

Bearing Witness to the Israel-Gaza War

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March 9, 2025 (version 6.6.o)

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Summary

Last updated:¹ November 29, 2024

I, Lee Mordechai, a historian by profession and an Israeli citizen, bear witness in this document to the 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 committing genocide against the Palestinian population in Gaza. I explain why I chose to use the term below. Israel's campaign is ostensibly its reaction to the Hamas massacre of Oct. 7, 2023, in which war crimes and crimes against humanity were 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, historical grievances and atrocities do not 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 dozens to hundreds 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 June 18, 2024 by adding much content and evidence to existing sections, adding new sections (an appendix on methodology and a focus on the Oct.-Nov. 2024 campaign in northern Gaza) as well as responding to the discussion it initiated. Due to the sheer amount of material and the expansion of the war, I move in this version from updating the entire document at once to a model that updates sections separately, starting from the beginning of the document.

Over the past year, Israel has repeatedly massacred Palestinians in Gaza, killing over 44,000 Palestinians – at least 60% of whom are women, children and elderly – as of writing. At least one hundred thousand others have been injured and more than 10,000 are still 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. Many 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 confirmed 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. The overall mortality in Gaza is unknown, but is almost certainly much higher than the official death toll.

Israeli discourse has dehumanized Palestinians to such an extent that the vast majority of Israeli Jews supports the aforementioned measures. The dehumanization was led by Israel's highest state officials, and it continues to be supported through the state infrastructure and military. Dehumanization is also widely prevalent in broader civil society. Speaking about Palestinians in genocidal language is legitimate in Israeli discourse. The

¹ I thank Hanoch Sheinman for commenting on the November 2024 version of this section.

dehumanization results in widespread abuse of, and violence towards, detained Palestinians and Gazan civilians and their property, all with almost no consequences. The vast majority of dehumanizing content is shared by Israelis themselves, 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, sometimes by persuading or pressuring other states. 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 60% of the buildings in the Gaza Strip have been destroyed or damaged.

One of the purposes of the war, according to the Israeli government, is to release the hostages – some 101 of whom remain in Hamas' captivity. The evidence demonstrates that compared to the ethnic cleansing this is a low priority for Israel's 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. Members of Israel's government have also attacked the families of the hostages, and their associates have attempted to prevent them from speaking up politically.

The global attention to Gaza, and at times to Lebanon, Iran and Syria, has drawn attention away from the West Bank. There, Israel's operations through its military or settlers since the beginning of the war have resulted in the killing of over 700 Palestinians, the ethnic cleansing of at least 20 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 factual claims, limited information flows from Gaza, discredited critical voices outside Israel, and curtailed domestic discourse to rally the Israeli public around the war. As a result, Israeli media and discourse remain predominantly and uncritically pro-war, with many institutions and individuals self-censoring. 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 normalizes Israeli violence and actions by portraying them as legitimate, deflects attention away from the reality in Gaza, and contributes to the dehumanization 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 the US gave Israel unprecedented support. Dissenters in the US –

both government employees and sizable groups in American society – had little to no influence on US policy.

I examine more specific events in three zoom-in sections as case studies of many of the themes described above:

1. The second raid on the al-Shifa hospital in late March 2024
2. The student protests across the US in April and May 2024
3. The military operation in the northern Gaza Strip in October and November 2024 (ongoing)

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 the document's two appendices, I explain my reasoning for using this term and discuss my methodology.

Professional and ethical statement (including trigger warning)

Last updated:² November 29, 2024

The following document represents my understanding of the war in Gaza. It was compiled by me alone, except for a subsection on healthcare (marked below) which I wrote together with a colleague, Liat Kozma. 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 dry 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. I describe my methodology in an appendix. The document includes much difficult material, particularly with regards to violence, cruelty, dehumanization and starvation. This document does not include images. 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.³ 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),⁴ 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 (a year as of writing) much more information has accumulated while any previous mistakes have been minimal. Interested readers can access all previous versions of this document.

The document changed its purpose over time. Originally, I used it to state my opinion publicly as a form of bearing witness to events. My motive was my commitment to human rights ideals. After the fourth version of this document in mid-March 2024 went viral on Twitter, the public support I received from readers encouraged me to rethink this goal. I now 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, making it accessible for others interested in these events. I have better organized the document over its successive versions, and I now supply footnotes to further references that could inform or be useful to readers. I hope you, the reader, find this document useful – whether to understand what happened during these days through the document or to reach more information through its footnotes.

² I thank Hanoeh Sheinman for commenting on the November 2024 version of this section.

³ <https://fair.org/home/brutal-is-a-word-mostly-reserved-for-palestinian-violence/>

⁴ 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>.

My position is based on many pieces of evidence that I have collected particularly since late December 2023. In my analysis, which is described in detail in the methodology appendix, 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. These institutions are at least ostensibly independent and therefore less prone to bias. They are also equipped for evidence-based inquiry, which they have employed in many issues unrelated to Israel/Palestine. I have also made use of mainstream media outlets, both in cases of factual reporting (e.g. someone saying something) and 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 and year 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 thousands of 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, dehumanization and their results, and I included them in the document’s footnotes 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. In cases where I encountered information that seemed doubtful I chose not to include it. I include in this document many footnotes to cite the sources I have used, so that the interested reader would be able to evaluate my account themselves. I welcome thoughtful critique and corrections, and thank everyone who read this document and commented on it in private or in public.⁵

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. My work on this document is very similar in nature to the professional work I conduct daily. Although the present war began as a new topic for me, I have invested in it far more work than I invest in an average scholarly article. My professional publications appear on my [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu) and [Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/) pages. The updated version of this document, alongside links to my other Gaza-related publications,

⁵ This document updates and expands earlier versions of my understanding of the situation in early January, late January, mid-February, mid-March, mid-April 2024 and mid-June 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 fifth version and also supplied several important sources. I thank subsequent contributors for work done after June 2024 in the respective sections. 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. I thank also those readers who disagreed with my conclusions as their critique has helped improve this document.

can be found on a dedicated website I opened in November 2024, <https://witnessing-the-gaza-war.com/>.

Preface

*Last updated:*⁶ November 29, 2024

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 long 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 had bravely spoken out early in the war were an inspiration.⁷ I do not believe this document will convince many others to change their minds. Rather, I write this publicly to bear witness to the events I observe and testify that during the war there were and remain Israeli voices who strongly dissented from Israel's actions. I preserve the previous versions of this document to demonstrate how much was known even at early stages of the war.

Beginning in November 2024, due to the amount of material I have begun to update this document in parts, starting from its beginning. I have also launched a dedicated website, <https://witnessing-the-gaza-war.com/>, to house both versions of the document, where readers could access its different parts and versions. The latest version of this document can also be found on my [academia.edu](#), which has both English and Hebrew versions. I use my [Twitter](#) page to notify when new sections come out.

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 Israeli fire in the general chaos. About 250 people, mostly Israeli civilians, were taken hostage to Gaza. These atrocities, fore and foremost the indiscriminate killing and kidnapping of civilians, are war crimes and crimes against humanity (of murder and hostage-taking, among others).⁸ Many others have

⁶ I thank Hanoach Sheinman for commenting on the November 2024 version of this section, as well as Sonja Brentjes and another anonymous reader who commented on the June 2024 version (the anonymous reader also checked its footnotes).

⁷ I chose to write this open statement about what is happening in Gaza having been inspired by John Mearsheimer's similar statement back in December 2023. <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>). Many others have since come to the same position (see below).

⁸ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/17/october-7-crimes-against-humanity-war-crimes-hamas-led-groups> ; https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/08/israel_palestine0724web.pdf ;

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 within the historical context of the longstanding conflict between Israel and the Palestinians – served and continue to serve as the justification for the current war that this document examines.

The war and public support

Despite Hamas' aforementioned atrocities, I believe Israel's response to the events of Oct. 7 over more than a 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 2023), 7% (December 2023), 3.2% (January 2024) and 4% (March-April 2024) 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.⁹ In March 2024, 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),¹⁰ and 80% of Israeli Jews believed that Israel should not consider the suffering of Gazans as it conducted its military operation.¹¹ 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.¹² A September 2024 poll found that 83% of Israeli Jews believed that the moral conduct of the IDF during the war was good or excellent, and that 61.5% believed soldiers should not be investigated in cases of abuse against Gazan detainees.¹³ A different September 2024 poll found that 82% of Israeli Jews were not concerned with the humanitarian conditions in Gaza.¹⁴

As of writing, the war continues despite unclarity about its objectives and the immense destruction it has wrought.¹⁵ High-placed voices within Israel¹⁶ as well as the US¹⁷ believe that

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/10/israel-opt-one-year-on-from-7-october-need-to-ensure-a-ceasefire-and-release-of-hostages-more-pressing-than-ever/> ;

<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/commission-of-inquiry-pr-hrc-19jun24/>

⁹ 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-abfo-66ffad40000> . As most of these polls demonstrate, non-Jewish Israelis held more moderate views.

¹⁰ <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001473815>

¹¹ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/53443>

¹² <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/world/europe/israel-weapons-sales-genocide.html>

¹³ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/56112> . 60% of Israeli Jews believed convicted IDF soldiers should receive lower punishments in such cases. A different poll from August found that 47% of Israeli Jews did not believe Israel should obey international law and conduct itself morally during the war:

<https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/august-2024/>

¹⁴ <https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/survey-september-2024/> (defined as “a little” or “very little” concerned).

¹⁵ <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/israel/israels-muddled-strategy-gaza> ; see also the lack of clarity in objectives below, for example in Zoom in 3.

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.¹⁸ Over time, over half of polled Israelis were willing to reach a ceasefire deal, often associated with releasing the hostages and ending the war with an Israeli retreat from Gaza (56% in July 2024,¹⁹ 54% in August,²⁰ 53% in September,²¹ 75% in October in a question that did not refer to an Israeli retreat,²² and 66% in November²³). By October 2024, however, 61% of Israelis believed the Israeli government had no plan to finish the war.²⁴ At the same time, most Israelis came to support increased military operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon in a separate front,²⁵ with such operations taking place from September to late November 2024. The operations in Lebanon received high levels of support among the Israeli public at first (80% in late September), but that support dwindled over time.²⁶

War crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide

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 consists of several crimes against humanity.²⁷ Taken together, Israel's actions during the war are consistent with the definition of genocide as I understand it.²⁸

The formal aspect of the question of genocide came to be discussed in December 2023, when South Africa accused Israel of committing genocide in Gaza, filing a complaint with the International Court of Justice. In January 2024, the International Court of Justice adopted

¹⁶ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2024_q1/Article-7c6a192b2cbfd81026.htm

¹⁷ <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/>

¹⁸ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/Article-1085677>

¹⁹ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/55008>

²⁰ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/55472>

²¹ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/56112> ; the question here was general about ending the war in Gaza.

²² <https://www.figma.com/deck/PebtSWAlxoRYdjaqyhoE6L/%D7%A9%D7%A0%D7%94-%D7%9C7.10---%D7%90%D7%92%D7%9D?node-id=49-1741&node-type=slide&viewport=222%2C16%2Co.5&t=rAWLTUo8lp5sRQp1-1&scaling=min-zoom&content-scaling=fixed&page-id=0%3A1> (p. 23)

²³ <https://x.com/uriweltmann/status/1861479880975634685> ; see also:

<https://www.idi.org.il/articles/57041> (56% of Israelis were willing to be more flexible for a hostage deal).

²⁴ <https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/survey-october-2024/>

²⁵ 71% in June: <https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/swords-of-iron-june/>; 61% in July:

<https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/july-2024/>; 67% in August: <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/55472>;

<https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/august-2024/> ; see also <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/55806>

which reaches 67% but only among Israeli Jews.

²⁶ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/56143> ; note that 56% of Israeli Jews in October preferred to try to reach a favorable deal with Lebanon as opposed to 44% who supported continuing the war and risking a regional war. <https://www.figma.com/deck/PebtSWAlxoRYdjaqyhoE6L/%D7%A9%D7%A0%D7%94-%D7%9C7.10---%D7%90%D7%92%D7%9D?node-id=49-1741&node-type=slide&viewport=222%2C16%2Co.5&t=rAWLTUo8lp5sRQp1-1&scaling=min-zoom&content-scaling=fixed&page-id=0%3A1> (p. 25). A different poll from early November found that 54% of Israeli Jews preferred to continue fighting in Lebanon, <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/57041> .

²⁷ <https://www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/definition>

²⁸ <https://www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/definition>

provisional measures that required Israel to prevent genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.²⁹ Commentators at the time widely interpreted this as if it was plausible that Israel was committing genocide.³⁰ In October 2024, South Africa filed its claim of genocide (“Memorial”) against Israel in the ICJ. The submission amounted to over 750 pages of text and over 4,000 pages of annexes.³¹ The question of intent on the Israeli side – crucial for the definition of genocide – has been addressed by a 120-page public dossier of evidence presented to the UN Security Council.³² The court is expected to take years to reach a formal conclusion about the question.

Many observers have commented on the question of genocide over the past year. Several institutions within the UN called to prevent genocide in November 2023.³³ A UN Special Rapporteur concluded that Israel was committing genocide in her report in March 2024, and repeated that conclusion in another report in October that concluded that Israel aimed to completely remove or eradicate Palestinians.³⁴ A UN Special Committee that issues periodic sub-annual reports on Palestinian matters concluded that Israel’s policies and practices after Oct. 7 “are consistent with the characteristics of genocide”.³⁵ Professional analyses of academic centers for Human Rights reached the same conclusion.³⁶ An important Mediterranean human rights organization accepted the conclusion of genocide based on a large amount of

²⁹ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf> ; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/01/26/gaza-world-court-orders-israel-prevent-genocide>

³⁰ <https://www.npr.org/2024/01/26/1227078791/icj-israel-genocide-gaza-palestinians-south-africa> ; <https://www.newarab.com/news/icj-ruled-plausible-genocide-israel-gaza-what-next> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/26/world-courts-interim-ruling-on-genocide-in-gaza-key-takeaways-icj-israel> ; <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/israel-gaza-genocide-case-at-un-international-court-of-justice-icj/> ; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/key-takeaways-world-court-decision-israeli-genocide-case-2024-01-26/>

³¹ <https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/south-africa-delivers-evidence-israel-genocide-icj> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/28/south-africas-legal-team-says-intent-is-clear-in-israels-gaza-genocide> ; the result of almost 100 people working on the case for nine months. It is the first time genocide allegations are presented while the atrocities are unfolding, are benefited by real-time documentation, and implicate a state backed by the West.

³² <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/151/97/pdf/n2415197.pdf>

³³ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/gaza-is-running-out-of-time-un-experts-warn-demanding-a-ceasefire-to-prevent-genocide/> ; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/gaza-un-experts-call-international-community-prevent-genocide-against>

³⁴ <https://unipd-centrodirittiumani.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>;

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/279/68/pdf/n2427968.pdf> (section 84); see also <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/31/un-should-consider-suspending-israel-over-genocide-against-palestinians-says-special-rapporteur> ; <https://tribunemag.co.uk/2024/11/if-this-is-not-genocide-what-is-francesca-albanese-palestine>

³⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/un-special-committee-finds-israels-warfare-methods-gaza-consistent-genocide> ; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a79363-report-special-committee-investigate-israeli-practices-affecting> ;

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/271/19/pdf/n2427119.pdf> (#69-70).

