

Jan 30, 2024

I do not believe anything written here will lead to a change of policy, or convince many others.¹ Rather, I write this publicly as a historian and Israeli citizen to state for the record, as events are unfolding, my personal position regarding the horrible current situation in Gaza. I write as an individual academic, partially because of the disappointing general silence on this issue among many academic institutions, especially those that are well-positioned to comment on it, even as some of my colleagues have bravely spoken out.

Although I am neither a lawyer nor an expert on the subject, 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 humanity.² A recent (Jan. 26) International Court of Justice Order found that Israel's actions could plausibly be argued to be genocide,³ as experts have pointed out before⁴ and after⁵ the Order – including both action and intent.⁶ The events that took place during the Hamas attacks on Oct. 7 consisted of war crimes and crimes against humanity by Hamas against Israeli civilians. Many others have already written about these events and I do not have much new to add there. However, I believe Israel's response to the events of Oct. 7 over the past four months 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) and 7% (December) of Jewish Israelis believed the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) was using too much firepower in Gaza.⁷

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, in particular its Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which releases almost daily updates about the situation in Gaza, as well as reports by several humanitarian aid and human rights organizations. I have also made use of mainstream media outlets, particularly in cases of factual reporting (e.g. someone saying something). In cases of in-depth investigative reporting I have also used sources like the Israeli +972/Local Call. To support the evidence I have collected from these sources, I have used material from social media from both sides. 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.

This document corresponds to an update and expansion of an earlier version of my understanding of the situation in early January 2024, following ideas and suggestions I have since received. The document's main purpose is still to state my opinion publicly out of a sense of commitment I have to human rights ideals. A secondary purpose is to preserve at least some of the evidence I have come

¹ I chose to write this open statement about what is happening in Gaza having been inspired by John Mearsheimer's similar statement a few weeks ago. https://mearsheimer.substack.com/p/death-and-destruction-in-gaza?publication_id=1753552&post_id=139711017. Additionally important in composing 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>).

² <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/crimes-against-humanity.shtml>

³ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

⁴ <https://time.com/6334409/is-whats-happening-gaza-genocide-experts/>

⁵ <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/>

⁶ <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

⁷ 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>

across as I have been reading about the war. I hope readers find it useful to better understand the circumstances over these difficult days in the present and the future.

Context

Gaza itself is a tiny piece of land, consisting of some 365 square kilometers. Its population is about 2.3 million, making it one of the most densely populated areas on the planet.⁸ Israel controls Gaza's borders, communications, electricity, water and even population registry.⁹ The United Nations, human rights organizations, government ministries (including in the US and the UK) and legal scholars all see Gaza as an occupied territory under the control of Israel.¹⁰ 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,¹¹ Amnesty International¹², and B'Tselem¹³). This has facilitated many of the policies and actions I discuss below.

The massacre of Palestinians

According to the available public data, including data in Israel, about 70% of the deaths in Gaza, over 26,422 as of writing, are of women and children. This consists of over 1 percent of the total population of Gaza.¹⁴ The number does not include thousands of missing people, many still buried under the rubble. As of early January, over 10,000 children were already killed.¹⁵ 65,087 people (about 3 percent of Gaza's population) have been injured.¹⁶

Israeli spokespersons themselves have estimated that two civilians have died for each Hamas militant, and stated that it is a justified ratio.¹⁷ In reality, the ratio is likely far worse – with estimates that about 80-90 percent of deaths have been of civilians.¹⁸ 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").¹⁹ About 40-45% of the air-to-ground munitions Israel has dropped on Gaza are unguided.²⁰ In addition, Israel has also used quadcopters to fire on civilians.²¹

The rate of civilian deaths is shocking, particularly as it continues in real time. 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]"²² Since the beginning of the operation, Israel has

⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-87>

⁹ <https://features.gisha.org/gaza-up-close/>

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

¹² <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/>

¹³ <https://www.btselem.org/topic/apartheid>

¹⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

¹⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-10000-children-killed-nearly-100-days-war>

¹⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

¹⁷ <https://cnn.com/2023/12/05/middleeast/israel-hamas-military-civilian-ratio-killed-intl-hnk/index.html>

¹⁸ See e.g. the considerably lower mortality estimate here (1,000-2,000 Hamas fighters in late November).

