html>. The third hearing was for the presidents of Northwestern, Rutgers and UCLA in late May, see: <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/23/us/college-antisemitism-hearing>. Unlike the former two hearings, it had no immediate impact.

¹¹²⁷ U Penn: <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/12/09/penn-president-resigns-00130961>; Harvard: <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/harvard-president-gay-resigns-harvard-crimson-student-newspaper-2024-01-02/>. To date, the president of Columbia has kept her job, but: <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/05/16/columbia-university-faculty-pass-vote-of-no-confidence-in-president-00158393>

¹¹²⁸ <https://www.foxbusiness.com/lifestyle/columbias-billionaire-donors-mull-giving-anti-israel-protests>; <https://www.thedp.com/article/2024/05/penn-donors-react-encampment-university-response>

¹¹²⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2024/05/16/business-leaders-chat-group-eric-adams-columbia-protesters/>

¹¹³⁰ <https://twitter.com/JoshuaPHill/status/1785443970237317351>; <https://x.com/Kahlissee/status/1783538202705285206>; for heavily armed police forces see: <https://x.com/RyanChandlerTV/status/1783197539824468403>; <https://x.com/balagonline/status/1783185444085117425>

¹¹³¹ https://x.com/DD_Geopolitics/status/1783565419305136271; <https://x.com/JoshuaPHill/status/1783518484137226284>; <https://x.com/AkbarSAhmed/status/1785856063226490986>; <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C6MpTOhP5uS/>

¹¹³² <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-campus-protests-50d754675b710c9b983faf9ec9164d81>

¹¹³³ <https://x.com/PatrickQuinnTV/status/1783532600637681964>; <https://x.com/RobertMackey/status/1783684235938894086>; <https://www.newsweek.com/65-year-old-man-lucky-alive-after-arrest-campus-protest-1895846>; <https://x.com/TylerKatzen/status/1785698828420608183>; <https://x.com/meznaqato/status/1785452260324979121>; <https://x.com/probablyreadit/status/1782569732538843267>; <https://x.com/rafaelshimunov/status/1786332708379017607>

¹¹³⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/22/business/columbia-tensions-passover-virtual-classes/index.html>

¹¹³⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/30/nyregion/columbia-shafik-protests-police.html>

¹¹³⁶ <https://dailytrojan.com/2024/04/15/valedictorian-will-not-speak-at-class-of-2024-commencement/>

¹¹³⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/30/us/brown-divestment-deal.html>; <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2024-05-06/ty-article-premium/rutgers-faces-backlash-over-shameful-capitulation-to-pro-palestinian-student-demands/0000018f-4e92-dcda-abcf-6e9711670000>; https://newbrunswick.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2024-05/AGREEMENT_05072024.pdf

declaring that they would no longer comment on political issues not central to university functions.¹¹³⁸ The end of the academic year and the departure of many students from campuses for the summer ended almost all active protests, although in many cases students protested in various end-of-year activities such as staging walkouts of their own graduation ceremonies,¹¹³⁹ raising Palestinian flags or symbols or associated signs,¹¹⁴⁰ or demanding the cancellation of graduation ceremony speakers.¹¹⁴¹

Coverage and reactions

Instead of dealing with the protestors' demands and grievances, media coverage was sensationalized.¹¹⁴² Public attention was drawn to a few examples of incendiary language or signs, as well as to a more general discomfort or lack of personal safety a minority of students felt on campus. Much of the public debate surrounded allegations of antisemitism, often neglecting the fact that a significant portion of the students organizing and participating in the encampments, as well as supportive faculty, were Jewish themselves.¹¹⁴³ In the US, the protests led to a bill that aimed to define antisemitism with a broad definition that included criticism of Israel (the bill passed in the House in May).¹¹⁴⁴