³⁶ <https://www.humanrightsnetwork.org/genocide-in-gaza>

evidence.³⁷ A federal judge in California – i.e. a representative of the federal US - ruled in January 2024 that Israel’s actions are “plausibly” genocide.³⁸

Many scholars have framed the situation through the question of genocide, with many accepting that definition. Already a week after the beginning of the war, over 800 scholars and practitioners of international law, conflict studies and genocide studies warned of the possibility of genocide against Palestinians.³⁹ Experts before⁴⁰ and after⁴¹ the January 2024 Order have pointed out that Israel’s behavior in the war included both action and intent, necessary for the definition of genocide.⁴² A June 2024 poll of 758 mostly American scholars who work on the Middle East found that 34% defined the situation as genocide, with another 41% defining it as “major war crimes akin to genocide”.⁴³ The Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association accused Israel of using “genocidal violence” and engaging in “cultural genocide”.⁴⁴ A year into the war, several experts who hesitated whether this was a case of genocide early in the war became convinced the legal requirements for genocide have been met.⁴⁵ Individual scholars spoke or wrote publicly as well.⁴⁶ A few Israeli academic experts accepted that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.⁴⁷ As of writing, the question has only

³⁷ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6494>

³⁸ <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.

³⁹ <https://twaiir.com/public-statement-scholars-warn-of-potential-genocide-in-gaza/>

⁴⁰ <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>

⁴¹ <https://www.justsecurity.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/>

⁴² <https://www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/definition>

⁴³ 16% defined it as major war crimes but not akin to genocide. Only 4% thought Israel’s actions were justified under its right to self-defense. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/gloom-about-the-day-after-the-gaza-war-pervasive-among-mideast-scholars/>

⁴⁴ <https://mesana.org/advocacy/letters-from-the-board/2024/03/11/mesa-board-joint-statement-with-caf-regarding-the-ongoing-genocidal-violence-against-the-palestinian-people-and-their-cultural-heritage-in-gaza>

⁴⁵ <https://www.vox.com/politics/378913/israel-gaza-genocide-icj>

⁴⁶ E.g. <https://x.com/martinshaw/status/1820389008880361676>. See more examples in:

<https://x.com/NimerSultany/status/1857404113794802128>

⁴⁷ Raz Segal: <https://jewishcurrents.org/a-textbook-case-of-genocide> ; Amos Goldberg:

<https://jacobin.com/2024/07/amos-goldberg-genocide-gaza-israel> ; Omer Bartov:

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/a-holocaust-scholar-meets-with-israeli-reservists> ;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/13/israel-gaza-historian-omer-bartov> ;

<https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/138983/>. Daniel Baltman: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-11-09/ty-article-opinion/.premium/00000193-06cf-d3a2-a3d7-4fcf3c7b0000> (“between a murderous ethnic

cleansing and a genocide”); Itamar Mann: <https://www.facebook.com/itamar.mann/posts/pfbido2oWqNNQzNKccAzy3UfSo7NxMhmkzhDGGa5iWtSJghUmQSHcgUiYwASBEwTewHupQWl> ; Adam Raz:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBGsDTHaMgk> . Others are more reserved but appear to be

recently entered Israeli discourse.⁴⁸ I discuss my own specific reasoning for using the term genocide to describe Israel's actions in an appendix to this document.

Some international institutions that have evaluated the situation independently described Israel's actions as war crimes or crimes against humanity. In May 2024, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court requested arrest warrants against Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's Prime Minister, and Yoav Gallant, its Defense Minister, accusing them of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and repeated that request on multiple occasions.⁴⁹ In November 2024, the ICC finally issued its warrants of arrest against both Netanyahu and Gallant, citing the war crime of starvation as a method of warfare, and the crimes against humanity of murder, persecution and other inhumane acts.⁵⁰

An Independent International Committee of the UN Human Rights Council concluded in June 2024 that Israel's actions consist of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including extermination and ethnic cleansing that were conducted with intent.⁵¹ The same group

leaning towards that conclusion: <https://www.regthink.org/in-the-region6/> ; <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14623528.2024.2418670> ; <https://www.regthink.org/genocidal-intentions/> ; a few Israelis have attempted to argue against the case of genocide: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/the-genocide-claim-against-israel-doesnt-add-up> .

⁴⁸ The first opinion piece in mainstream Israeli media I know of that reached a positive answer was published in November 2024: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-11-12/ty-article-opinion/.premium/00000193-1a46-df19-a3fb-3ecee00e40000> ; this was likely also the first time the allegation was made on an Israeli TV channel as part of a comedy show: <https://youtu.be/oVa-cZWeZtE?si=ablgcojF2MdXKcTw&t=1377>

⁴⁹ The Prosecutor also requested arrest warrants for three Hamas officials, at least two of whom were killed subsequently. For the original request: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-applications-arrest-warrants-situation-state> . For additional requests, see: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/CourtRecords/0902ebd180949087.pdf> and coverage at <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skmacia3r>; <https://www.commondreams.org/news/icc-arrest-warrant-israel> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skdokt1sr>. For Israel's response, see: https://x.com/just_security/status/1843276793912209507 and an analysis at: <https://x.com/AdHaque110/status/1843382278371848291> . For other arguments against the arrest warrants see: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/CourtRecords/0902ebd18092of26.pdf> . Note also the general repeated and unjustified delays and procrastinations in the ICC's dealings with Palestine as described in <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6494> (pp. 91-93). The delays have been formally criticized, see: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/court-record/icc-01/18-369>

⁵⁰ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-state-palestine-icc-pre-trial-chamber-i-rejects-state-israels-challenges> . The decision was received with widespread critique by top Israeli officials, who described it as "outrageous... no war is more just than the war Israel has been waging in Gaza", "false and absurd", "a dark day for justice", "shameful". See for examples:

<https://x.com/yoavgallant/status/1859656508193030496> ; <https://x.com/IsraeliPM/status/1859607527412904186> ; https://x.com/Isaac_Herzog/status/1859578515487592658 ; <https://x.com/YairGolani/status/1859572170419995031> (head of the Labor-Meretz union). US President Joe Biden said the same, see also: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/21/icc-issues-arrest-warrant-for-benjamin-netanyahu-israel>

⁵¹ <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-aid5-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/cl55gzp7vn90> . Note also a contemporary report by the UN Human Rights on specific Israeli operations during the war, which received a rare response by Israel (who rejected it): <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/opt/20240619-ohchr->

repeated its conclusions in harsher language in October 2024, stating that Israeli security forces committed the crime against humanity of extermination, as well as other crimes against humanity (including forced disappearance, torture and rape) and war crimes.⁵² A major human rights NGO examined Israel's forced displacement of Palestinians in Gaza and concluded that it amounted to a crime against humanity.⁵³

In a case that began long before the war, the ICJ declared in July 2024 that Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territories (the West Bank and Gaza) is unlawful, noting also that Israel exercised key elements of authority over Gaza even before October 7.⁵⁴ The court also decided that Israel must bring its unlawful presence to an end as rapidly as possible, cease all settlement activities, and is obliged to make reparation for the damage caused to people in the occupied Palestinian territories.⁵⁵ This decision drew some attention in Israel, with some rare acknowledgement that war crimes were committed in the West Bank.⁵⁶ A year after the beginning of the war, an NGO filed a major complaint with the ICC against 1,000 IDF soldiers (individually identified by name) for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide for their actions in Gaza. The complaint was said to be supported by over 8,000 pieces of verifiable evidence.⁵⁷ Formal complaints by the NGO led to tangible results.⁵⁸

Key international officials have used very strong words to describe the effects of the war. The UN Security General stated that "The suffering endured by the Palestinian people in Gaza is beyond imagination".⁵⁹ The Prosecutor at the ICC and the Spokesperson for UNICEF have both described Gaza as "hell on earth".⁶⁰ Other officials have said similar things.⁶¹ Institutions

[thematic-report-indiscrim-disprop-attacks-gaza-oct-dec2023.pdf](#) ;

<https://embassies.gov.il/UnGeneva/NewsAndEvents/MediaStatements/Documents/Israel-Initial-Response-OHCHR-Background-Note-June2024-PUBLIC.pdf>

⁵² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-israel/index> ; report at:

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/262/79/pdf/n2426279.pdf> (#89, 94, 98, 102, 105, 108, 109, 110; note also the accusation of Hamas at #112); coverage at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-inquiry-accuses-israel-crime-extermination-destruction-gaza-health-system-2024-10-10/> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-10/ty-article/.premium/00000192-76c5-d7ad-afd3-76ef87b70000>

⁵³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/14/israel-accused-of-crimes-against-humanity-over-forced-displacement-in-gaza> ; <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/11/14/hopeless-starving-and-besieged/israels-forced-displacement-palestinians-gaza> ;

https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/11/gaza_displacement1124web_o.pdf

⁵⁴ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.pdf> (#88-94)

⁵⁵ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.pdf> (#285)

⁵⁶ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1814790277053243765> (the passive is purposeful as it is unclear whether the speaker thought the perpetrators are settlers or Israel more broadly, i.e. the military and perhaps also the political class).

⁵⁷ <https://www.hindrajabfoundation.org/perpetrators/archives/10-2024>;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/2024-10-16/ty-article/.premium/00000192-947a-d2db-ab97-ddfb40800000>

⁵⁸ <https://x.com/HindRFoundation/status/1858485122263093445> ;

<https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/16802240>

⁵⁹ <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sgsm22400.doc.htm>

⁶⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvEgS8RLOBQ>;

<https://x.com/UNGeneva/status/184732201697552784>

⁶¹ United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process called the situation a "nightmare" <https://x.com/TWennesland/status/1847950734534254989> ; for quotes by the UN Human Rights, UNICEF, UNOCHA and the UN Rapporteur on Right to Food:

<https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1850360530730709105> ; head of the Norwegian Refugee Council

like the UN Development Programme (UNDP) have stated in a report that the impacts of the war have set back development in Gaza by decades.⁶²

Other international institutions have taken action to stop the war because of these and other infractions. Since the situation in the Gaza Strip continued to deteriorate in February and March 2024,⁶³ the UN Security Council passed a resolution demanding “an immediate ceasefire” in Gaza in late March.⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵ Another UN Security Council resolution in June 2024 called for a ceasefire as well.⁶⁶ As of writing, Israel has not changed its policy in a substantive manner since these decisions even if the overall rate of killing has decreased due to the general slowdown of the active fighting in the war.⁶⁷ The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to impose sanctions and an arms embargo on Israel in September 2024 (124 in favor, 12 against).⁶⁸ Several European countries, including those that have had close relations with Israel such as Germany and the United Kingdom, have begun to limit the arms they send to Israel.⁶⁹ In October 2024, The editorial board of Financial Times urged the US to stop supplying Israel with offensive weapons.⁷⁰ In November 2024, 52 countries (and two organizations) – including Russia and China – signed a letter calling for an arms embargo on Israel.⁷¹ At the same time, the pope suggested that the international community investigate whether Israel was committing genocide.⁷²

On several key occasions, Israel has obstructed international investigations.⁷³ This has obfuscated the reality on the ground. The fact that over a year into the war Israel has provided

described families, women and children as enduring “almost unparalleled suffering to anywhere in recent history”: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/nov/08/gaza-unparalleled-suffering-jan-egeland-norwegian-refugee-council-aid-ceasefire-hostages-peace-process>

⁶² <https://www.undp.org/press-releases/new-un-report-impacts-war-have-set-back-development-gaza-much-69-years> ; <https://www.undp.org/arab-states/publications/gaza-war-expected-socio-economic-impacts-state-palestine-october-2024>

⁶³ <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>

⁶⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147931>

⁶⁵ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1148096>

⁶⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/un-security-council-vote-plan-israel-hamas-ceasefire-2024-06-10/>

⁶⁷ In the first three months of the war (Oct. 7 – Dec. 31, 2023) over 22,000 Palestinians were killed. In the last three months as of writing (Sept.-Nov. 2024) about 3,500 Palestinians were killed. These numbers do not include excess mortality. For mortality, see <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-26-november-2024>.

⁶⁸ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-09-18/ty-article/.premium/un-demands-israel-end-unlawful-presence-in-palestinian-territories-within-12-months/00000192-05bd-df16-afbe-6dfdee0000>

⁶⁹ Germany: <https://www.shomrim.news/hebrew/german-embargo> ;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sinfq9vpo> ; the UK: <https://www.npr.org/2024/09/03/nx-si-5098300/uk-suspends-arms-israel> ; the Netherlands: <https://www.reuters.com/world/dutch-highest-court-advised-uphold-ruling-export-ban-f-35-components-israel-2024-11-29/>

⁷⁰ <https://www.ft.com/content/cbe18019-752f-4770-be40-fe4b2dc5abd7>

⁷¹ <https://peoplesdispatch.org/2024/11/05/52-countries-led-by-turkiye-urge-the-un-to-call-for-an-arms-embargo-on-israel/>

⁷² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/world/europe/2024-11-17/ty-article/.premium/00000193-3a08-db66-aff3-7eab22680000> ; <https://apnews.com/article/pope-vatican-gaza-israel-genocide-book-62907898cead13dbcfd603592263904c>

⁷³ For example: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf> (section 2)

almost no investigations or reports of its own, even with regards to high-profile cases, suggests that the absence of precise information is in its interests (on this see also the Media section below).⁷⁴ Israel has also lashed out against key international officials, going as far as to declare the UN Secretary-General as “persona non grata” and banning him from entering the country.⁷⁵

Israel’s heavy-handed approach during the war also caused significant harm to human rights within its own borders. An Israeli NGO demonstrated that the Israeli government has undermined the foundations of the country’s democracy, has infringed on right of freedom of speech of its critics, has persecuted its Arab minority, distributed arms to untrained citizens, normalized citizen surveillance, accelerated the occupation in the West Bank and has violated the rights of suspects and prisoners.⁷⁶ Although these are not the focus of my report, they are an important consequence of this war which I touch upon in several sections below (e.g. Media, Hostages).

Israel’s conduct during the war has repeatedly and systematically destroyed existing laws and norms that aimed to regulate “civilized” warfare in recent decades.⁷⁷ As discussed throughout this document, the UN Security Council 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 over a year. Indiscriminate bombing is similarly illegal yet practiced by Israel since the beginning of the war. Attacking hospitals is illegitimate – and yet Israel attacked every hospital in Gaza (as well as assassinated patients in a West Bank hospital and attacked Lebanese hospitals). Embassies are supposed to be off-limits, and yet Israel bombed a foreign embassy (Iran) in a different country (Syria).⁷⁸ 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)⁷⁹: Israel did so matter-of-factly, while almost completely trusting the results of an automatic system for identifying

⁷⁴ This is also the case for the events of Oct. 7. On the heated question of rape, for example, the UN’s Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict conducted a preliminary investigation and recommended “fully-fledged investigations into all alleged violations”, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/report/mission-report-official-visit-of-the-office-of-the-srsg-svc-to-israel-and-the-occupied-west-bank-29-january-14-february-2024/20240304-Israel-oWB-CRSV-report.pdf> (e.g. sections 19-20, 88). The UN Special Representative repeated her call on Oct. 7, 2024, describing it as “of vital importance”: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/statement-special-rep-sexual-violence-07oct24/>. Israel has not released an official report regarding this issue. It has, however, bestowed its highest civil prize, the “Israel Prize”, upon an academic who was supposed to release such a report. The said report has not been published as of writing. See <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skt8jo3rt>; this case is described in more detail below.

⁷⁵ This was done by Israel Katz, then Israel’s Minister of Foreign Affairs: https://x.com/Israel_katz/status/1841422324890812763; <https://x.com/jeremyscahill/status/1841486527693459872>; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-10-02/ty-article-live/00000192-4a04-d07b-aff3-5fe6f4cd0000?liveBlogItemId=877119090#877119090>

⁷⁶ https://www.acri.org.il/post/_i128

⁷⁷ Originally based on: <https://twitter.com/tparsi/status/1774872023098888465>

⁷⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/02/world/middleeast/iran-israel-damascus-strike.html>

⁷⁹ <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>; <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2024/09/04/the-risks-and-inefficacies-of-ai-systems-in-military-targeting-support/>

targets. Norms regarding collateral damage were destroyed as Israel was willing to kill hundreds of uninvolved civilians to reach a single high value target. The lack of a forceful response by many countries to the destruction of these norms has normalized this behavior.