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/26/idf-messaging-suggests-gaza-truce-unlikely-to-last-much-beyond-tuesday>

¹⁹ <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>

²⁰ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/13/politics/intelligence-assessment-dumb-bombs-israel-gaza/index.html>

²¹ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-israeli-quadcopters-hi-tech-weapon-menacing-palestinian-civilians>

²² https://twitter.com/UN_News_Centre/status/1726609880986083685

killed an average of about 100 children per day. 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.²³ In 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.²⁴ As UNICEF's Executive Director put it, Gaza is "the most dangerous place in the world to be a child".²⁵

As of January 28, 154 UN staff members have been killed.²⁶ Over 70 and possibly 119 Palestinian journalists 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.²⁷ At least 94 university professors, including several leading Palestinian academics, have been killed.²⁸ At least 337 health workers have been killed.²⁹ Israel's attacks on hospitals have killed hundreds of Palestinians. More have died by 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.³⁰

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reiterated that there is no safe space in Gaza.³¹ There have been multiple mass graves where corpses of Palestinians have been deposited,³² with additional decomposed corpses in the streets.³³ Preliminary reports have "documented dozens of cases of field executions carried out by the Israeli army".³⁴ 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.³⁵ Few of these cases have even been covered in Israeli media.³⁶

In a recent poll, two thirds of Israelis preferred to continue the war in its current form of excessive bombardment and violence.³⁷

Causing the deaths of civilian populations

Israel has placed a stranglehold on the Palestinian population of Gaza since the beginning of the war. The amounts of food, fuel, medicine and water are extremely limited. The absence of supplies in

²³ <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/gaza-3195-children-killed-three-weeks-surpasses-annual-number-children-killed-conflict-zones>;

²⁴ <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>.

²⁵ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/press-releases/statement-by-unicef-executive-director-catherine-russell-on-the-resumption-of-fighting-in-gaza/>

²⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

²⁷ <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>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

²⁸ <https://www.ici-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20231228-app-01-00-en.pdf> (#90);

<https://twitter.com/Timesofgaza/status/1744041205938409756>; <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1743662116614070495> ;

<https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1745135460270096699>; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6108/Israel-kills-dozens-of-academics,-destroys-every-university-in-the-Gaza-Strip>

²⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

³⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/03/gaza-premature-babies-dead-nasr/>

³¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-82>

³² <https://www.reuters.com/pictures/all-cemeteries-are-full-palestinians-buried-mass-grave-gaza-2023-11-22/>

³³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Poydd3EG-8>.

³⁴ <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>

³⁵ <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>

³⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syv8bslop>

³⁷ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/52071>

Gaza – a siege – has been the stated policy of top Israeli officials since the beginning of the war.³⁸ Only about 20-30% of the 500 trucks necessary to supply Gaza for humanitarian causes are allowed in daily, and encounter multiple problems as they try to do so.³⁹ Gaza is experiencing full electricity blackout.⁴⁰ Fuel prices, for example, have increased by over 500 percent.⁴¹

As a result, the vast majority of Gaza's population is at risk of famine. Virtually all households are skipping meals every day, with 50-80% of households going entire days and nights without eating.⁴² Some 90% of civilians in Gaza experience "high levels of acute food insecurity".⁴³ Some 40% experience "emergency levels" and over 15% (378,000) experience catastrophic levels, namely "extreme lack of food, starvation and exhaustion of coping capacities".⁴⁴ 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."⁴⁵ 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 career⁴⁶ 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".⁴⁷ Images and videos from the strip appear to confirm these findings.⁴⁸ Despite this situation, IDF officers demand a further lowering of the humanitarian aid to Gaza.⁴⁹

The average water supply per person in Gaza is between 1.5-1.8 liters daily (the minimum average volume of water for drinking and domestic hygiene should be 15 liters).⁵⁰ The lack of medical supplies has resulted in the conduction of medical operations, including C-sections and amputations, without anesthesia or blood supplies.⁵¹ An online video shows a Gazan doctor who had to amputate his daughter's foot on the dining table in their home without anesthesia.⁵² 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.⁵³ 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

³⁸ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/defense-minister-announces-complete-siege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/ ; <https://twitter.com/KnessetT/status/171650248633113922>

³⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>
<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/remarks-media-secretary-general>

⁴⁰ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>.

