

9 Jan. 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, 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 humanity² that could plausibly be argued to be genocide³ – including both action and intent.⁴ While 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, I believe Israel's response to those events over the past three 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.⁵

I state my position based on several pieces of evidence, as below:

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.⁶ Israel controls Gaza's borders, communications, electricity, water and even population registry.⁷ 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,⁸ Amnesty International⁹, and B'Tselem¹⁰). This has facilitated many of the policies and actions I discuss below.

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

⁴ <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

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>

⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-87>

⁷ <https://features.gisha.org/gaza-up-close/>

⁸ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

⁹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/>

¹⁰ <https://www.btselem.org/topic/apartheid>

The massacre of Palestinians

According to the available public data, including data in Israel, about 70% of the deaths in Gaza, over 23,210 as of writing, are of women and children. This consists of about 1 percent of the total population of Gaza.¹¹ As of mid December, over 7,000 children were already killed.¹² 59,167 people (over 2 percent of Gaza's population) have been injured.¹³

Israeli spokespersons themselves have estimated that two civilians have died for each Hamas militant, and stated that it is a justified ratio.¹⁴ In reality, the ratio is likely far worse – with estimates that about 80-90 percent of deaths have been of civilians.¹⁵ 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").¹⁶ About 40-45% of the air-to-ground munitions Israel has dropped on Gaza are unguided, causing more collateral damage.¹⁷

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]".¹⁸ Since the beginning of the operation, Israel has 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.¹⁹ 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.²⁰ As UNICEF's Executive Director put it, Gaza is "the most dangerous place in the world to be a child".²¹

As of December 27, 144 UN staff members have been killed.²² Over 70 and possibly 112 Palestinian journalists have been killed, more than the entirety of World War II, and at a rate higher than any other conflict over the past century.²³ Several leading Palestinian academics have been killed.²⁴ At

¹¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-94>

¹² <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/gaza-children-war-israel-b2462281.html>

¹³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-94>

¹⁴ <https://cnn.com/2023/12/05/middleeast/israel-hamas-military-civilian-ratio-killed-intl-hnk/index.html>

¹⁵ 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>

¹⁶ [https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/;](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>

¹⁷ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/13/politics/intelligence-assessment-dumb-bombs-israel-gaza/index.html>

¹⁸ https://twitter.com/UN_News_Centre/status/1726609880986083685

¹⁹ [https://www.savethechildren.net/news/gaza-3195-children-killed-three-weeks-surpasses-annual-number-children-killed-conflict-zones;](https://www.savethechildren.net/news/gaza-3195-children-killed-three-weeks-surpasses-annual-number-children-killed-conflict-zones)

²⁰ [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.](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)

²¹ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/press-releases/statement-by-unicef-executive-director-catherine-russell-on-the-resumption-of-fighting-in-gaza/>

²² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-94>

²³ [https://cpj.org/2024/01/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/;](https://cpj.org/2024/01/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/)

[https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/9/how-deadly-is-the-israel-gaza-war-for-journalists;](https://www.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-94>

²⁴ <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/Timesofgaza/status/1744041205938409756)

<https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1743662116614070495>

least 326 health workers have been killed.²⁵ 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 a state of decomposition as nobody cared for them.²⁶

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reiterated that there is no safe space in Gaza.²⁷ There have been multiple mass graves where corpses of Palestinians have been deposited,²⁸ with additional decomposed corpses in the streets.²⁹ Preliminary reports have "documented dozens of cases of field executions carried out by the Israeli army".³⁰ In one such event, on 19 Dec. IDF troops are said to "summarily killed at least 11 unarmed Palestinian men in front of their family members".³¹ Few of these cases have even been covered in Israeli media.³²

In a recent poll, two thirds of Israelis preferred to continue the war in its current form of excessive bombardment and violence.³³

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 Gaza – a siege – has been the stated policy of top Israeli officials since the beginning of the war.³⁴ Only about 20-25% 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.³⁵ Gaza is experiencing full electricity blackout.³⁶ Fuel prices, for example, have increased by over 500 percent.³⁷

As a result, the vast majority of Gaza's population is at risk of famine. Some 90% of civilians in Gaza experience "high levels of acute food insecurity".³⁸ Some 40% experience "emergency levels" and over 15% (378,000) experience catastrophic levels, namely "extreme lack of food, starvation and exhaustion of coping capacities".³⁹ 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

²⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-88>

²⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/03/gaza-premature-babies-dead-nasr/>

²⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-82>

²⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/pictures/all-cemeteries-are-full-palestinians-buried-mass-grave-gaza-2023-11-22/>

²⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Poydd3EG-8>.