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,⁸⁰ making it one of the most densely populated polities on the planet (over 6,000 people/square kilometer – slightly less than Hong Kong and Singapore).⁸¹ About 70% of the population descend from refugees who fled Mandatory Palestine to Gaza during the 1948 war (“Nakba”).⁸² Since 2007 Israel had laid siege on the Gaza Strip, severely limiting the movement and trade in/out of the Strip in a move that destroyed its economy and the livelihoods of many of its inhabitants.⁸³ Periodic rounds of violence – with major escalations in 2008/9, 2012, 2014 and 2021 – disrupted any recovery in the Strip.⁸⁴ In 2022, poverty levels in Gaza reached 65%, while unemployment was 45%.⁸⁵ Israel has long controlled Gaza’s borders, communications, electricity, water and even population registry.⁸⁶ Even before the war, it continuously surveilled Gazans’ movements and their communications, including all phone calls and all internet use.⁸⁷ The United Nations, human rights organizations, government ministries (including in the US and the UK) and legal scholars all saw Gaza as an occupied territory under the control of Israel even before the war.⁸⁸ These features as well as Gaza’s geography and demography exacerbate the crisis I outline below.

⁸⁰ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-87>

⁸¹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/singapore> ; <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/hong-kong/>

⁸² https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/gaza_thematic_6_o.pdf

⁸³ <https://www.unicef.org/mena/documents/gaza-strip-humanitarian-impact-15-years-blockade-june-2022> ; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/14/gaza-israels-open-air-prison-15>

⁸⁴ https://www.btselem.org/gaza_strip

⁸⁵ <https://unctad.org/news/gaza-unprecedented-destruction-will-take-tens-billions-dollars-and-decades-reverse>

⁸⁶ <https://features.gisha.org/gaza-up-close/> . Notably, Israel also de facto controls Gaza’s border with Egypt, as it has the right to dispute entrance from Egypt by any person and limit entrance of goods. On this see https://www.gisha.org/userfiles/File/publications/Rafah_Report_Eng.pdf (pp. 143-147); <https://amp.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/15/rafah-border-crossing-could-egypt-open-it-to-fleeing-palestinians> ; <https://theconversation.com/egypts-rafah-crossing-is-a-lifeline-to-palestinians-living-in-gaza-but-opening-it-is-still-unresolved-215718> ; <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-investigation-how-egypt-implicit-reporting-blockade-gaza>

⁸⁷ <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> ; <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/>

⁸⁸ Long list of references in <https://www.humanrightsnetwork.org/publications/genocide-in-gaza> (paragraph 20). 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->

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,⁸⁹ Amnesty International,⁹⁰ and B'Tselem⁹¹). As a term, apartheid is taken from a South African context and means two parallel systems of political rights. In the case of Israel, the term refers to a system that cements the supremacy or domination of Jews over Palestinians.⁹² Apartheid has been defined as a crime against humanity in an International Convention in 1973.⁹³ While the West Bank and Gaza have long been declared as areas under apartheid, the aforementioned reports found that apartheid also existed in Israeli sovereign territory (i.e. within the 1967 borders).

Israelis tend to agree with this characterization of Israel. Several Israeli leaders, including former Prime Ministers and heads of security organizations, have used the term apartheid, or close descriptions, to refer to the political reality.⁹⁴ 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% wanted to transfer some of Israel's Arab population to the Palestinian Authority.⁹⁵ In the decade before Oct. 7, Israeli analysts and officials have referred to their strategy against Palestinians as "mowing the lawn" (or grass), i.e. periodically degrading their abilities, a dehumanizing term that percolated into the language of high Israeli officials.⁹⁶

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).⁹⁷ 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

[occupied-international-law/](https://www.occupied-international-law/) . And more recently, as determined by the ICJ: <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.pdf> (sections 86-94).

⁸⁹ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

⁹⁰ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/>

⁹¹ <https://www.btselem.org/topic/apartheid>

⁹² For a longer discussion of the term, see <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

⁹³ https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.10_International%20Convention%20on%20the%20Suppression%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Apartheid.pdf

⁹⁴ <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/15-former-israeli-leaders-call-apartheid>

⁹⁵ <https://www.haaretz.com/2012-10-23/ty-article/.premium/israelis-say-no-vote-to-arabs-if-w-bank-annexed/0000017f-f55e-d460-afff-ff7e683c0000>

⁹⁶ The term appears to have been coined in an academic article:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01402390.2013.830972>. This approach is common in Israeli discourse, see: <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Mowing-the-grass-in-Gaza-368516> ; <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/hyvknorgn>; <https://besacenter.org/the-end-of-mowing-the-grass-if-israel-wants-to-continue-to-exist-it-must-uproot-hamas-from-gaza/> ; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/05/14/israel-gaza-history/> ; <https://warontherocks.com/2014/08/israel-and-the-demise-of-mowing-the-grass/> . More examples here: <https://x.com/BeckyCNN/status/1832069899780325818>

⁹⁷ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/הסיכוי-לכתב-אישום-נגד-חייל-שפגע-בפלסטי/>

Palestinians (out of 409 cases or 614 deaths), and the few soldiers found guilty received minor punishments.⁹⁸

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

⁹⁸ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/הסיכוי-לכתב-אישום-נגד-חייל-שפגע-בפלסטי/>

The massacre of Palestinians

Last updated: June 18, 2024

Numbers and ratios

As of June 14, Israel has killed over 37,266 Gazans – over 1.5 percent of the total population of Gaza.⁹⁹ This death toll is conservative and will almost certainly increase.¹⁰⁰ The number is accepted by Israeli officials (see discussion below)¹⁰¹ and media.¹⁰² The number does not include over ten thousand missing people, many still buried under the rubble.¹⁰³ It also does not include any individuals whose death was not reported to Gaza's overwhelmed health ministry.¹⁰⁴ According to the available public data some 60% of the deaths in Gaza are of women, children, and the elderly.¹⁰⁵ As of mid May, 7,797 identified children had already been killed.¹⁰⁶ 85,102 people (over 3 percent of Gaza's population) have been injured.¹⁰⁷ 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.¹⁰⁸

Israeli spokespersons themselves have estimated that two civilians have died for each Hamas militant, and stated that it is a justified ratio.¹⁰⁹ In reality, the ratio is likely worse and civilian

⁹⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-179-gaza-strip>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/מספרי-ההרוגים-בעזה-בנראה-גבוהים-פי-שלו/>

¹⁰¹ <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/הצבא-בדק-ומצא-שדיווחי-ההרוגים-במשך-הב/>; more confirmations by the IDF in March and April: <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694>

¹⁰² <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/world/Article-1095370>

¹⁰³ <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>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694>

¹⁰⁵ <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-65e18f3362674245356c539e4bcob67a>

¹⁰⁶ <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.

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-179-gaza-strip>

¹⁰⁸ 60% in March:

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

¹⁰⁹ <https://cnn.com/2023/12/05/middleeast/israel-hamas-military-civilian-ratio-killed-intl-hnk/index.html>

deaths could reach 75% and even more of the total death count.¹¹⁰ 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.¹¹¹ 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.¹¹² 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.¹¹³

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).¹¹⁴ In the first four years in Iraq, the US killed 18,832 militants.¹¹⁵ In Afghanistan, 46,319 civilians and 52,893 Opposition fighters were killed in the war over 20

¹¹⁰ 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>. Anecdotally, the testimony of doctors returning from Gaza further indicates the majority of children among the injured (70-75% elementary school age or younger) as well as the low number of military age males (a handful according to one); both doctors believed none of the people they treated were militants: https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/11/surgeons_in_gaza. The reliability of the Gaza death count is discussed in depth below.

¹¹¹ <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>

¹¹² <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>

¹¹³ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/12/28/world/middleeast/jabaliya-gaza-strike-israel.html>

¹¹⁴ 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%2C%202003-2013.pdf>

¹¹⁵ <https://web.archive.org/web/20200727084052/https://www.stripes.com/news/insurgent-body-count-records-released-1.69423>

years (2001-2021).¹¹⁶ Here too a large number of the civilians were killed by opposition forces rather than the US.¹¹⁷

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]”.¹¹⁸ The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reiterated that there is no safe space in Gaza.¹¹⁹ 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”.¹²⁰ 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.¹²¹ A panel of UN experts stated in February that arms exports to Israel are illegal and must stop immediately,¹²² while a Dutch court ordered a halt to export F-35 jet parts to Israel.¹²³ In March, Canada declared it will stop selling arms to Israel because of its conduct in the war in Gaza,¹²⁴ 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.¹²⁵ 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,¹²⁶ and backed a call for an arms embargo on Israel.¹²⁷ 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.¹²⁸

¹¹⁶ <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures/2021/human-and-budgetary-costs-date-us-war-afghanistan-2001-2022>

¹¹⁷ <https://unama.unmissions.org/protection-of-civilians-reports> ;
<https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2020/Rising%20Civilian%20Death%20Tol%20in%20Afghanistan%20Costs%20of%20War%20Dec%207%202020.pdf>

¹¹⁸ https://twitter.com/UN_News_Centre/status/1726609880986083685

¹¹⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-82>

¹²⁰ <https://airwars.org/conflict/israel-and-gaza-2023/>;

<https://twitter.com/ShaykhSulaiman/status/1776263272800354451>

¹²¹ 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>

¹²² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/arms-exports-israel-must-stop-immediately-un-experts>

¹²³ <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/dutch-court-orders-halt-export-f-35-jet-parts-israel-2024-02-12/>

¹²⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-19/ty-article/0000018e-584f-d88e-a39e-7dff4580000>

¹²⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/30/uk-government-lawyers-say-israel-is-breaking-international-law-claims-top-tory-in-leaked-recording>

¹²⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/05/un-human-rights-council-israel-gaza-biden-netanyahu>

¹²⁷ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148261>

¹²⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/world/europe/israel-weapons-sales-genocide.html>

In late April, a leaked US assessment revealed that several bureaus within the US government raised “serious concern over [Israel’s] non-compliance” with international humanitarian law and asserted that Israel’s assurances were “neither credible nor reliable”. Among the potential violations were repeatedly striking protected sites and civilian infrastructure and “unconscionably high levels of civilian harm to military advantage”.¹²⁹ 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.¹³⁰ Israel refused, and in the following 48 hours, conducted more than 60 air raids on Rafah.¹³¹ 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.¹³²

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,¹³³ while the IDF spokesperson stated that the IDF was “focused on what causes maximum damage” rather than accuracy.¹³⁴ Already in late October, US officials knew that Israel was regularly bombing buildings without solid intelligence that they were legitimate military targets.¹³⁵ About 40-45% of the air-to-ground munitions Israel dropped on Gaza by December were unguided.¹³⁶ These bombs have a wide margin of error of about 100 feet around the target.¹³⁷ 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.¹³⁸ In the first week of the war, Israel dropped 6,000 bombs on Gaza.¹³⁹ As of December, Israel dropped 29,000 weapons on Gaza. For comparison, the US military dropped

¹²⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/some-us-officials-say-internal-memo-israel-may-be-violating-international-law-2024-04-27/>

¹³⁰ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/24/middleeast/israel-icj-gaza-rafah-south-africa-ruling-intl/index.html>

¹³¹ <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>

¹³² <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>

¹³³ <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>

¹³⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/10/right-now-it-is-one-day-at-a-time-life-on-israels-frontline-with-gaza>

¹³⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/18/biden-israel-gaza-rafah-palestinians/>

¹³⁶ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/13/politics/intelligence-assessment-dumb-bombs-israel-gaza/index.html>

¹³⁷ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf>, paragraph 80.

¹³⁸ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/> ; also <https://twitter.com/WarWatches/status/1783121782557352320>

¹³⁹ <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/israel-hamas-war-gaza-strip/card/israeli-air-force-says-it-has-dropped-6-000-bombs-on-gaza-QK1aSnupiGqytMVO86PU>

3,678 munitions on Iraq from 2004 to 2010.¹⁴⁰ 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.¹⁴¹

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.¹⁴² 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.¹⁴³ In February, Amnesty International closely investigated four attacks that killed at least 95 civilians. All took place in the southern governate that was supposed to be safe at the time, and Amnesty found no indication that the buildings were legitimate military objectives or that people in the buildings were military targets.¹⁴⁴ 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.¹⁴⁵

In addition, Israel has commonly used drones in Gaza – including drones that launch grenades,¹⁴⁶ suicide drones,¹⁴⁷ and drones that attack in swarms.¹⁴⁸ Drones have also made the sounds of babies crying, perhaps to lure Gazans.¹⁴⁹ 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.¹⁵⁰ One doctor stated that

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542>

¹⁴¹ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6282/200-days-ofmilitary-attack-on-Gaza%3A-A-horrific-death-toll-amid-intl.-failure-to-stop-Israel's-genocide-of-Palestinians>.

¹⁴² <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/21/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-bomb-investigation.html> . For an example: <https://www.cnn.com/videos/world/2024/02/23/gaza-atrocities-investigation-warehouse-attack-karadsheh-pkg-vpx.cnn>

¹⁴³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-20/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-5677-dc6f-adff-df77a73d0000>

¹⁴⁴ <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/>

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/04/gaza-israeli-strike-killing-106-civilians-apparent-war-crime>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFMz8KYS5rg> ;

<https://x.com/yoavzitun/status/1792840386077171729>

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.calcalist.co.il/internet/articles/0.7340.L-3741063.00.html?AF=3741062>

¹⁴⁸ <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3439695>

¹⁴⁹ <https://twitter.com/KufiyyaPS/status/1780669019659358244>

¹⁵⁰ <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/C3mtgtEM2db/>; <https://www.instagram.com/dr.ahmed.moghrabi/p/C2rPxBlgz-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>

quadcopters wounded 30 people who tried to reach a hospital in a single night.¹⁵¹ There are some indications that Israel has used thermobaric weapons, which have been internationally banned by several Conventions and international humanitarian law.¹⁵²

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 1994.¹⁵³ 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."¹⁵⁴ 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".¹⁵⁵

Israel has used artificial intelligence (AI)-based programs to generate massive kill lists for assassination. The "Lavender" system is designed to mark all suspected operatives in Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, including low-ranking ones, as potential bombing targets.¹⁵⁶ 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 17.¹⁵⁷ 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.¹⁵⁸ Experts in international humanitarian law expressed alarm at these ratios.¹⁵⁹ For comparison, the number of permissible civilian deaths to kill Saddam Hussein was 29.¹⁶⁰ When the US assassinated Bin

¹⁵¹ <https://x.com/GhassanAbuSitti/status/1788570484981858793>

¹⁵² <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6290>

¹⁵³ <https://twitter.com/OwenJones84/status/1760286175699272027> ; <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/14/gaza-war-israel-civilian-deaths-urban-warfare-hamas/>

¹⁵⁴ <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/179011634930737387> ;

<https://x.com/tparsi/status/1796984162169086156> ;

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

¹⁵⁵ <https://twitter.com/ShaykhSulaiman/status/1790403949230784974>

¹⁵⁶ 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/>

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/> ;

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

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/03/israel-gaza-ai-database-hamas-airstrikes>

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.businessinsider.com/saddam-husseins-life-was-deemed-worth-29-civilian-lives-as-the-us-invaded-iraq-2015-3>

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.¹⁶¹ This mass-generation of targets was stopped later partly due to American pressure,¹⁶² but subsequent attacks continued to be authorized despite knowing that many uninvolved citizens would be harmed.¹⁶³

Mortality and impacts on groups in Palestinian society

Since the beginning of the operation, Israel has killed dozens of children on average every day.¹⁶⁴ 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.¹⁶⁵ 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.¹⁶⁶ As UNICEF's Executive Director put it, Gaza is "the most dangerous place in the world to be a child".¹⁶⁷ UNICEF estimated in early February that at least 17,000 children are unaccompanied or separated from their parents.¹⁶⁸ Children deaths are prominent in videos from Gaza, often filmed by their own families.¹⁶⁹ 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.¹⁷⁰ A Gazan journalist wrote an open letter to Israeli society in which he narrated a case of a 6 year old boy who lay down to sleep under a truck and turned blue from the cold. When a passer-by woke him up and asked him what was he doing, the boy responded that he wanted the truck to drive over him in the morning because his entire family had been killed. The boy died the same day from hypothermia.¹⁷¹ A doctor returning from volunteering in a

¹⁶¹ <https://www.defensedaily.com/pentagon-removed-non-combatant-casualty-cut-off-value-doctrine-2018/pentagon/>

¹⁶² <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

¹⁶³ <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>

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/gaza-3195-children-killed-three-weeks-surpasses-annual-number-children-killed-conflict-zones>;

¹⁶⁶ <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>.