Israeli voices weaponized the antisemitism in both international and domestic discourse. Internationally, Israel's Prime Minister put out a widely covered video address in English in which he described the protests as "antisemitic" and "horrific", comparing them to rallies in German universities in the 1930s (i.e. as the Nazi party rose to power): "Antisemitic mobs have taken over leading universities... They call for the annihilation of Israel. They attack Jewish students. They attack Jewish faculty".¹¹⁴⁵ Netanyahu subsequently described students who chanted "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" – a relatively common call in protests – as "supporting genocide" and linked it to the "sorry state of American education... there's a deep rot and bankruptcy there".¹¹⁴⁶ In Israel, the campus protests were framed as a form of antisemitism and covered far more superficially.¹¹⁴⁷ *Israel Today*, the most widely circulating newspaper in Israel, dedicated its front page on April 25 to "Antisemitism Around the Globe" with a dark photo of a demonstration of people waving Palestinian flags covering most of the page. The subtitle read "[Jews] fearing to speak Hebrew, incitement in the media, and police incompetence... a terrifying reality".¹¹⁴⁸ A lead to the next page presented readers with a solution ("Despite everything, there is only one place to Jews in the world [today]", i.e. Israel).¹¹⁴⁹

¹¹³⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/may/28/harvard-policy-issues-institutional-neutrality>

¹¹³⁹ https://x.com/JalalAK_jojo/status/1793672275809718459 ; <https://twitter.com/iamschvitzing/status/1789666643141914965>

¹¹⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/brainnotonyet/status/1789796916022157770>

¹¹⁴¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/10/us/xavier-vermont-cancel-linda-thomas-greenfield.html>

¹¹⁴² <https://theconversation.com/media-coverage-of-campus-protests-tends-to-focus-on-the-spectacle-rather-than-the-substance-229172> ; <https://www.nybooks.com/online/2024/06/13/acts-of-language-isabella-hammad/>

¹¹⁴³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/24/not-like-other-passovers-hundreds-of-jewish-demonstrators-arrested-after-new-york-protest-seder> ; <https://x.com/rafaelshimunov/status/1786332708379017607> ; <https://x.com/ofercass/status/1783246682626400722>

¹¹⁴⁴ <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2024-05-07/explainer-the-controversy-surrounding-the-antisemitism-bill> . The proposed definition for antisemitism is the one defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, which has often been used to interpret criticism of Israel as antisemitism, see: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2023/apr/24/un-ihra-antisemitism-definition-israel-criticism>

¹¹⁴⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/apr/24/us-campus-protests-benjamin-netanyahu-ceasefire>. Some US lawmakers publicly refuted these claims, e.g. <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1247670359>

¹¹⁴⁶ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-says-college-protesters-chanting-from-the-river-to-the-sea-are-supporting-genocide/

¹¹⁴⁷ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/517399>

¹¹⁴⁸ <https://www.pressreader.com/newspapers/n/israel-hayom/20240425>

¹¹⁴⁹ <https://www.pressreader.com/newspapers/n/israel-hayom/20240425>

Beyond a debate on antisemitism, US media outlets were concerned with the presence of non-students within the protests and their organization, although little evidence was presented to support these claims. A similar question concerned who was “behind” the protests, which appears to have been asked more commonly in conservative-leaning media. A *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece, for example, claimed with no evidence that the protestors were “groomed” by Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houtis.¹¹⁵⁰ Other right-wing commentators blamed George Soros for them.¹¹⁵¹ Israeli media had similar concerns, decrying for example the “billions of dollars” with which Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar bought influence in American universities.¹¹⁵² A third theme of Israeli coverage, aimed primarily at domestic Israeli audiences and almost completely absent from US media coverage, presented American student protestors as ignorant about the real situation in Israel/Palestine and naïve towards Hamas in particular.¹¹⁵³ This talking point was amplified by the work of an initiative heavily promoted by pro-Israel elites.¹¹⁵⁴