⁴¹ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000154766/download/>

⁴² 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>

⁴³ <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>

⁴⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

⁴⁵ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/gaza-is-starving>

⁴⁶ https://youtu.be/0pGgFZovlAw?si=mone7I85_SobAivS&t=875

⁴⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/11/health/gaza-israel-hunger-starvation.html>

⁴⁸ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1750503719806923075> ; <https://twitter.com/NABEELRAJAB/status/1750017231197544706>;

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

⁴⁹ <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3633138>

⁵⁰ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000154766/download/>

⁵¹ <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.iuoor.org/cached_uploads/download/2023/11/11/maternal-health-report-final-1699726911.pdf

⁵² <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1746887014337671410>

⁵³ https://www.iuoor.org/cached_uploads/download/2023/11/11/maternal-health-report-final-1699726911.pdf

“simply inhumane”.⁵⁴ Miscarriages in Gaza have increased by 300% compared to the pre-war situation.⁵⁵

There are over 400,000 reported cases of diseases in Gaza so far.⁵⁶ Over 100,000 cases of diarrhea have been reported, half of which are among children aged 5 or less (25 times the pre-conflict frequency).⁵⁷ In a single week in mid-December, 3,200 cases of diarrhea were reported every day (compared to 2,000 per month before the war).⁵⁸ On average, there is one shower in Gaza for every 4,500 people, and a toilet for every 220.⁵⁹ 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 Minister⁶⁰ – have spoken in favor of allowing diseases to decimate the civilian population in Gaza.⁶¹

As a result of the above, the chair of global public health at the University of Edinburgh has stated 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”.⁶²

Israeli discourse and de-humanization of Palestinians

Much of the above is made possible through the consistent de-humanization of Palestinians, fore and foremost those living in Gaza. This dehumanization has proceeded from the top of the Israeli state. Israel’s Prime Minister has described the conflict as “a struggle between the children of light and the children of darkness, between humanity and the law of the jungle”,⁶³ stated that “this war is civilization against barbarism”⁶⁴ and defined the war as a battle against the Biblical Amalek,⁶⁵ which the Bible directs to annihilate completely.⁶⁶ Israel’s President has stated that Israel did not distinguish between militants and civilians, “it’s an entire nation out there that is responsible”.⁶⁷ He also personally wrote a message on an artillery shell to be shot into Gaza.⁶⁸ Israel’s Minister of Defense has described the Palestinians in Gaza as “human animals”. At least five other government ministers have made similar statements.⁶⁹ Israel’s National Security minister told Border Police troops they should shoot terrorists even if the terrorists do not threaten them, against procedure.⁷⁰ 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 לְהַשְׁמִיד] all Gazans”.⁷¹ Other politicians have done the

⁵⁴ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/babies-dying-preventable-causes-besieged-gaza-oxfam>

⁵⁵ <https://jezebel.com/miscarriages-in-gaza-have-increased-300-under-israeli-1851168680>

⁵⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-82>

⁵⁷ <https://www.who.int/news/item/21-12-2023-lethal-combination-of-hunger-and-disease-to-lead-to-more-deaths-in-gaza>

⁵⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-86>

⁵⁹ <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>

⁶⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r1zlcnoqa>

⁶¹ <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001462900>

⁶² <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/29/health-organisations-disease-gaza-population-outbreaks-conflict>

⁶³ <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/children-post-deleted-netanyahu/>

⁶⁴ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-to-dutch-leader-this-war-is-civilization-vs-barbarism/

⁶⁵ <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>

⁶⁶ 1 Samuel 15.2-3.

⁶⁷ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/israel-gaza-isaac-herzog_n_65295ee8e4b03ea0c004e2a8

⁶⁸ <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2024-01-03/ty-article/.premium/a-munition-signed-by-israeli-president-could-hit-a-child/0000018c-bc4-d4e1-ad8f-fff5a0c70000>

⁶⁹ <https://www.ici-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20231228-app-01-00-en.pdf>, pp. 60-62.