³⁰ <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>

³¹ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unlawful-killings-in-gaza-city-ohchr-press-release/>

³² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syv8bslop>

³³ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/52071>

³⁴ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/defense-minister-announces-complete-siege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/ ; <https://twitter.com/KnessetT/status/1716502486331113922>

³⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-94;>

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/remarks-media-secretary-general>

³⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-94>.

³⁷ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000154766/download/>

³⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-94;>

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

³⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-94>

terms of speed.”⁴⁰ Despite this situation, IDF officers demand a further lowering of the humanitarian aid to Gaza.⁴¹

The average water supply per person in Gaza is between 1.5-1.8 liters (the minimum average volume of water for drinking and domestic hygiene should be 15 liters).⁴² The lack of medical supplies has resulted in the conduction of medical operations, including C-sections and amputations, without anesthesia or blood supplies.⁴³ Women who face postpartum bleeding as they give birth have underwent hysterotomies for lack of medicine and blood supply, preventing them from giving birth in the future.⁴⁴ 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 diarrhea 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”.⁴⁵

There are over 400,000 reported cases of diseases in Gaza so far.⁴⁶ 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).⁴⁷ 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).⁴⁸ On average, there is one shower in Gaza for every 4,500 people, and a toilet for every 220.⁴⁹ 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 Minister⁵⁰ – have spoken in favor of allowing diseases to decimate the civilian population in Gaza.⁵¹

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”.⁵²

⁴⁰ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/gaza-is-starving>

⁴¹ <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3633138>

⁴² <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000154766/download/>

⁴³ <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

⁴⁴ https://www.juzoor.org/cached_uploads/download/2023/11/11/maternal-health-report-final-1699726911.pdf

⁴⁵ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/babies-dying-preventable-causes-besieged-gaza-oxfam>

⁴⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-82>

⁴⁷ <https://www.who.int/news/item/21-12-2023-lethal-combination-of-hunger-and-disease-to-lead-to-more-deaths-in-gaza>

⁴⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-86>

⁴⁹ <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>

⁵⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r1zlcnoqa>

⁵¹ <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001462900>

⁵² <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/29/health-organisations-disease-gaza-population-outbreaks-conflict>

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",⁵³ stated that "this war is civilization against barbarism"⁵⁴ and defined the war as a battle against the Biblical Amalek,⁵⁵ which the Bible directs to annihilate completely.⁵⁶ Israel's President has stated that Israel did not distinguish between militants and civilians, "it's an entire nation out there that is responsible".⁵⁷ He also personally wrote a message on an artillery shell to be shot into Gaza.⁵⁸ Israel's Minister of Defense has described the Palestinians in Gaza as "human animals". At least five other government ministers have made similar statements.⁵⁹ 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".⁶⁰ Other politicians have done the same.⁶¹ In early January, a long list of rabbis, academics and ten MPs have called for the cessation of all humanitarian aid to Gaza.⁶² 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.⁶³

The dehumanization of Palestinians is now pervasive and obvious in countless videos⁶⁴ that present shooting civilians waving white flags,⁶⁵ abuse of individuals,⁶⁶ captives and corpses,⁶⁷ gleefully damaging or destroying houses⁶⁸, various structures and institutions,⁶⁹ religious sites⁷⁰ and theft of

⁵³ <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/children-post-deleted-netanyahu/>

⁵⁴ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-to-dutch-leader-this-war-is-civilization-vs-barbarism/

⁵⁵ <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>

⁵⁶ 1 Samuel 15.2-3.

⁵⁷ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/israel-gaza-isaac-herzog_n_65295ee8e4b03ea0c004e2a8

⁵⁸ <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>

⁵⁹ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20231228-app-01-00-en.pdf>, pp. 60-62.