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.unicef.org/uk/press-releases/statement-by-unicef-executive-director-catherine-russell-on-the-resumption-of-fighting-in-gaza/>

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/stories-loss-and-grief-least-17000-children-are-estimated-be-unaccompanied-or>

¹⁶⁹ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1760724513581584472>;

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

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

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

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.msf.org/msf-briefing-gaza-un-security-council>

¹⁷¹ <https://twitter.com/AGvanyahu/status/1763102777423659018/photo/1>

Gaza hospital said that 70-75% of the people he operated on were elementary school age or younger.¹⁷²

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.¹⁷³ 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.¹⁷⁴ 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.¹⁷⁵

As of April 15, 273 UN and aid workers have been killed.¹⁷⁶ More than 100 university professors, including several leading Palestinian academics, have been killed.¹⁷⁷ More than 243 athletes (of which 161 are footballers) have been killed in Gaza and the West Bank.¹⁷⁸ 498 health workers have been killed.¹⁷⁹ By June, 55 specialist doctors (4% of the total in Gaza) were killed.¹⁸⁰ Israel's attacks on hospitals have killed hundreds of Palestinians. More have died by lack of supplies¹⁸¹ 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

¹⁷² https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/11/surgeons_in_gaza

¹⁷³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>;
<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>; 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.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/palestine-at-least-ninety-nine-journalists-and-media-workers-killed-in-gaza>

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/21/israel-idf-accused-targeting-journalists-gaza> ; <https://cpj.org/2024/03/attacks-arrests-threats-censorship-the-high-risks-of-reporting-the-israel-hamas-war/>

¹⁷⁵ https://cpj.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/CPJ-Special-Report-May-2023_Deadly-Pattern.pdf

¹⁷⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

¹⁷⁷ <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>

¹⁷⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/football/article/2024/may/07/sporting-tragedy-war-in-gaza-israel-palestine>

¹⁷⁹ <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>.

¹⁸⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/israel-palestinians-gaza-health/>

¹⁸¹ <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-80-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>

of decomposition as nobody cared for them.¹⁸² The number of Palestinian deaths has led to digging graves and mass graves everywhere, including in formerly built areas and parks.¹⁸³

Massacres, rules of engagement and examples

Palestinian lives are incredibly cheap. Based on sources inside the IDF, an investigative report has pointed out that dead Palestinians are defined as “[Hamas] terrorists” based not on what they did but on where they were killed.¹⁸⁴ 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.¹⁸⁵ 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.¹⁸⁶ There are several filmed cases of Palestinians walking along the coasts and getting shot.¹⁸⁷ 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.¹⁸⁸ 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.¹⁸⁹ 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”.¹⁹⁰

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

¹⁸² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/03/gaza-premature-babies-dead-nasr/>

¹⁸³ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1759600702886748387> ;
<https://twitter.com/omarsuleiman504/status/1769735691808743563> ;
<https://twitter.com/EuroMedHR/status/1783855639006986260>

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-31/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-9035-d9a4-a7bf-dc7d839e0000>

¹⁸⁵ <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-9fao-dbea-abde-bfe55d9e0000>

¹⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1775960365630624249>

¹⁸⁷ <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1800790290783248589>

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9nY-niPcDo>

¹⁸⁹ <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-9fao-dbea-abde-bfe55d9e0000>

¹⁹⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-06-07/ty-article/.highlight/0000018f-ef13-de64-a98f-efb768400000>

destroyed their ambulance about 50 meters away from the car that they were trying to reach.¹⁹¹ 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).¹⁹² 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.¹⁹³ The IDF subsequently bombed the hospital.¹⁹⁴ 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!!!”.¹⁹⁵ A human rights organization documented other occasions in which Israeli soldiers have deliberately driven over dozens of Palestinian civilians while they were alive.¹⁹⁶ In another case, an IDF soldier shot and killed a Palestinian man with special needs in front of his mother in a Gaza hospital after the man shouted in fear and did not keep quiet as the soldier commanded.¹⁹⁷ 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”.¹⁹⁸ 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.¹⁹⁹ An Israeli soldier shared a video showing the killing of five other Palestinians walking in the rubble in North Gaza.²⁰⁰ A different video showed IDF soldiers shooting two unarmed Palestinian men before burying them in rubble with a bulldozer.²⁰¹ 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.²⁰² When the IDF evacuated a Gazan family by force from their building, forcing them to

¹⁹¹ <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/>

¹⁹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RDXQapOtUg>

¹⁹³ <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>

¹⁹⁴ https://twitter.com/Ahmad_tibi/status/1758038092353503495

¹⁹⁵ <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>

¹⁹⁶ <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>

¹⁹⁷ <https://www.itv.com/news/2024-03-01/he-didnt-understand-disabled-man-shot-dead-in-gaza-hospital-by-idf>

¹⁹⁸ <https://twitter.com/MatanGolanPhoto/status/1766586400558739508> ;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Dp95bN81Ww>

¹⁹⁹ <https://twitter.com/GozukaraFurkan/status/1770919234278740269>

²⁰⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1770919159800402148>

²⁰¹ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1773065074162213322>

²⁰² <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->

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.²⁰³ There are many similar stories of IDF soldiers purposefully killing civilians.²⁰⁴

Cases in which the IDF kills civilians almost never make the news in Israel and the United States.²⁰⁵ 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.²⁰⁶ 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).²⁰⁷ 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.²⁰⁸ 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).²⁰⁹ 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.²¹⁰ The first international UN worker was killed in May when an Israeli tank attacked his vehicle, which was marked as a UN vehicle.²¹¹ 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

[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>

²⁰³ <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>

²⁰⁴ <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>

²⁰⁵ For example: <https://twitter.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1780252222279840036> ;

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

²⁰⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9e1e-d764-adff-gedf9cd00000>

²⁰⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-05/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-aca8-d906-a5cf-aebcb100000>

²⁰⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9e1e-d764-adff-gedf9cd00000>

²⁰⁹ <https://twitter.com/marcowenjones/status/1775125251149500706>

²¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sI3XydVerm8> ;

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/canadian-aid-truck-bombed-water-gaza-1.7179849>

²¹¹ <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>

two. The investigative report found that the IDF spokesperson's version of events is likely false.²¹²

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.²¹³ Palestinians claimed that the IDF shot them,²¹⁴ while the IDF claimed that most casualties died because of overcrowding and the general mayhem in which the lorries ran over the civilians.²¹⁵ 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,²¹⁶ as well as the media,²¹⁷ 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 injured who came to receive treatment after the event (142 of 176) suffered from gunshot wounds.²¹⁸ A CNN investigation found inconsistencies with, and cast further doubts on, the IDF's version and leaned towards accepting the Palestinian version.²¹⁹ A sample of 200 dead and injured victims found that they were hit by bullets of the diameter used by IDF troops.²²⁰ 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.²²¹ 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”.²²² Israel's National Security Minister nonetheless praised the IDF soldiers

²¹² <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/134512/>

²¹³ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/08/middleeast/gaza-flour-massacre-idf-report-intl/index.html>

²¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/NaksBilal/status/1763188564823576868> ;

<https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1763174751042695313> ;

https://twitter.com/kaneez_e_zahrah/status/1763176424012230952 ;

²¹⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/08/middleeast/gaza-flour-massacre-idf-report-intl/index.html>

²¹⁶ <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/>

²¹⁷ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6200> ; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6200/In-press-conference,-Euro-Med-confirms-Israeli%27s-full-involvement-in-Gaza-flour-massacre> ;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/05/un-experts-condemn-israeli-massacre-of-palestinians-collecting-flour>

²¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1763221018103996559> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68445973>

²¹⁹ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/09/middleeast/gaza-food-aid-convoy-deaths-eyewitness-intl-investigation-cmd>

²²⁰ <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>

²²¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf>, paragraphs 240-249.

²²² <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/muhammadshahad2/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>

for their conduct during the event.²²³ International law stipulates that Israel is required to supply food and water in the areas where it is an occupying power.²²⁴ 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 2021.²²⁵

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.²²⁶

An NGO documented around 130 random mass graves of Palestinians across the Gaza Strip.²²⁷ Other corpses have been interred in improvised burials within built areas,²²⁸ with additional decomposed corpses²²⁹ and skeletons on the streets.²³⁰ Reports have “documented dozens of cases of field executions carried out by the Israeli army”.²³¹ 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.²³² In another, over 30 Palestinian corpses were found in black plastic bags, blindfolded and handcuffed.²³³ Similar events took place in al-Shifa hospital, according to

²²³ <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/>

²²⁴ <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/occupied-territory/>

²²⁵ <https://press.un.org/en/2021/gashc4336.doc.htm>

²²⁶ <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>

²²⁷ <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>

²²⁸ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1769304583325483266>

²²⁹ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Poydd3EG_-8](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>

²³⁰ <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/muhammadshahad2/status/1798345071722684760>

²³¹ <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%99safe-corridor%E2%80%99-in-Gaza>

²³² <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>

²³³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/1/palestinians-demand-international-inquiry-after-mass-grave-found-in-gaza>

several eyewitness accounts (see also Zoom-In 1 below).²³⁴ Few of these cases have even been covered in Israeli media.²³⁵

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,²³⁶ 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.²³⁷

In a January poll, two thirds of Israelis preferred to continue the war in its current form of excessive bombardment and violence.²³⁸ In a poll from February, about three quarters of Israeli Jews supported continuing the military operation to Rafah.²³⁹ A poll from March-April found that only 4% of Israeli Jews believe the military campaign has gone too far.²⁴⁰

²³⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlerY4MgkQc>

²³⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra13792905>; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syv8bslop>

²³⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/magazine/israel-west-bank-settler-violence-impunity.html>

²³⁷ <https://www.npr.org/2024/05/15/1250417719/israel-military-idf-investigations-icc>

²³⁸ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/52071>

²³⁹ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/53276>

²⁴⁰ <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/05/30/views-of-the-israel-hamas-war-may-2024/>

chocolate croissants, animal feed, nail clippers, toys in wooden boxes, and crutches.²⁴⁹ In one case, it took a UN organization three months to get approval to deliver 500 tons of animal feed.²⁵⁰ 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.²⁵¹

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).²⁵² 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.²⁵³ The numbers were similar in May.²⁵⁴ Some of the food on these trucks rots during the long times they wait to enter Gaza.²⁵⁵

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”.²⁵⁶ In February, Israel 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.²⁵⁷ 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.²⁵⁸ Both the US and the UN asked Israel to stop targeting the police to avoid “a total breakdown

²⁴⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/11/israel-aid-gaza-banned-blocked/>

²⁵⁰ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148296>

²⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/ChronicBabak/status/1778616402280059360> ;

<https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/kix/kixkc2nwph>

²⁵² <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/

²⁵³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-140>

²⁵⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

²⁵⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000009486472/gaza-food-aid-trucks-rafah-egypt.html>

²⁵⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/21/gaza-police-aid-hamas/>

²⁵⁷ <https://www.ft.com/content/8aa813fc-a87e-4002-9aaf-890c11a1ec35> ;

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

²⁵⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/> ;

<https://www.mekomit.co.il/המטרה-של-ישראל-היא-להשאיר-את-הכאוס-על-כנ> ;

<https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1770422130712146254>

of law and order”.²⁵⁹ 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.²⁶⁰ 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.²⁶¹ Israel reduced the number of trucks it let into the Strip to less than a third than what it had committed to facilitating,²⁶² while also attacking Gazan police officers responsible for coordinating aid.²⁶³ 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.²⁶⁴ 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.²⁶⁵ Additional police officers associated with the distribution of aid were killed in April.²⁶⁶

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.²⁶⁷

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.²⁶⁸ 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.²⁶⁹ In January, a survey among shop owners revealed a significant shortage of basic food items, with 81% indicating depletion and

²⁵⁹ <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>

²⁶⁰ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

²⁶¹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza> (footnote 105).

²⁶² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/>

²⁶³ 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>

²⁶⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/18/israel-hamas-gaza-shifa-issa/>

²⁶⁵ <https://twitter.com/UNLazarini/status/1771917857598693549>

²⁶⁶ 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/0000018e-e3b4-daaaf-afaf-e7f555f60000?liveBlogItemId=1978850928#1978850928> . Also <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra13878899>

²⁶⁷ <https://gaza-aid-attacks.forensic-architecture.org/> ;

<https://twitter.com/ForensicArchi/status/1790796901123559572>

²⁶⁸ https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/202404_manufacturing_famine_heb.pdf

²⁶⁹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza> (footnote 54).