⁷⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkxx1alft>

⁷¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMxnNkQsfmQ>

prisoners and captives have died in Israeli jails since the beginning of the war.⁹⁵ The IDF has admitted that additional detained Palestinians from Gaza have died but refused to supply additional details.⁹⁶ The IDF refused to answer whether it opened Military Police investigations for the deaths of Gazan captives.⁹⁷

Ethnic cleansing

Ethnic cleansing is openly discussed in Israeli discourse, including by ministers in the ruling government. This includes the ministers of Finance,⁹⁸ National Security,⁹⁹ the former minister of Information¹⁰⁰ and a former Minister of Justice.¹⁰¹ A Israeli government plan proposal to repopulate all Gazans to the Sinai Peninsula (part of Egypt) has been leaked.¹⁰² Israel has also attempted to get the US to pressure Egypt into accepting Gazan refugees,¹⁰³ and has attempted to convince several countries including Congo to accept Palestinian refugees.¹⁰⁴ Other locations members of Israel government suggested as potential resettlement locations include Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the European Union and Chile.¹⁰⁵ According to Israeli media, Chad and Rwanda have expressed interest to accept tens of thousands of Palestinians in exchange for generous financial support that included military support.¹⁰⁶

The absence of clear 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.¹⁰⁷ Over 30 right-wing organizations have supported this goal in a late January conference.¹⁰⁸ A total of 11 ministers and 15 MPs (of a total of 120) participated in the conference.¹⁰⁹ Several IDF soldiers have stated their will to resettle Gaza while uniformed and within Gaza.¹¹⁰ IDF soldiers appear to have constructed “the first synagogue in Khan Younis”,¹¹¹ another synagogue there,¹¹² as well as inaugurated a Torah scroll in two occasions (Sheikh Radwan in Gaza City and the Islamic University in Gaza).¹¹³ 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.¹¹⁴

<https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1747273886264443173> ;

https://twitter.com/brown_johnbrown/status/1743021596682371453

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-12-06/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-3b9b-d11b-a3bf-ffb16d80000>;

<https://twitter.com/KhalilAsslan/status/174192648246333866>

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

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-call-for-resettling-gazas-palestinians-building-settlements-in-strip/>

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-call-for-resettling-gazas-palestinians-building-settlements-in-strip/>

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEU-dQWOIL4>

<https://www.mekomit.co.il/%D7%94%D7%9e%D7%a1%D7%9e%D7%9a-%D7%94%D7%9e%D7%9c%D7%90-%D7%a9%D7%9c-%D7%9e%D7%a9%D7%a8%D7%93-%D7%94%D7%9e%D7%95%D7%93%D7%99%D7%a2%D7%99%D7%9f-%D7%9b%D7%99%D7%91%D7%95%D7%a9-%D7%a2%D7%96%D7%94-%D7%95/>

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

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

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

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

https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2023_q4/Article-9f47fed9563eb81027.htm

<https://twitter.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1746855797328433438>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All the evidence I have seen indicates that Israel is systematically destroying Gaza to make it unlivable in the future. 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.¹¹⁵ Over 60 percent of Gaza's housing units have been destroyed or damaged.¹¹⁶ Israel has destroyed not only buildings whose connection to Hamas militants is weak,¹¹⁷ but also a long list of cultural institutions,¹¹⁸ historical and archaeological sites,¹¹⁹ dozens of governmental buildings (including the parliament¹²⁰ and the main courthouse)¹²¹, religious buildings (over 161 mosques and 3 churches¹²²), universities (all universities in Gaza have been destroyed according to Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor),¹²³ public libraries¹²⁴ and archives.¹²⁵ Already in early December, Israeli attacks destroyed or damaged more than 100 heritage sites,¹²⁶ including buildings from Gaza's medieval, Byzantine and Roman periods. Soldiers have been filmed within a warehouse filled with antiquities, and there appears to have been a post by the director of the Israel Antiquities Authority that claimed that some of those antiquities were taken to Israel and presented in the Knesset (the post was later deleted).¹²⁷ Over 90% of all school buildings have sustained damage.¹²⁸ 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.¹²⁹ At least 16 cemeteries have been desecrated by the IDF, often by bulldozing.¹³⁰ A video shows the results of such an operation, with corpses left scattered across the landscape.¹³¹ The IDF further bulldozed broad areas in the Gaza strip.¹³² The amount of debris created by the destruction of residential areas (>8,000,000 metric tons) will take over 3 years to remove according to estimates.¹³³

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

¹¹⁵ <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/>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/>

¹¹⁸ E.g. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israeli-army-says-it-struck-islamic-university-of-gaza/3015542>

¹¹⁹ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-26/ty-article-magazine/.premium/bombing-historical-sites-in-gaza-israel-is-destroying-everything-beautiful/0000018c-a565-df1f-a7bf-b7e53e8e0000>; <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2023/12/22/gaza-city-archives-among-heritage-sites-destroyed-in-israel-hamas-war>