⁶⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMxnNkQsfmQ>

⁶¹ <https://twitter.com/AmirHetsroni/status/1743063371551822292> (speaker is Moshe Feiglin)

⁶² <https://twitter.com/shilofreid/status/1742919348401135788>

⁶³ https://twitter.com/itamar_green/status/1741504115874627765

⁶⁴ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/videos-of-israeli-soldiers-acting-maliciously-emerge-amid-international-outcry-against-tactics-in-gaza>

⁶⁵ <https://twitter.com/middleeasteye/status/1744351540435935525>

⁶⁶ <https://www.mistaclim.org/he/post/%D7%94%D7%92%D7%99%D7%91%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%A0%D7%95>

⁶⁷ Long list of videos at: <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1713533460290076817>,

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

⁶⁸ <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>

⁶⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1742346460559995063>;

<https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1743626241104543942>

⁷⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=if_Z2ZegrN8

personal belongings,⁷¹ as well as defacing Palestinian symbols.⁷² The IDF has even brought influencers to mockingly “review” a “hotel” in Gaza.⁷³

Significant but unknown numbers of Palestinians have been arrested and moved to camps within Israel.⁷⁴ Many of these Palestinians (as much as 85-90% according to Israeli media) are arrested without any concrete connection to Hamas.⁷⁵ The conditions throughout the process of arrest and detainment are appalling, as a released Gazan poet has recently narrated in detail.⁷⁶ Many others have shared similar stories.⁷⁷ Online videos provide more evidence.⁷⁸ To date, at least 7 Palestinian prisoners and captives have died in Israeli jails since the beginning of the war.⁷⁹ The IDF has admitted that additional detained Palestinians from Gaza have died but refused to supply additional details.⁸⁰ The IDF refused to answer whether it opened Military Police investigations for the deaths of Gazan captives.⁸¹

Ethnic cleansing

Ethnic cleansing is openly discussed in Israeli discourse, including by ministers in the ruling government. This includes the ministers of Finance,⁸² National Security,⁸³ the former minister of Information⁸⁴ and a former Minister of Justice.⁸⁵ A Israeli government plan proposal to repopulate all Gazans to the Sinai Peninsula (part of Egypt) has been leaked.⁸⁶ Israel has also attempted to get the

⁷¹ <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>

⁷² <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1742273606699106542>;
<https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1743712184725594564>

⁷³ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1743296706576269446>;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1739728935779234254>

⁷⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/09/gaza-civilians-detained-israel/>

⁷⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-12-10/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-542b-df2f-adac-fe2f4bf80000>

⁷⁶ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/01/01/a-palestinian-poets-perilous-journey-out-of-gaza>

⁷⁷ <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/>

⁷⁸ https://twitter.com/brown_johnbrown/status/1743021596682371453

⁷⁹ <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>

⁸⁰ <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/>

⁸¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-c6e1-d6c4-ab8d-e7f5fd670000>

⁸² <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-call-for-resettling-gazas-palestinians-building-settlements-in-strip/>

⁸³ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-call-for-resettling-gazas-palestinians-building-settlements-in-strip/>

⁸⁴ <https://www.hidabroot.org/article/1187840>

⁸⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEu-dQWOIL4>

⁸⁶ <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/>

US to pressure Egypt into accepting Gazan refugees,⁸⁷ and has attempted to convince several countries including Congo to accept Palestinian refugees.⁸⁸ Other locations members of Israel government suggested as potential resettlement locations include Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the European Union and Chile.⁸⁹ 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.⁹⁰ The absence of clear war goals or a clear end game to the war has allowed a majority of Israelis to support the resettling of Gaza with Jewish settlements after the war.⁹¹ IDF soldiers appear to have constructed “the first synagogue in Khan Younis”,⁹² as well as inaugurated a Torah scroll to Sheikh Radwan in Gaza City.⁹³