19% having only limited supplies.²⁷⁰ 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.²⁷¹ In late February, the price of a plate with some raw meat and rice reached \$95 (US) according to social media,²⁷² while a nurse in Al-Shifa hospital claimed he had not eaten bread for 2 months during which he consumed animal feed.²⁷³ 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".²⁷⁴ 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.²⁷⁵ In April, the price of a kilogram of sugar reached between \$19 and \$30.²⁷⁶

As of mid-April, at least 31 people (of which 28 were children) in Gaza died of malnutrition or dehydration.²⁷⁷ 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".²⁷⁸ Leading NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Oxfam concluded

²⁷⁰

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

²⁷¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-02-07/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018d-8213-daa1-af9d-e21b04660000>; <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20231117-give-us-our-daily-bread-gaza-faces-flour-crisis>

²⁷² <https://twitter.com/HamzaAbuToha/status/1760588426103963720>

²⁷³ <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1762736475957829852>

²⁷⁴ <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>

²⁷⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/2024-03-03/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-03c5-da4e-adbf-83fdcoif0000>

²⁷⁶ <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/>

²⁷⁷ <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/muhammadshedad2/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-hamas-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>

²⁷⁸ <https://apnews.com/video/europe-gaza-european-union-war-and-unrest-josep-borrell-63eebf7f71f4ed881580913c51b7036>

that “the Israeli government is using starvation of civilians as a weapon of war in Gaza”.²⁷⁹ Israeli accounts have de facto admitted this,²⁸⁰ and within a broader historical context, Israel has long used food in such a manner in Gaza.²⁸¹ A report by a global authority on food security and nutrition from mid March stated that famine (their definition here²⁸²) was imminent in the northern governorates of the Strip over the next two months.²⁸³ 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.²⁸⁴ The price of a bag of flour in northern Gaza increased to \$275 (normally \$8) by mid March, alongside rampant banditry.²⁸⁵ By late March, apparently in the same area, the price of a few dozen kilograms (estimated from video) of vegetables reached some \$3,000.²⁸⁶ For context, the average income in Gaza before the war was \$13-20/day.²⁸⁷ 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.²⁸⁸ Individual accounts confirm these details.²⁸⁹

As a result, the vast majority of Gaza’s population is at risk of famine.²⁹⁰ Already by January virtually all households were skipping meals every day, with 50-80% of households going entire days and nights without eating.²⁹¹ Some 90% of civilians in Gaza experienced “high levels of acute food insecurity”.²⁹² 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.²⁹³ Some 40% experience “emergency levels” and over 15% (378,000) experience catastrophic levels, namely “extreme lack of food, starvation and exhaustion of coping

²⁷⁹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/19/israeli-forces-conduct-gaza>

²⁸⁰ <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/>

²⁸¹ <https://www.nybooks.com/online/2024/03/30/the-road-to-famine-in-gaza/>

²⁸² 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>

²⁸³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/18/world/middleeast/gaza-famine-report-starvation.html>

²⁸⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/22/unicef-official-utter-annihilation-gaza>

²⁸⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/>

²⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1770911921870446966>

²⁸⁷ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-investment-climate-statements/west-bank-and-gaza/>

²⁸⁸

<http://pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/Poll%20091%20English%20opress%20release%2020%20March%202024.pdf> (p. 6)

²⁸⁹ <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/gaza-starvation-denial-aipac/>

²⁹⁰ 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/>

²⁹¹

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/>

²⁹² <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>

²⁹³ <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-on-gaza--the-who-executive-board--trans-fats-and-leprosy>

capacities”.²⁹⁴ 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.”²⁹⁵ Despite this situation, IDF officers demanded a further lowering of the humanitarian aid to Gaza.²⁹⁶ 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 career²⁹⁷ 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”.²⁹⁸

In February, an aid organization stated on CNN that Gaza was the fastest decline in nutritional status ever recorded in a human population.²⁹⁹ In late February and early March about half of the missions aimed at delivering aid to areas in the north part of the Gaza Strip were denied access by Israeli authorities.³⁰⁰ On more than one occasion, the IDF attacked a food convoy.³⁰¹ 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.³⁰² In late March, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to allow unimpeded food aid into Gaza.³⁰³ 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”.³⁰⁴ 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.³⁰⁵ 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”.³⁰⁶ 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

²⁹⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

²⁹⁵ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/gaza-is-starving>

²⁹⁶ <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3633138>

²⁹⁷ https://youtu.be/opGgFZovlAw?si=mone7l85_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

²⁹⁸ <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>

²⁹⁹ <https://twitter.com/MedicalAidPal/status/1763172220900151317>

³⁰⁰ <https://twitter.com/UNRWA/status/1759993361702748380> ;

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

³⁰¹ 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.

³⁰² <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/>

³⁰³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/28/famine-is-setting-in-icj-orders-israel-to-unblock-gaza-food-aid>

³⁰⁴ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/gaza-collapse-famine_n_660c96aae4b0328a72be47f5

³⁰⁵ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/people-northern-gaza-forced-survive-245-calories-day-less-can-beans-oxfam>

³⁰⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-says-it-still-faces-obstacles-bid-fend-off-famine-gaza-2024-04-16/>

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).³⁰⁷ 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 diarrhea over two weeks in February.³⁰⁸ Images and videos from the strip appear to confirm these findings.³⁰⁹

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.³¹⁰ In the rest of May, the amount of food entering Gaza dropped by 70%³¹¹ (discrepancies with Israeli-supplied numbers derive from the different ways of counting trucks,³¹² as well as the entry of commercial food sales).³¹³ 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.³¹⁴ The much-heralded US pier,³¹⁵ 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.³¹⁶ 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,

³⁰⁷ <https://www.devex.com/news/exclusive-usaid-officials-say-israel-breached-us-directive-on-gaza-aid-107545>

³⁰⁸ <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-65d4650d8fo8f68df4c9a84&filterKeyEvents=false#liveblog-navigation>

³⁰⁹ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1750503719806923075> ; <https://twitter.com/NABEELRAJAB/status/1750017231197544706> ; <https://twitter.com/jakeshieldsajj/status/1751580352601309591>

³¹⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/22/gaza-famine-aid-israel-hamas/>

³¹¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/30/israel-hamas-war-news-gaza-palestine-rafah/>

³¹² <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/>

³¹³ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-reopens-gaza-food-sales-rafah-raid-chokes-aid-2024-05-30/>

³¹⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-west-bank-jenin-raid-a3320a77a3a6ccff41db2a4bc63e4aa3>

³¹⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/04/27/world/middleeast/gaza-pier-israel-hamas-war.html>

³¹⁶ <https://apnews.com/article/us-pier-gaza-famine-israel-ifeae14dac670bb4de0467988799c5c6> ; <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/>

as aforementioned, was far from enough for the needs of the population).³¹⁷ 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).³¹⁸

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.³¹⁹ 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”.³²⁰ 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.³²¹ The UN’s aid chief said that “delivering aid has become almost impossible” in Gaza.³²² In late May, head of USAID said that conditions in Gaza are “worse... than ever before”.³²³ 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”.³²⁴ 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.³²⁵ 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.³²⁶

³¹⁷ <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>

³¹⁸ <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/980>

³¹⁹ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-hamas-famine-0056ceecdb4ae3bee5f64c54abo34c7e> ; https://fewsn.net/sites/default/files/2024-06/Gaza-Targeted-Analysis-Update-042024-Final_3.pdf

³²⁰ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-hamas-famine-0056ceecdb4ae3bee5f64c54abo34c7e> ; https://fewsn.net/sites/default/files/2024-06/Gaza-Targeted-Analysis-Update-042024-Final_3.pdf

³²¹ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-hunger-un-07afb7fe4a1654f54b81b944a0dab535> ; <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000159235/download/>

³²² <https://x.com/UNReliefChief/status/1798118788576989489>

³²³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/30/israel-hamas-war-news-gaza-palestine-rafah/>

³²⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/05/1150486> ;

<https://x.com/UNGeneva/status/1796579174204813488>

³²⁵ <https://x.com/blarn357857/status/1801920586677154113>

³²⁶ 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

Additional findings

Evidence from the Strip reveals some of the actions that desperate Gazans are forced into because of the lack of food.³²⁷ Media coverage refers to people eating horse meat,³²⁸ grass and drinking contaminated water or sea water.³²⁹ One video shows a group of people swimming in an area flooded with sewage to procure airdropped aid that landed in that area.³³⁰ 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).³³¹ Others fell as a building on which an airdrop of aid landed had collapsed.³³²

About 60 percent of Israeli Jews oppose humanitarian aid to Gaza, a stable figure over time.³³³ Jewish activists have completely blocked the entrance of aid to Gaza on several occasions in recent months.³³⁴ IDF soldiers recorded themselves destroying and burning food warehouses in Gaza.³³⁵ In May, Israeli settlers/protestors blocked³³⁶ and sometimes attacked Jordanian convoys of aid to Gaza.³³⁷ Such attacks included causing massive damage to the trucks themselves, as well as throwing away the humanitarian aid onto the road.³³⁸ Some of these attacks took place near IDF blockades and local eyewitnesses noted that the Israeli soldiers

Strip, the destruction of infrastructure, the deaths of Palestinians trying to get aid, the deaths of Palestinians from malnutrition and dehydration. 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>

³²⁷ <https://twitter.com/amirs74/status/177198476446998611>

³²⁸ <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240224-dead-horses-scrap-leaves-gaza-s-hungry-get-desperate>; <https://twitter.com/KhalilAsslan/status/1773732648847876569>

³²⁹ <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-agfd-e21bo4660000>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mN1SRUxoR8>

³³⁰ <https://twitter.com/sarabaha94/status/1771278625175654815>

³³¹ <https://twitter.com/arixegal/status/1772657137136619838> ;

<https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/26/middleeast/palestinians-drown-gaza-aid-drop-intl/index.html>

³³² <https://twitter.com/stairwayto3dom/status/1787522270555996657>

³³³ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/52967>

³³⁴ <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-5f5fco740000>

³³⁵ <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)

³³⁶ <https://twitter.com/JoshuaPHilll/status/1789407061555445951>

³³⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/jordan-says-israeli-settlers-attacked-jordanian-aid-convoys-way-gaza-2024-05-01/>

³³⁸ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1787643854155321448> ;

<https://twitter.com/adinitay/status/1787692297527693802> ; <https://politicallycorret.co.il/tlv-jerus/>

and the police allowed the destruction and looting of aid to take place.³³⁹ Other road blocks took place in major cities – including Jerusalem – with little to no police interference.³⁴⁰ In at least two occasions trucks were burned,³⁴¹ and at least in two cases settlers attacked and injured the Palestinian truck drivers who were hospitalized (including once in which the truck was not involved in bringing aid to Gaza).³⁴² 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.³⁴³ The deputy speaker of the Israeli Knesset claimed he blocked aid trucks with his private car.³⁴⁴ 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.³⁴⁵

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).³⁴⁶ As of December, fuel prices had increased by over 500 percent.³⁴⁷ In April, the price of a liter of gasoline reached 150 shekels (~\$40).³⁴⁸ 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

³³⁹ <https://twitter.com/barakravid/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/>

³⁴⁰ <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/sjflyyooxo> ;
on police interference: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-20/ty-article/premium/0000018f-9268-d212-abcf-d66d978d0000>

³⁴¹ <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-97bfba030000?liveBlogItemId=738950520#738950520> ;
<https://x.com/Mistaclim/status/1791402493173203356>

³⁴² <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>

³⁴³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/21/israeli-soldiers-and-police-tipping-off-groups-that-attack-gaza-aid-trucks>

³⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/lirishavit/status/1790723920221311015>

³⁴⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hj6opjuba>

³⁴⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/page/gaza-strip-electricity-supply>

³⁴⁷ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000154766/download/>

³⁴⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-04-04/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-a379-d315-ab0f-aff98d4b0000>

Gaza City) compared to the pre-war reality.³⁴⁹ 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.³⁵⁰

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),³⁵¹ but this number decreased to less than one liter on average in February.³⁵² Even basic medical supplies are in short supply. Gauze, for example, is sterilized and reused for the next patient.³⁵³ Some have begun to die from treatable diseases such as hepatitis.³⁵⁴

The lack of medical supplies has resulted in the conduct of medical operations, including C-sections and amputations, without anesthesia or blood supplies.³⁵⁵ An online video shows a Gazan doctor who had to amputate his daughter's foot on the dining table in their home without anesthesia.³⁵⁶ 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.³⁵⁷ A British surgeon who visited al-Aqsa hospital recounted in the UN the story of a girl burned so badly that he could see her facial bones. She had no chance of surviving it, so she died in agony because there was no morphine to give her, and because there was no place for her to die in she was simply left on the floor to die. The surgeon stated there were many such cases and recounted several.³⁵⁸ 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.³⁵⁹

³⁴⁹ <https://www.care.org/news-and-stories/press-releases/care-warns-84-of-gazas-lights-extinguished-people-left-sick-and-starving/>

³⁵⁰ <https://www.nbcnews.com/specials/gaza-universities-destroyed-israel-military-war/index.html>

³⁵¹ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000154766/download/>

³⁵² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/27/un-israel-food-starvation-palestinians-war-crime-genocide>

³⁵³ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

³⁵⁴ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1783398458004578791>

³⁵⁵ <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/cache/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>

³⁵⁶ <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>

³⁵⁷ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1763960723695185934>

³⁵⁸ <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1770677587670684039> ;

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/single-worst-top-oxford-surgeon-horrors-gaza-hospital/>

³⁵⁹ <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/>

As a result of the lack of supplies, women who face postpartum bleeding as they give birth have undergone hysterectomies for lack of medicine and blood supply, preventing them from giving birth in the future.³⁶⁰ 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".³⁶¹ Miscarriages in Gaza have increased by 300% compared to the pre-war situation.³⁶² 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.³⁶³ Women in Gaza also have difficulties finding menstrual pads, with some using alternatives such as the corners of their tents to manage their periods.³⁶⁴

Gaza's health system

Gaza's health system has all but collapsed. 84% of all health facilities have been damaged or destroyed.³⁶⁵ At times, less than a third of Gaza's hospitals and a quarter of its primary health centers were even partially operational.³⁶⁶ As of writing, about half of the hospitals in the Strip are partially operational.³⁶⁷ 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.³⁶⁸ There are over a million reported cases of diseases in Gaza so far.³⁶⁹ As of mid June, there have been over 865,000 cases of acute respiratory infections.³⁷⁰ Over 485,000 cases of diarrhea have been reported, over 113,000 of which are among children aged 5 or less.³⁷¹ 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).³⁷²

³⁶⁰ https://www.juzoor.org/cached_uploads/download/2023/11/11/maternal-health-report-final-1699726911.pdf

³⁶¹ <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>

³⁶² <https://jezebel.com/miscarriages-in-gaza-have-increased-300-under-israeli-1851168680>

³⁶³ <https://twitter.com/abierkhatib/status/1771451982500229193>

³⁶⁴ <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2024/01/11/1224201620/another-layer-of-misery-women-in-gaza-struggle-to-find-menstrual-pads-running-wa>

³⁶⁵ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf>

³⁶⁶ <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

³⁶⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

³⁶⁸ 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>

³⁶⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

³⁷⁰ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

³⁷¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

³⁷² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-86>

On average, there is one shower in Gaza for every 4,500 people, and a toilet for every 220.³⁷³ 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 Minister³⁷⁴ – have spoken in favor of allowing diseases to decimate the civilian population in Gaza.³⁷⁵ 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.³⁷⁶ Exposure to high temperatures within refugee tents has also killed Palestinians sheltering inside them.³⁷⁷

Israel has systematically dismantled the health system in Gaza, making it inoperable.³⁷⁸ In late February, the head of MSF stated that “there is no health system to speak of left in Gaza”.³⁷⁹ 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”.³⁸⁰ 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”.³⁸¹ 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).³⁸² 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.³⁸³

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

³⁷³ <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).

³⁷⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rizlcnoga>

³⁷⁵ <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001462900>

³⁷⁶ <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inflicting-unprecedented-suffering-and-destruction-seven-ways-the-government-of-621591/>

³⁷⁷ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1783397508154052793>

³⁷⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/world/middleeast/gaza-israel-hospitals-medical-system.html>

³⁷⁹ <https://www.msf.org/msf-briefing-gaza-un-security-council>

³⁸⁰ <https://www.msf.org/msf-briefing-gaza-un-security-council>

³⁸¹ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/israel-government-continues-block-aid-response-despite-icj-genocide-court-ruling>; <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inflicting-unprecedented-suffering-and-destruction-seven-ways-the-government-of-621591/>

³⁸² <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

³⁸³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gazas-silent-killings-destruction-healthcare-system-rafah>

deaths from preventable health causes and the collapse of the medical system”.³⁸⁴ Other academics reached similar and more detailed conclusions.³⁸⁵

³⁸⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/29/health-organisations-disease-gaza-population-outbreaks-conflict>

³⁸⁵ https://gaza-projections.org/gaza_projections_report.pdf

Israeli discourse and dehumanization of Palestinians

Last updated: June 18, 2024

Dehumanization in Israeli institutions and the IDF

Much of the above is made possible through the consistent dehumanization 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).³⁸⁶ 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",³⁸⁷ stated that "this war is civilization against barbarism"³⁸⁸ and defined the war as a battle against the Biblical Amalek in both a speech and in a letter he sent to IDF soldiers.³⁸⁹ The Bible directs to annihilate Amalek completely: men, women, children and livestock.³⁹⁰ Israel's President has stated that Israel did not distinguish between militants and civilians, "it's an entire nation out there that is responsible".³⁹¹ He also personally wrote a message on an artillery shell to be shot into Gaza.³⁹² 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.³⁹³ Israel's National Security minister told Border Police troops they should shoot terrorists even if the terrorists do not threaten them, against procedure.³⁹⁴ 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.³⁹⁵ In late March, she stated that Israel was fighting against the Amalekites "of our times" in explicit context of the religious obligation to exterminate Amalek.³⁹⁶ 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".³⁹⁷ Other

³⁸⁶ <https://humanityjournal.org/blog/discourses-of-palestinian-disappearance/>

³⁸⁷ <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/children-post-deleted-netanyahu/>

³⁸⁸ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-to-dutch-leader-this-war-is-civilization-vs-barbarism/

³⁸⁹ <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>

³⁹⁰ 1 Samuel 15.2-3.