The public discussion touched upon Israeli academia as well. The Association of University Heads in Israel (VERA) put out a statement in which they voiced their “deep concern” regarding “the serious cases of violence, antisemitism and anti-Israeli washing through the campuses of many leading American universities, with the support of Palestinian organizations including terrorist organizations”. They proceeded by stating that they would help Jewish and Israeli scholars and students who desired to come to Israeli universities “and find here a personal and academic home”.¹¹⁵⁵ In May, Israel launched a well-funded program to bring Israeli ex-pat and Jewish scholars to the country because of “an unprecedented wave of antisemitism” by offering them generous grants.¹¹⁵⁶

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

¹¹⁵⁰ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/whos-behind-the-anti-israel-protests-hamas-gaza-hezbollah-talking-points-d2f538ca>
¹¹⁵¹ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/some-anti-israel-protesters-are-paid-soros-rockefeller-funding-activism-hamas-fba26c20>; on Soros see also: <https://www.thedailybeast.com/theres-been-a-george-soros-for-every-era-of-antisemitic-panic>
¹¹⁵² E.g. <https://www.ynet.co.il/economy/article/yokra13903697>; <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/Article-1095319>; <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/15711685>
¹¹⁵³ E.g. <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/Article-1095319>
¹¹⁵⁴ For examples aimed at a US domestic audience, but with less traction, see: https://x.com/Facts_For_Peace/status/1794093433818096072; https://x.com/Facts_For_Peace/status/1801653974648410448. For the connection to the group of elites, see the discussion here: <https://www.semafor.com/article/11/09/2023/billionaires-discuss-50-million-anti-hamas-media-blitiz>; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2024/05/16/business-leaders-chat-group-eric-adams-columbia-protesters/>
¹¹⁵⁵ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-1094819>
¹¹⁵⁶ https://www.themarket.com/news/education/2024-05-26/ty-article/_premium/0000018f-b5b6-d390-ab8f-f5bee80a0000; https://www.facebook.com/Bezazelsmotrich/photos/%D7%91%D7%99%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%90%D7%9C%D7%95-%D7%99%D7%95%D7%AA%D7%A8-%D7%9E%D7%AA%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%93-%D7%90%D7%A0%D7%95-%D7%90%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%95%D7%A7%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%91%D7%90%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%A1%D7%99%D7%98%D7%90%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%91%D7%99%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%91%D7%A2%D7%95%D7%9C%D7%9D-%D7%91%D7%95%D7%90/988484582838144/?paipv=0&eav=Afbn2KFToO1qrHWpcUKB5K_G0uVHfC0qdzwc_QxQih_5piL23tHM_3585Pm_Fbxxlxe&_rdr

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.

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 almost 2% 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 over 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 – particularly middle- and low-ranking officers - 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 NGOs¹¹⁵⁷ and now widely by international officials and lawyers¹¹⁵⁸ – as an attempt to bring 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 (middle and lower-ranking officers and NCOs) 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 unwilling¹¹⁵⁹ (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.¹¹⁶⁰ 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. As one reserve officer put it: “the standing orders don’t matter in the field... Just about any battalion commander can decide that whoever moves in his sector is a terrorist”.¹¹⁶¹ A sapper added “the only limit to the number of buildings we blew up was the time we had inside Gaza”.¹¹⁶² 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.¹¹⁶³

¹¹⁵⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/18/israel-starvation-used-weapon-war-gaza>

¹¹⁵⁸ See ICC’s expert panel report, paragraphs 28-33: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2024-05/240520-panel-report-eng.pdf>

¹¹⁵⁹ The general public support that the IDF must maintain plays a significant role – reining in commanders and soldiers would easily lose this support.

¹¹⁶⁰ <https://twitter.com/justfp/status/1775613111711465554>

¹¹⁶¹ <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2024/04/11/the-idf-is-accused-of-military-and-moral-failures-in-gaza> ; for example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aa-VDAjL8vM>

¹¹⁶² <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2024/04/11/the-idf-is-accused-of-military-and-moral-failures-in-gaza>

¹¹⁶³ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/250473/> ; https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/s1x26uvs ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/election2022/article/s1ar9pebi>