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.⁹⁴ Over 60 percent of Gaza’s housing units have been destroyed or damaged.⁹⁵ Israel has destroyed not only buildings whose connection to Hamas militants is weak,⁹⁶ but also a long list of cultural institutions,⁹⁷ historical and archaeological sites,⁹⁸ dozens of governmental buildings (including the parliament⁹⁹ and the main courthouse)¹⁰⁰, religious buildings (over 142 mosques and 3 churches¹⁰¹), public libraries¹⁰² and archives.¹⁰³ Already a month ago, Israeli attacks destroyed or damaged more than 100 heritage sites,¹⁰⁴ including buildings from Gaza’s medieval, Byzantine and Roman periods. Over 69% of all school buildings have sustained damage.¹⁰⁵ One an IDF soldier claims his unit received orders to destroy the village of Khuza`a and uploaded a video showing that they accomplished the mission

⁸⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/12/21/biden-netanyahu-dispute-palestinian-state/>

⁸⁸ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/israeli-officials-said-in-talks-with-congo-others-on-taking-in-gaza-emigrants/

⁸⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/01/04/gaza-displaced-civilians-resettlement-israel/>

⁹⁰ <https://www.zman.co.il/453910/popup/>

⁹¹ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2023_q4/Article-9f47fed9563eb81027.htm

⁹² <https://twitter.com/yanivkub/status/1742189448006127715>

⁹³ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1743588216630919271>

⁹⁴ <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/>

⁹⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-87>

⁹⁶ <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/>

⁹⁷ E.g. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israeli-army-says-it-struck-islamic-university-of-gaza/3015542>

⁹⁸ <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>

⁹⁹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.newarab.com/news/israel-destroys-gaza-courthouse-dozens-govt-buildings>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-94>

¹⁰² <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2023-12-12/gaza-library-bombing>; <https://lithub.com/gazas-main-public-library-has-been-destroyed/>

¹⁰³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCNftkL7cx4>

¹⁰⁴ <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>

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-87>

over two weeks.¹⁰⁶ Another video claims to show a the destruction of a graveyard by IDF bulldozers that left corpses scattered across the landscape.¹⁰⁷

In two months of fighting, Israel has 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.¹⁰⁸ The destruction in Gaza has resulted in the displacement of some 85 percent of Gaza's population.¹⁰⁹

Hostages

Within this context, the Israeli government – and significant segments in Israeli society – has refrained from making serious moves to release the 128 to 136 Israeli hostages that remain in Gaza.¹¹⁰ To date, a single hostage of some 240 hostages taken on October 7 has been released by a military operation.¹¹¹ Three other Israeli hostages were killed by IDF forces within Gaza despite waving white flags and calling for help.¹¹² Another was killed during an attempted rescue operation.¹¹³

On the other hand, a temporary ceasefire has resulted in the release of 105 hostages.¹¹⁴ 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.¹¹⁵

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 (386 recorded since October 7).¹¹⁶ These settlers have killed several Palestinians. A total of some 329 have been killed so far by IDF activity in the area (320 or 321) as well as the aforementioned settlers (8 or 9).¹¹⁷ 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, 4,068 Palestinians

¹⁰⁶ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1744195835577921772>

¹⁰⁷ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1743386378606412188>

¹⁰⁸ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-bombs-destruction-death-toll-scope-419488c511f83c85baea22458472a796>

¹⁰⁹ <https://twitter.com/UNHumanRights/status/1742863747683668418>;

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-94>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-87>

¹¹¹ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-10-30/ty-article/.premium/israel-rescues-woman-soldier-kidnapped-to-gaza-by-amas/0000018b-81cc-df47-a3df-ffcdcbcdc0000>

¹¹² <https://www.ft.com/content/2e299603-2fed-4855-9694-9801008c48dc>

¹¹³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjzpo117da>

¹¹⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2023/12/world/hostage-israel-amas-deal-dg/>

¹¹⁵ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-1061467>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-87>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-87>

have been injured in the West Bank.¹¹⁸ Multiple videos present Israeli troops humiliating Palestinians¹¹⁹ and destroying their property.¹²⁰

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.¹²¹ 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.¹²²

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 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.

¹¹⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-87>

¹¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1741445118333222937>

¹²⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1743038305581593033>

¹²¹ <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/>

¹²² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-c6e5-d6c4-ab8d-e7f561840000>