³⁹¹ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/israel-gaza-isaac-herzog_n_65295ee8e4b03ea0c004e2a8

³⁹² <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>

³⁹³ <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20231228-app-01-00-en.pdf>, pp. 60-62.

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

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

³⁹⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkxx1alft>

³⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/GolanMay/status/1759675501424042329;>

<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1760354792663142557>

³⁹⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771246005368861008>

³⁹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmxnNkQSfmQ>

politicians have done the same.³⁹⁸ 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.³⁹⁹ In March, a former general described the people in three areas from which Israel retreated (Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon) as "human animals".⁴⁰⁰ 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".⁴⁰¹ 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".⁴⁰² In mid June, Israel's Foreign Ministry placed an ad that claimed that "there are no innocent civilians there [in Gaza]".⁴⁰³

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.⁴⁰⁴ 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. These volumes contained many revenge themes as well poems that treat the war as a religious war.⁴⁰⁵ 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.⁴⁰⁶ 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.⁴⁰⁷ 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.⁴⁰⁸ 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

³⁹⁸ <https://twitter.com/AmirHetsroni/status/1743063371551822292> (speaker is Moshe Feiglin);

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syqoo1noo6>

³⁹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQtqvSYjMIc>

⁴⁰⁰ <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1773260052683469178>

⁴⁰¹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1781995666593456397> ;

<https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1779764062433284213>

⁴⁰² <https://twitter.com/MacaesBruno/status/1787573947690819907>

⁴⁰³ <https://x.com/MaxBlumenthal/status/1801745356289622225>

⁴⁰⁴ 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>

⁴⁰⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/literature/2024-03-26/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-7ad9-d96c-af9f-7ed9e9fa0000>

⁴⁰⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-05-15/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018f-7c03-d808-a9bf-ff1745530000>

⁴⁰⁷ 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>

⁴⁰⁸ https://ynet-pic1.yit.co.il/picserver5/wcm_upload_files/2024/01/21/SimT5hcKp/merged.pdf ; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/terror-and-security/israel-hamas-war-gaza-idf-aid-strike-world-central-kitchen/>

Jerusalem and Israel.⁴⁰⁹ The decision was delayed after a petition by the charity Physicians for Human Rights to Israel's Supreme Court.⁴¹⁰ In April, the IDF scattered fake money bills in the Strip with a portrait of the local Hamas leader depicted as a rat.⁴¹¹

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.⁴¹²

Dehumanization in the IDF

The dehumanization of Palestinians is now normative, pervasive and obvious in many hundreds⁴¹³ of images and videos, almost all of which were uploaded by IDF soldiers to social media.⁴¹⁴ These videos and images present shooting civilians waving white flags,⁴¹⁵ abuse of

⁴⁰⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/health/article/h17117hua6>

⁴¹⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-20/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-5d54-d27e-a7af-7ffe83dcooooo> ; https://twitter.com/PHR_IL/status/1770877688539988234

⁴¹¹ <https://twitter.com/N12News/status/1780977153166688378>

⁴¹² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-21/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-9b46-dce9-a1cf-ffc6dceeooooo> ; <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/05/israels-extortion-leaflets-and-namecheap-how-to-do-corporate-accountability-during-a-genocide/>

⁴¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAT9NQ4WkEo> (hundreds; see below for many others)

⁴¹⁴ <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=IwAR3bg9099KfZMujGiphBISJxDhNWIMF6hAaL8nQlaf-3b-g8ljZVX2BOV4k> . 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/177296477262911095> ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1791770589985640847> (collection) ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1792656511510143472> (collection) ; <https://www.mako.co.il/news->

individuals,⁴¹⁶ captives and corpses,⁴¹⁷ gleefully damaging or destroying houses⁴¹⁸, various structures and institutions,⁴¹⁹ religious sites⁴²⁰ and looting of personal belongings,⁴²¹ as well as

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>

⁴¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/middleeasteye/status/1744351540435935525> ;
<https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/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.

⁴¹⁶

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

⁴¹⁷ 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>
⁴¹⁸ <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>

randomly firing their weapons,⁴²² shooting local animals,⁴²³ destroying private property,⁴²⁴ burning books within libraries,⁴²⁵ defacing Palestinian⁴²⁶ and Islamic symbols⁴²⁷ (including

; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798325368023384423> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798685435356393524> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801743066497212733>
⁴¹⁹ <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>
⁴²⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=if_Z2ZeqrN8 ;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1754458148276990180> ;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1757054593656103198> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1777799671647191117> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1789978344311648368> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798393141021553018> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1799879016436093021> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1800841913349894346>
⁴²¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/amid-ongoing-genocide-gaza-systematic-israeli-theft-occurring-palestinian-civilian-homes-enar> ; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-war-gaza-singer-helpless-israeli-soldier-filmed-tiktok-his-guitar> ;
<https://twitter.com/BChutzpah19416/status/1750186862579269867> ; written report that includes a soldier confessing to looting homes before demolishing them: <https://medium.com/@dillontelem/gaza-warzone-musings-a-soldiers-reflections-on-demolition-and-humanity-7ddeae313c00> ;
<https://twitter.com/adinitay/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>
⁴²² <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>
⁴²³ https://twitter.com/Sarah_Hassan94/status/1754620276271149451
⁴²⁴ <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/adinitay/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>
⁴²⁵ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1793628894245118205> ; <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/israeli-soldier-burning-books/>

burning Qurans⁴²⁸ and turning mosques into dining spaces⁴²⁹) and declaring a new Nakba.⁴³⁰ More videos are covered by *The New York Times*⁴³¹ and *CNN*.⁴³²

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”.⁴³³ 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.⁴³⁴ 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.⁴³⁵ 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.⁴³⁶ A Palestinian woman claimed that IDF soldiers carved a Star of David on her husband’s back during his time in detention.⁴³⁷ 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.⁴³⁸

Looting has become normalized⁴³⁹ to the extent that one case was featured approvingly in a popular Friday evening news segment,⁴⁴⁰ 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”.⁴⁴¹ Soldiers shared an image of themselves with tens of thousands of shekels (thousands of dollars).⁴⁴² A military doctor noted disapprovingly that looting had become “almost institutionalized”.⁴⁴³ An IDF soldier attempted to sell online a Gazan passport

⁴²⁶ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1742273606699106542>;

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

<https://twitter.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1787892635186712737>

⁴²⁷ <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1769378368431047090>

⁴²⁸ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1793032057649512671> ; also

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1793756431881294035>

⁴²⁹ <https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/180193479470534674>

⁴³⁰ <https://x.com/YousefMunayyer/status/1791807669797347571> ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1793047312115040450>

⁴³¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/06/world/middleeast/israel-idf-soldiers-war-social-media-video.html>

⁴³² <https://twitter.com/amanpour/status/1758204651927744784>

⁴³³ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1752433175320478060>

⁴³⁴ <https://twitter.com/adham922/status/1756068057779245412>

⁴³⁵ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1756605167946899965>

⁴³⁶ <https://snd.ps/post/117484/هديل-الحدوح-حاول-الاحتلال-دفنها-وأخضعها-وأطفالها-لتحليل-جيني> ;

<https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1773318803075531136>

⁴³⁷ https://www.instagram.com/landpalestine/p/C4qQ6pltu5N/?img_index=1

⁴³⁸ <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1766132416899420637>

⁴³⁹ <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>

⁴⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1756438313899024862>

⁴⁴¹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1760599708857237838>

⁴⁴² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772972625532207265> ; also

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796637726835446048> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1802082633679090163>

⁴⁴³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra13792905>

and other items he had looted while serving in Gaza.⁴⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁴⁵

Revenge is a common theme in this content.⁴⁴⁶ Some IDF soldiers shared social media content that explicitly compared Gazans to the biblical Amalek (see above),⁴⁴⁷ as well as stating that they have fulfilled the religious commandment to annihilate the memory of Amalek.⁴⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁴⁹ Other soldiers upload much revenge content and relate it to the destruction of the Gaza Strip, including the destruction they themselves caused.⁴⁵⁰ 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”.⁴⁵¹ High ranking officers have said similar things.⁴⁵² 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.⁴⁵³ During the Jewish Purim celebration, IDF soldiers filmed themselves reading the Scroll of Esther while indiscriminately firing a mortar round 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).⁴⁵⁴ Soldiers preparing to enter Rafah in early May called for “let’s take Rafah apart” as their battle cry.⁴⁵⁵

Many soldiers release videos that portray their experience and destruction in Gaza as fun and humorous,⁴⁵⁶ treating their experience like a video game,⁴⁵⁷ or content that ignores the war,

⁴⁴⁴ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/rjytktkra

⁴⁴⁵ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796133135400210700>

⁴⁴⁶ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1750219568428036237> ;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1756652152607457781>

⁴⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1762185882994425961> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772965195683336261> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1792891418370781395>

⁴⁴⁸ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1779808804751757387>

⁴⁴⁹ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1765386577855791185>

⁴⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1767900767313182897>

⁴⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772304727457317039>

⁴⁵² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqEj3DzadiM>

⁴⁵³ <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>

⁴⁵⁴ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1771197890829898017>

⁴⁵⁵ <https://twitter.com/ofercass/status/1787791098095534223>

⁴⁵⁶ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1745063720080793681>;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750782757326795020> ;
<https://twitter.com/NABEELRAJAB/status/1750228266193969448> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750627849948532763> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750540763413287350> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1749795644532035602> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750197302579343870> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1753422534555427299> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1753536164085010674> ;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1754091912040968444> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1754553057696784519> ; a long list of additional videos here:
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1755973157515669708> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1757094979460067773> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760040514915553463> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1759307381169701366> ;
<https://twitter.com/NaksBilal/status/1761825956950421858> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761363322182516924> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761360983174316281> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1762212629576069120> ;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1762543392997703956> ;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1766193632661447085> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1766178422361821416> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1766491956090155333> ; more videos and images here:
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1766912143444656544> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1767985211747270834> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1769374467732767049> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1769865723843588124> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771544787264409759> ;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1773452109532323868> ;
<https://twitter.com/LensVeritatis/status/1774471148430111088> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1776049466656579639> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1764936131718635713> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1779619958126784854> ;
<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>
⁴⁵⁷ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1800822593777545634> ;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1802060863731319253>

such as conducting a yoga class in an abandoned home in Gaza,⁴⁵⁸ or a soldier holding up a sign advertising a barber shop in Israel with corpses of dead Palestinians around him.⁴⁵⁹ 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”.⁴⁶⁰ One soldier expressed his will to poison the flour on the trucks bringing humanitarian aid to Gazans.⁴⁶¹ Other photos include soldiers posing near election banners for local (Israeli) politicians and restaurant chains “coming soon” to Gaza.⁴⁶² Recurring types of content include humorously presenting the lingerie of Gazan women⁴⁶³ or posing with items (often toys) from abandoned Gazan houses.⁴⁶⁴ *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.⁴⁶⁵ 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.⁴⁶⁶ The IDF has even brought influencers to

⁴⁵⁸ <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>

⁴⁵⁹ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1755129771825000637>

⁴⁶⁰ <https://twitter.com/ozleisraelaza/status/1780525230064058757>

⁴⁶¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1780159773981220987>

⁴⁶² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760407071747719357> ;

<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761039679212671105>

⁴⁶³ <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>

⁴⁶⁴ <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>

⁴⁶⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/food/2024-02-13/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018d-82c5-d6dc-ab9f-cffd1ebc0000>

⁴⁶⁶ https://www.mako.co.il/news-n12_magazine/781730bdada5e810/Article-979e397c1ea9f81027.htm

mockingly “review” a “hotel” in Gaza.⁴⁶⁷ An IDF soldier reflected that other soldiers went into the Gaza Strip as a form of tourism to see the destruction.⁴⁶⁸

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.⁴⁶⁹ I have seen almost no reporting on such disciplinary processes within the IDF since the beginning of the war, and in the few cases where such process took place the impact on the IDF soldiers committing the acts was negligible.⁴⁷⁰ 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.⁴⁷¹ 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.⁴⁷² 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).⁴⁷³ Similar calls appear in public space, for example in graffiti.⁴⁷⁴ In October, an adviser to Israel’s Prime Minister called for torturing Hamas militants in a graphic way.⁴⁷⁵ In November, 90 Israeli doctors signed a letter calling to bomb hospitals in Gaza,⁴⁷⁶ while the president of Israel’s largest university compared Hamas to Amalek.⁴⁷⁷ A popular singer used a long series of expletives against Gaza during a show for Israeli soldiers.⁴⁷⁸ In early January, a long list of rabbis, academics and ten MPs have called for the cessation of all humanitarian aid to Gaza.⁴⁷⁹ 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

⁴⁶⁷ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1743296706576269446>;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1739728935779234254> ; also the similar
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801625890633159060>

⁴⁶⁸ <https://twitter.com/WarWatches/status/1783121782557352320>

⁴⁶⁹ <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>

⁴⁷⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-11/ty-article/0000018e-2c36-d682-a9df-edbe2df50000> ; https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/rjytktkra

⁴⁷¹ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/750891/>

⁴⁷² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkrbsjbvc>

⁴⁷³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-war-rhetoric.html>

⁴⁷⁴ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1790031034408394798>

⁴⁷⁵ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-war-sara-netanyahu-advisor-torture-gazans-rant>

⁴⁷⁶ <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/11/israeli-doctors-urge-the-bombing-of-gaza-hospitals/>

⁴⁷⁷ <https://www.hidabroot.org/article/1188125>

⁴⁷⁸ <https://www.ice.co.il/social/news/article/988380> “Gaza, you daughter of a bitch, Gaza, you Black, you garbage can, Gaza, you whore...”