¹²⁰ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542>

¹²¹ <https://www.newarab.com/news/israel-destroys-gaza-courthouse-dozens-govt-buildings>

¹²² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

¹²³ <https://twitter.com/PeruginiNic/status/1747730495482310771>; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6108/israel-kills-dozens-of-academics-destroys-every-university-in-the-Gaza-Strip>

¹²⁴ <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2023-12-12/gaza-library-bombing>; <https://lithub.com/gazas-main-public-library-has-been-destroyed/>

¹²⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCNftkL7cx4>

¹²⁶ <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>

¹²⁷ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240122-israel-army-displays-artefacts-stolen-from-gaza-in-the-knesset/>;

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

¹²⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

¹²⁹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1744195835577921772>

¹³⁰ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/20/middleeast/israel-gaza-cemeteries-desecrated-investigation-intl-cmd/index.html>;

<https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1749145986595713498>

¹³¹ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1743386378606412188>

¹³² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750443193575886945>

¹³³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-104>

in World War II.¹³⁴ The destruction in Gaza has resulted in the displacement of some 75 percent of Gaza's population.¹³⁵

Hostages

Within this context, the Israeli government – and significant segments in Israeli society – has refrained from making serious moves to release the 136 Israeli hostages that remain in Gaza.¹³⁶ To date, a single hostage of some 240 hostages taken on October 7 has been released by a military operation.¹³⁷ Three other Israeli hostages were killed by IDF forces within Gaza despite waving white flags and calling for help.¹³⁸ Another was killed during an attempted rescue operation.¹³⁹ Three others were supposedly killed by gas that the IDF flooded the tunnels with.¹⁴⁰

On the other hand, a temporary ceasefire has resulted in the release of 105 hostages.¹⁴¹ 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.¹⁴²

The West Bank

The West Bank has received less attention in media and public discourse. Nonetheless, the situation there has deteriorated quickly since the beginning of the war. At least 15 herding/Bedouin Palestinian settlements there have been abandoned after attacks by Israeli Jewish settlers (464 recorded since October 7).¹⁴³ These settlers have killed several Palestinians.¹⁴⁴ A total of 362 Palestinians have been killed so far, 352 to 354 by IDF activity in the area and 8 to 10 by the aforementioned settlers (8 or 9).¹⁴⁵ 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. Since October 7, 4,366 Palestinians have been injured in the West Bank.¹⁴⁶ Several videos depict the killing of unarmed and unthreatening Palestinians.¹⁴⁷ 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.¹⁴⁸ Multiple videos present Israeli troops humiliating Palestinians¹⁴⁹ and destroying their property¹⁵⁰ or public infrastructure.¹⁵¹

¹³⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-bombs-destruction-death-toll-scope-419488c511f83c85baea22458472a796>

¹³⁵ <https://twitter.com/UNHumanRights/status/1742863747683668418>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

¹³⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

¹³⁷ <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-ffcdcbcdc0000>

¹³⁸ <https://www.ft.com/content/2e299603-2fed-4855-9694-9801008c48dc>

¹³⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjzpo117da>

¹⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/tomashinyu3/status/1747651031737979233>

¹⁴¹ <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2023/12/world/hostage-israel-hamas-deal-dg/>

¹⁴² <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-1061467>

¹⁴³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-104>

¹⁴⁴ For example: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2024/01/09/israel-settler-violence-qusra-west-bank/>

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-104>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-104>

¹⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1746987605034447294>

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-forces-kill-3-gunmen-west-bank-hospital-army-says-2024-01-30/>

¹⁴⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1741445118333222937>; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1748100280560845092>;

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

More Palestinians 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 have been subjected to torture and degrading treatment, according to Amnesty.¹⁵² Many descriptions of released detainees refer to constant abuse by their prison staff.¹⁵³ One recently said that daily, since Oct. 7 their guards require them to crawl while draped in an Israeli flag and kiss the Israeli flag, beating them if they refuse to do so. Food was thrown to the floor and stepped on.¹⁵⁴

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.

- Lee Mordechai

Do not go gentle into that good night \ Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

¹⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1743038305581593033> ;

¹⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1751125745701671025>

¹⁵² <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/>

¹⁵³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/2023-12-30/ty-article/0000018c-b51e-d45c-a98e-bf5e7a340000>

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-c6e5-d6c4-ab8d-e7f561840000>