⁴⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/shilofreid/status/1742919348401135788>

humanitarian aid.⁴⁸⁰ The Rabbi of Tzefat compared the Gazans to Amalek and claimed that they should be eradicated.⁴⁸¹

In April, 42% of Israeli Jews claimed that Israel should not follow international humanitarian law.⁴⁸² 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.⁴⁸³ 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”.⁴⁸⁴ Similar sentiments appear on Israel’s main TV channels.⁴⁸⁵ Similar messages are directed at Arabs/Palestinians in general. An Israeli model/influencer stated that all Palestinians with Israeli citizenship should be annihilated,⁴⁸⁶ a sentiment followed by a cameraman for the Israeli Channel 14.⁴⁸⁷ When three members of a family of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship died in a car accident, large numbers of Israelis voiced their joy on social media.⁴⁸⁸ 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.⁴⁸⁹

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.⁴⁹⁰ 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.⁴⁹¹ A popular Israeli stand-up comedian mocked Gazans who were killed from faulty airdropped humanitarian aid, declaring that they were “such morons”.⁴⁹² 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).⁴⁹³ 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”).⁴⁹⁴ A senior journalist

⁴⁸⁰ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1757837275830907052>

⁴⁸¹ <https://www.yeshiva.org.il/midrash/52638>

⁴⁸² <https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/swords-of-iron-15/>

⁴⁸³ https://twitter.com/itamar_green/status/1741504115874627765

⁴⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshahad2/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>

⁴⁸⁵ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1790909070708285910>

⁴⁸⁶ https://x.com/z_ooplz/status/1791336664666603703

⁴⁸⁷ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1794698212206653773>

⁴⁸⁸ https://x.com/Ahmad_tibi/status/1801934557723419012;

https://x.com/z_ooplz/status/1802321259188920411

⁴⁸⁹ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1794351306028839298>

⁴⁹⁰ <https://twitter.com/CensoredMen/status/1765773664325075354>

⁴⁹¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sy3bfhu6p> ; also <https://olam-katan.co.il/archives/12261>

⁴⁹² <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1769159335299485732> ; also

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

⁴⁹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVopEUXMz6M>

⁴⁹⁴ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1768989430084227090> ;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irk3n9V-aQs> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfZOIYA7EOg>

asserted that Gazans “have earned that hell fairly, and I don't have a milligram of empathy”.⁴⁹⁵ A senior commentator stated that “to destroy Hamas... you have to bring Gaza to a humanitarian disaster”.⁴⁹⁶ Many other media workers and artists have said similar things.⁴⁹⁷ Voices on the street speak openly and positively about the killing of civilians in Gaza in interviews.⁴⁹⁸ One t-shirt in Israel features the text “May your [i.e. Arab] village burn”.⁴⁹⁹ 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.⁵⁰⁰ When the IDF killed three sons and four grandchildren of Ismail Haniyeh, one of Hamas’s leaders,⁵⁰¹ an Israeli journalist cited the religious commandment to erase the memory of Amalek.⁵⁰² 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”.⁵⁰³ Some Israeli police officers apparently believe that there are no innocents in Gaza, including a fetus in his mother’s womb.⁵⁰⁴

Israeli demonstrators have repeatedly attempted to block humanitarian aid from entering Gaza, including holding a rave/protest just outside the border wall.⁵⁰⁵ After the “flour massacre” on 29 February, Israel’s Minister of National Security called to “completely support” all IDF troops while also calling for stopping all humanitarian aid to Gazans.⁵⁰⁶ Some IDF soldiers have also called to stop all humanitarian aid.⁵⁰⁷ 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.⁵⁰⁸ 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.⁵⁰⁹ When a

⁴⁹⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2023-12-19/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-7dog-de44-a9be-7d9d47790000>

⁴⁹⁶ <https://twitter.com/freyisraeli/status/1769996721591877793>

⁴⁹⁷ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1768045698350465445> ; <https://twitter.com/bokeralmog/status/1782777513678196933> ; see also <https://x.com/IsraelGaley/status/1799689832257749110>

⁴⁹⁸ <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C5YJhcgslyz/>

⁴⁹⁹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1780222143445205191>

⁵⁰⁰ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1775162156792631334>

⁵⁰¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/three-sons-hamas-leader-haniyeh-killed-israeli-airstrike-2024-04-10/>

⁵⁰² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1778072422530400755>

⁵⁰³ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794826941209702699> ; also

<https://x.com/idanlandau/status/1794956280504930630>

⁵⁰⁴ <https://twitter.com/AlissaShira/status/1787096840216654241>

⁵⁰⁵ <https://twitter.com/Lowkeyonline/status/1757326323712774650> ;

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

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

⁵⁰⁶ <https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1763196768458604583>

⁵⁰⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1785410517823046018>

⁵⁰⁸ <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.jdn.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-b7dfadob0000>

⁵⁰⁹ <https://twitter.com/UNLazarini/status/1788643951945150790>

teacher was suspended for participating in a Nakba commemoration, the children of her school demonstrated against her, repeatedly shouting “may your village burn”.⁵¹⁰

The dehumanization of Palestinians is closely associated with a sharp increase in Israeli militarism. Israeli dating practices attest to both these changes.⁵¹¹ 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.⁵¹² One Tinder bio, for example, stated that “We are not only here to fuck Hamas”.⁵¹³ 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).⁵¹⁴ All of the above legitimizes as well as incentivizes violent behavior in the war within the Gaza Strip.

Effects of dehumanization on detained and arrested Palestinians

Thousands of Palestinians have been detained and moved to camps within Israel.⁵¹⁵ Many of these Palestinians (as much as 85-90% according to Israeli media) are detained without any concrete connection to Hamas.⁵¹⁶ The conditions throughout the process of arrest and

⁵¹⁰ <https://x.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1791788316943106366>

⁵¹¹ <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-7aee5b000000>

⁵¹² <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-7aee5b000000>

⁵¹³ <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-7aee5b000000>

⁵¹⁴ <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-7aee5b000000>

⁵¹⁵ <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-dfbo-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>

⁵¹⁶ <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-dfbo-a7af-fb7b4c150000>

detainment are appalling, as a released Gazan poet has narrated in detail in *The New Yorker* in January.⁵¹⁷ Many others have shared similar stories, including on the torture they experienced.⁵¹⁸ 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.”⁵¹⁹ 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.⁵²⁰ Online videos provide more evidence for the torture.⁵²¹ 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.⁵²² The official position of Israel’s medical directorate recommends such blindfolding and handcuffs.⁵²³

At least 8 Palestinian prisoners and captives have died in Israeli jails since the beginning of the war,⁵²⁴ where conditions are appalling as well.⁵²⁵ The IDF has admitted that additional detained Palestinians from Gaza have died but refused to supply additional details,⁵²⁶ until in early March *Ha’aretz* revealed that 27 Gazans died in IDF detention.⁵²⁷ By late May, the number increased to 35 including two who died en route to the detention facility after soldiers

⁵¹⁷ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/01/01/a-palestinian-poets-perilous-journey-out-of-gaza>

⁵¹⁸ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/20-שעות-על-הברכיים-מי-שחז-מונה-אזרחים-20/> ;

<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-7fef68c0000> ; <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>

⁵¹⁹ <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>

⁵²⁰ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6153/>

⁵²¹ https://twitter.com/brown_johnbrown/status/1743021596682371453 ;

<https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1753512387322474545> ;

<https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1753044873974840578> ;

<https://twitter.com/arixegal/status/1759978751524212926> ;

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

⁵²² <https://twitter.com/ReneeLevant/status/1754269959927079245>

⁵²³ <https://img.mako.co.il/2023/12/20/MEDIC.pdf>

⁵²⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-12-06/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-3b9b-d1b-a3bf-ffbb16d80000> ; <https://twitter.com/KhalilAsslan/status/1741926482463633866> ;

<https://twitter.com/MustafaBarghoui/status/1761325667252092984>

⁵²⁵ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1759571535637954816>

⁵²⁶ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/20-שעות-על-הברכיים-מי-שחז-מונה-אזרחים-20/>

⁵²⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-07/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-1240-df16-a58e-1ffdcf70000> ; also 2 more here: <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1781018819961454697> ; and one more here: <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1789930610783408368>

beat them, and two who died because of poor medical treatment.⁵²⁸ By early June, the number of Palestinians who died in potentially criminal circumstances according to the IDF increased further to 48.⁵²⁹ For comparison, in the notorious American Guantánamo prison, 9 prisoners died over more than 20 years of operation.⁵³⁰ The IDF refused to answer whether it opened Military Police investigations for the deaths of these Gazans.⁵³¹ 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.⁵³²

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).⁵³³ The same law was used, for example, to detain and imprison an 82-year old woman with Alzheimer’s disease for almost two months.⁵³⁴ 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.⁵³⁵ 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 six month old baby), and that since his release he has not found her or them.⁵³⁶

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.⁵³⁷ 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).⁵³⁸ Detainees were threatened with prolonged

⁵²⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-28/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-bbb6-dc1f-abef-ffb9de50000> ; for examples see: <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1781018819961454697> ; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1789930610783408368>

⁵²⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-06-03/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-dab1-dbod-ag8f-def9186a0000>

⁵³⁰ <https://reprieve.org/uk/campaign/guantanamo/faq/>

⁵³¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-c6e1-d6c4-ab8d-e7f5fd670000>

⁵³² <https://www.phr.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Death-in-Israeli-Prisons-28.03.24-Ver.pdf>

⁵³³ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/20-שעות-על-הברכיים-מי-שחז-מוכה-אזרחים-20/>

⁵³⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-02-01/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-5f18-doaf-a3af-7fbcea840000>

⁵³⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-3945-d516-afbf-ffc73dd00000>

⁵³⁶ <https://twitter.com/Hanineo9/status/1769258663837827582>

⁵³⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/03/world/middleeast/unrwa-gaza-detention-israel.html>

⁵³⁸

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

detention, injury or the killing of their family members if they did not provide information.⁵³⁹ 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).⁵⁴⁰ 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.⁵⁴¹ Another detainee recounted he lost 37 kilograms during his period in detention and described experiencing electric shocks as a form of torture.⁵⁴² One released detainee recounted that he could use the restroom for only four minutes, after which he would be electrocuted.⁵⁴³ 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.⁵⁴⁴ 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”,⁵⁴⁵ while the UNICEF spokesperson revealed the extent of destruction in the then-empty hospital.⁵⁴⁶ As of June, according to one NGO, international press reports documented at least 7 cases of rape against Palestinian prisoners and detainees.⁵⁴⁷

In early April, an Israeli doctor in the hospital in the detainment 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 detainment (“this is a regular event”). All patients in the hospital are straw-fed, wear diapers, are blindfolded and their hands and feet are all handcuffed⁵⁴⁸ (even before the war, 95% of prisoners were restrained when they received medical treatment)⁵⁴⁹. 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”.⁵⁵⁰ A medical source described the situation as “it’s like a different world or a black hole. There’s a disease incubator there”.⁵⁵¹ In mid-April

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

546 https://twitter.com/ijames_elder/status/1770440852717912117

547 <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.

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

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

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

551 <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-28/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-bbb6-dc1f-abef-ffbf9de50000>

Physicians for Human Rights Israel called to “Shut down the Sde Teiman Facility Now”, stating that it reflects “a moral and professional low point”.⁵⁵² 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”.⁵⁵³ A *New York Times* report in June provided additional similar evidence, adding details about the rape of male Gazan detainees.⁵⁵⁴ 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.⁵⁵⁵ 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),⁵⁵⁶ but Israel began phasing out the camp in early June.⁵⁵⁷

The number of women detained in Gaza (and the West Bank) since Oct. 7 has been in the hundreds (140 in Gaza in mid-December⁵⁵⁸). 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.⁵⁵⁹ One Palestinian detained woman stated that “For the most of the interrogations, I and the majority of the detainees were repeatedly threatened with rape”.⁵⁶⁰ Another Palestinian woman has spoken about the sexual, emotional and physical abuse she has experienced for over a month in which she was detained.⁵⁶¹ Other women have said similar things.⁵⁶² In late March, an Israeli

⁵⁵² <https://www.phr.org.il/en/shut-down-the-sde-teiman-facility-now/>

⁵⁵³ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/10/middleeast/israel-sde-teiman-detention-whistleblowers-intl-cmd/index.html>

⁵⁵⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/06/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-detention-base.html>

⁵⁵⁵ <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-d9ao-a38f-ee2f1f8e0000>

⁵⁵⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-04/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9ac3-dd2b-ad9f-dadb900f0000>

⁵⁵⁷ <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-dao2-a1dc-ff5b23460000>

⁵⁵⁸ <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>

⁵⁵⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/israelopt-un-experts-appalled-reported-human-rights-violations-against>

⁵⁶⁰ <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).

⁵⁶¹ <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1762502752184467495>

⁵⁶² <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=3mN1SRUxoR8> ; <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240324-women-in-gaza-are-being-raped-and-this-is-not-being->

former general claimed that a US official accused the IDF of “systematically” abusing Palestinian women.⁵⁶³ 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.⁵⁶⁴

[investigated-or-reported/](#) ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771585576963092757> ;
<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/by115igcoa>
; <https://www.timesofisrael.com/al-jazeera-report-alleging-idf-rapes-in-shifa-hospital-retracted/>
⁵⁶³ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-793420>
⁵⁶⁴ <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>

Ethnic cleansing

Last updated: June 18, 2024

Ethnic cleansing is openly discussed in Israeli discourse, including by ministers in the ruling government. This includes the ministers of Finance,⁵⁶⁵ National Security (who also stated he would like to live in Gaza),⁵⁶⁶ Heritage (who also called to drop a nuclear bomb on Gaza),⁵⁶⁷ Agriculture (who claimed that another Nakba was ongoing),⁵⁶⁸ the former Minister of Information⁵⁶⁹ and a former Minister of Justice.⁵⁷⁰ Israel MPs have also participated in the discussion.⁵⁷¹ 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”.⁵⁷² Some IDF officers and soldiers fighting in Gaza support the same idea.⁵⁷³ An Israeli government plan proposing to repopulate all Gazans to the Sinai Peninsula (part of Egypt) has been leaked.⁵⁷⁴ Israel has also attempted to get the US to pressure Egypt into accepting Gazan refugees,⁵⁷⁵ and has attempted to convince several countries including Congo to accept Palestinian refugees.⁵⁷⁶ Other locations members of Israel’s government suggested as potential resettlement locations include Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the European Union and Chile.⁵⁷⁷ 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.⁵⁷⁸ 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”.⁵⁷⁹ In mid-February a local human rights organization revealed that Egypt was building a

⁵⁶⁵ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-call-for-resettling-gazas-palestinians-building-settlements-in-strip/> ; <https://x.com/N12News/status/1798769743119167566>

⁵⁶⁶ <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/sdtng3> ; <https://x.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1798729352412319874>

⁵⁶⁷ https://twitter.com/Eliyahu_a/status/1772645094295830643 ; <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/596470/>

⁵⁶⁸ <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>

⁵⁶⁹ <https://www.hidabroot.org/article/1187840>

⁵⁷⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEU-dQWOIL4>

⁵⁷¹ <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.

⁵⁷² <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-778367>

⁵⁷³ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794113236708573451> ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794826941209702699>

⁵⁷⁴ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ו-המסמך-המלא-של-משרד-המודיעין-כיבוש-עזה-ו/> ;

<https://www.972mag.com/intelligence-ministry-gaza-population-transfer/>

⁵⁷⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/12/21/biden-netanyahu-dispute-palestinian-state/>

⁵⁷⁶ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/israeli-officials-said-in-talks-with-congo-others-on-taking-in-gaza-emigrants/

⁵⁷⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/01/04/gaza-displaced-civilians-resettlement-israel/>

⁵⁷⁸ <https://www.zman.co.il/453910/popup/>

⁵⁷⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-02-05/ty-article-live/0000018d-762a-dd6e-a98d-f62a9c200000?liveBlogItemId=310435701#310435701>

high-security area for the reception of Palestinian refugees,⁵⁸⁰ and in late March an Egyptian source claimed Egypt was preparing for the entrance of 150,000 Palestinians during an Israeli invasion of Rafah.⁵⁸¹ 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".⁵⁸² According to estimates, the number of Palestinians who left for Egypt by April was 30-50 thousand.⁵⁸³ 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".⁵⁸⁴ 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.⁵⁸⁵

The absence of clear war plans,⁵⁸⁶ 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.⁵⁸⁷ Over 30 right-wing organizations have supported this goal in a late January conference.⁵⁸⁸ A total of 11 ministers and 15 MPs (of a total of 120) participated in the conference.⁵⁸⁹ Several IDF soldiers have stated their will to resettle Gaza while uniformed and within Gaza.⁵⁹⁰ In March, the commander of an armored battalion did the same during an interview with Israeli TV.⁵⁹¹ 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.⁵⁹² Other polls from January, February, March and April reveal that some 20-25% of Israeli Jews believe that Israel should resettle

⁵⁸⁰ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-egypt-building-buffer-zone-palestinian-refugees>

⁵⁸¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hklu44rk> ; <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/-مصر-تطلب-معلومات-ومساعدات-من-أميركا-قبل-عملية-رفح>

⁵⁸² <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/mar/19/jared-kushner-gaza-waterfront-property-israel-negev>

⁵⁸³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-04-04/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-a379-d315-ab9f-aff98d4b0000>

⁵⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1777360030380986803>

⁵⁸⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1785075803870404644> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-30/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-2e6c-d502-a5bf-eeeebb50000>

⁵⁸⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/18/biden-israel-gaza-rafah-palestinians/>

⁵⁸⁷ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2023_q4/Article-9f47fed9563eb81027.htm ;

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-794770>

⁵⁸⁸ <https://twitter.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1746855797328433438> ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/09/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-settlers.html>

⁵⁸⁹ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2024_q1/Article-7ce65d03aa05d81027.htm

⁵⁹⁰ <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>

⁵⁹¹ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/727102/> ; he was reprimanded as a result.

⁵⁹² <https://www.now14.co.il/%D7%A1%D7%A7%D7%A8-%D7%A6%D7%A9%D7%A1%D7%A8-%D7%AA%D7%A9%D7%A-%D7%A4%D7%A0%D7%A9-%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%A6%D7%A2%D7%A4-%D7%A2%D7%A9-%D7%A9%D7%A7%D7%A9/> ; a similar question in the same poll had higher support. Also: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ryals5foop>

Gaza.⁵⁹³ A poll from March-April revealed that 50% of Israeli Jews thought that Israel should govern the Gaza Strip after the war.⁵⁹⁴

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”.⁵⁹⁵ In early March, Jewish activists were able to briefly enter the Gaza Strip in an attempt to build a settlement there.⁵⁹⁶ 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.⁵⁹⁷ 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.⁵⁹⁸ 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”.⁵⁹⁹

Inside the Gaza Strip, IDF soldiers appear to have constructed “the first synagogue in Khan Younis”,⁶⁰⁰ another synagogue there,⁶⁰¹ 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).⁶⁰² One soldier filmed himself spray painting the Temple in Jerusalem on the ruins of a destroyed mosque in Gaza.⁶⁰³ 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.⁶⁰⁴ 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.⁶⁰⁵ 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.⁶⁰⁶ Many of these initiatives, it seems,

⁵⁹³ <https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/swords-of-iron-14/> ;
<https://jppi.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>

⁵⁹⁴ <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/05/30/israeli-views-of-the-israel-hamas-war/>

⁵⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760758994350588388>

⁵⁹⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ruoner3a>; <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-settlers-gaza-outpost-erez-crossing/>

⁵⁹⁷ <https://twitter.com/VerminusM/status/1774080556701245486>

⁵⁹⁸ <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>

⁵⁹⁹ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1802435990251848148>

⁶⁰⁰ <https://twitter.com/yanivkub/status/1742189448006127715>

⁶⁰¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1745979741931282775>

⁶⁰² <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1743588216630919271> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750793042850664750> ; <https://twitter.com/KhalilAsslan/status/1753364384800252200> ; <https://x.com/moshebs11/status/1766830282219372906>

⁶⁰³ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1756666882331988140>

⁶⁰⁴ <https://twitter.com/arixegal/status/1747704367145201666>

⁶⁰⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1759534834710352030>

⁶⁰⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1753547113638604865> ; also <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1765450350549487672>

were relatively short-lived. In late March, it appears that soldiers recorded themselves reading the Scroll of Esther in al-Shifa hospital.⁶⁰⁷ 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.⁶⁰⁸ A different unit took over a Gazan school, transforming it into its base.⁶⁰⁹ In May, a journalist showcased the first military synagogue in the area of Rafah,⁶¹⁰ while soldiers from an IDF unit prepared a makeshift sign declaring a new settlement in the Gaza Strip.⁶¹¹

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.⁶¹² 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 billion.⁶¹³ 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).⁶¹⁴ In mid May a UN official stated that rebuilding could cost around \$50 billion over two decades.⁶¹⁵ 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.⁶¹⁶ A top UN demining official claimed that simply clearing the debris could take as much as 14 years.⁶¹⁷ 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.⁶¹⁸

⁶⁰⁷ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1771974813491360211>

⁶⁰⁸ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1778864079995568598> ;

<https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1784694240921989320>

⁶⁰⁹ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1785413134011838765>

⁶¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/YakiAdamker/status/1787846143096828303>

⁶¹¹ https://twitter.com/T_Nachala/status/1786806755374084274

⁶¹² <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>

⁶¹³ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542> ;

https://twitter.com/NRC_MiddleEast/status/174134134311110950

⁶¹⁴ <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/>

⁶¹⁵ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-05-02/rebuilding-gaza-to-cost-50-billion-over-two-decades-un-says>

⁶¹⁶ <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>

⁶¹⁷ <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>

⁶¹⁸ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-04/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/amid-israeli-destruction-in-gaza-a-new-crime-against-humanity-emerges-domicide/0000018c-d585-d751-ad8d-ffa5965e0000>

Israel is said to have dropped over 500 2,000-pound bombs within the densely populated urban area, despite the massive collateral damage these bombs cause (causing death or injury in a radius of up to 365 meters around the target). These bombs are four times heavier than the largest bombs the United States used when fighting ISIS in Mosul; the US dropped a single such 2,000-pound bomb throughout its fight with ISIS.⁶¹⁹ 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,⁶²⁰ as well as the fights against ISIS in Mosul (2016-7) and Raqqa (2017).⁶²¹

Over 60 percent of Gaza's housing units have been destroyed or damaged.⁶²² As of mid-January experts estimate based on satellite imagery that between 142,900 to 176,900 buildings have been damaged.⁶²³ 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).⁶²⁴ By early June, the amount increased to 58.5%.⁶²⁵ Drone videos reveal the extent of the destruction.⁶²⁶ 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.⁶²⁷ Some of the destruction is purposeful, as indicated in videos by IDF troops.⁶²⁸ As a result of the war and destruction, 89% of Gazan workers lost their jobs by December.⁶²⁹ As of April, all staff of at least one hospital have not been paid since October 7.⁶³⁰ According to estimates, the GDP of Gaza has decreased by some 80%.⁶³¹

⁶¹⁹ <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/>

⁶²⁰ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-bombs-destruction-death-toll-scope-419488c51f83c85baea22458472a796>

⁶²¹ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/14/gaza-war-israel-civilian-deaths-urban-warfare-hamas/>

⁶²² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

⁶²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2024/jan/30/how-war-destroyed-gazas-neighbourhoods-visual-investigation>

⁶²⁴

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).

⁶²⁵ <https://www.conflict-damage.org/>, accessed June 17 (the number is updated to June 1).

⁶²⁶ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1777786701768708193>

⁶²⁷ <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>

⁶²⁸ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796232276818424251>

⁶²⁹ <https://gisha.org/almost-89-of-gaza-residents-have-lost-their-jobs-heb/> ; according to another report from late March, 74% of Gazans were unemployed:

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

⁶³⁰ https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/11/surgeons_in_gaza

⁶³¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148296>

Israel has destroyed not only buildings whose connection to Hamas militants is weak or non-existent,⁶³² but also a long list of cultural institutions,⁶³³ historical and archaeological sites,⁶³⁴ dozens of governmental buildings (including the parliament⁶³⁵ and the main courthouse)⁶³⁶, religious buildings (over 233 mosques and 3 churches⁶³⁷), 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),⁶³⁸ hospitals,⁶³⁹ educational facilities (88% of school buildings sustained some level of damage; 13 public libraries were destroyed or damaged),⁶⁴⁰ archives,⁶⁴¹ and UN offices.⁶⁴² Already in early December, Israeli attacks destroyed or damaged more than 100 heritage sites, including buildings from Gaza's medieval, Byzantine and Roman periods⁶⁴³ (by mid April the number rose to 195 such sites).⁶⁴⁴ 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).⁶⁴⁵ 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.⁶⁴⁶ Certain

⁶³² <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1790901748346867875> ;
https://x.com/JalalAK_jojo/status/1797296916763418747

⁶³³ E.g. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israeli-army-says-it-struck-islamic-university-of-gaza/3015542>

⁶³⁴ <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-dfif-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>

⁶³⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542>

⁶³⁶ <https://www.newarab.com/news/israel-destroys-gaza-courthouse-dozens-govt-buildings>

⁶³⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

⁶³⁸ <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>

⁶³⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760766861279391872>

⁶⁴⁰ <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>

⁶⁴¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCNftkL7cx4>

⁶⁴² <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771195504883339683>

⁶⁴³ <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>

⁶⁴⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>

⁶⁴⁵ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240122-israel-army-displays-artefacts-stolen-from-gaza-in-the-knesset/> ; <https://twitter.com/EmekShavehHeb/status/1749030636529008651>

⁶⁴⁶ <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2024/04/29/weve-become-addicted-to-explosions-the-idf-unit-responsible-for-demolishing-homes-across-gaza>

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.⁶⁴⁷ In this reality, even a simple shelter such as a tent is sold for more than \$800. Those who cannot afford such an expense improvise a shelter from simple materials.⁶⁴⁸ An alternative is to rent half destroyed and burnt apartments. One such apartment in Khan Younis cost \$330/month.⁶⁴⁹

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.⁶⁵⁰ Some 88% of all school buildings have sustained damage.⁶⁵¹ 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.⁶⁵² Using an ATM or attempting to get access to one’s money through money changers have high commissions (e.g. 17%).⁶⁵³ At least 16 cemeteries have been desecrated by the IDF, often by bulldozing.⁶⁵⁴ One video shows a bulldozer driving within a cemetery,⁶⁵⁵ while another shows the results of such an operation, with corpses left scattered across the landscape.⁶⁵⁶ The IDF has also bulldozed burial sites at Nasser hospital.⁶⁵⁷ The IDF further bulldozed broad areas in the Gaza Strip.⁶⁵⁸ An online video depicts the torching of the Shujjaiya neighborhood in a military operation.⁶⁵⁹ Satellite images reveal the massive extent of destruction of Khan Younis.⁶⁶⁰ 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”.⁶⁶¹

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”.⁶⁶² This buffer

⁶⁴⁷ <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>

⁶⁴⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-economy.html>

⁶⁴⁹ <https://x.com/lamIbrahim21/status/1797521016702550496>

⁶⁵⁰ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf>

⁶⁵¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

⁶⁵² <https://twitter.com/ryangrim/status/1774422433736393207>

⁶⁵³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-economy.html>

⁶⁵⁴ <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>

⁶⁵⁵ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771125186370101561>

⁶⁵⁶ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1743386378606412188>

⁶⁵⁷ <https://news.sky.com/story/israel-bulldozed-mass-graves-at-gaza-hospital-sky-news-analysis-shows-13121638>

⁶⁵⁸ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750443193575886945>

⁶⁵⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1767698980127838474>

⁶⁶⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-14/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-3bab-db12-agef-fbfb627d0000>

⁶⁶¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/22/unicef-official-utter-annihilation-gaza>

⁶⁶² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1758376261628436523>

zone will take over 16% of the territory of the Gaza Strip.⁶⁶³ 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".⁶⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁶⁵ In early March, its construction was completed,⁶⁶⁶ and it enables rapid movement and will be held by Israel for "at least another year" according to the IDF.⁶⁶⁷ At least 750 buildings have been destroyed to create a buffer zone on both sides of the road.⁶⁶⁸ In subsequent months, Israel built bases within the Gaza Strip by taking over civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and schools, as well as watchtowers and outposts.⁶⁶⁹

The destruction in Gaza has resulted in the displacement of some 75 percent of Gaza's population.⁶⁷⁰ An investigation of Israel's evacuation orders to Gazans revealed numerous unclaritys and inconsistencies within the IDF's official orders.⁶⁷¹ This included, for example, five different geographical definitions of the al-Mawasi "safe zone", which was itself bombed and invaded by IDF ground troops.⁶⁷² 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.⁶⁷³ Some of the evacuation orders were given online during periods of full communication outages.⁶⁷⁴ Already by early February, 67% of the Gaza Strip's area was under

⁶⁶³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-28/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018d-9cc9-df62-a3fd-gecddb8420000> ; <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-hamas-war-buffer-zone-explained-2a7347af> ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/135417/>

⁶⁶⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/widespread-destruction-israeli-defence-forces-civilian-infrastructure-gaza>

⁶⁶⁵ <https://twitter.com/YairWallach/status/1759572148559962424>

⁶⁶⁶ <https://news.sky.com/story/israel-completes-construction-of-road-which-cuts-across-gaza-strip-13089556>

⁶⁶⁷ 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>

⁶⁶⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/17/gaza-israel-netzarim-corridor-war-hamas/>

⁶⁶⁹ <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-a10f-f43f6da50000> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1795129920902873557> ;

<https://inews.co.uk/news/world/israel-gaza-superhighway-watchtower-post-war-plans-3090909>

⁶⁷⁰ <https://twitter.com/UNHumanRights/status/1742863747683668418>;

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

⁶⁷¹ For example: <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/01/26/middleeast/hala-khreis-white-flag-shooting-gaza-cmd-intl/index.html> ; <https://x.com/marcowenjones/status/1795063041513402446>

⁶⁷² <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.

⁶⁷³ <https://twitter.com/NBCNightlyNews/status/17840011214932600>

⁶⁷⁴ https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Humanitarian-Violence_Report_FA.pdf (e.g. p. 28)

evacuation orders.⁶⁷⁵ As a result of these repeated orders and the general overcrowdedness of the Strip, many Palestinians have been displaced several times.⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷⁵ https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/israel-s-evacuation-covers-67-of-gaza-leaves-palestinians-crammed-124020600748_1.html

⁶⁷⁶ <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/-/המצב-המציב-למרב-ברפיח-מידרדר-ותושבים-בורחים-למרב> ; 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-tried-starve-gaza-palestine> ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/135043/> ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/135923/>

Hostages

*Last updated:*⁶⁷⁷ March 9, 2025

On October 7, 2023 Hamas and several other Palestinian militant groups captured 251 hostages and took them to the Gaza Strip,⁶⁷⁸ where two Israeli civilian hostages and two corpses of IDF soldiers had been held since 2014 and 2015.⁶⁷⁹ The hostages included Israeli citizens, Israeli soldiers, foreign workers who came to Israel and other foreigners.⁶⁸⁰ More than half had foreign passports, from 25 countries.⁶⁸¹ Some of the hostages were captured alive, of whom some were injured, and some were already dead.⁶⁸² Hamas' official narrative states that taking Israeli soldiers as hostages/prisoners of war was central to their plans on October 7.⁶⁸³ On the day of the attack, the then-deputy chairman of Hamas' Political Bureau suggested the same when stating on Al Jazeera that "what we have in our hands will liberate all our prisoners".⁶⁸⁴ Footage reveals that the hostage-taking was highly coordinated and that several militant Palestinian groups participated. Within this context, therefore, hostage-taking – the imprisonment of civilians in violation of fundamental rules of international law – is a war crime and crime against humanity.⁶⁸⁵ Accordingly, hostage-taking was one of the charges the ICC advanced against three Hamas leaders.⁶⁸⁶

Over the past few decades, Israel conducted several exchange deals in which it traded Palestinian and Lebanese captives for its own captured citizens. Israel always released more captives than its interlocutor. The ratio increased over time, reaching a high of 1,027 prisoners

⁶⁷⁷ I thank Iris Agmon and two anonymous readers for their detailed comments on drafts leading to the March 2025 version of this section.

⁶⁷⁸ Over the first year of the war, no Israeli state institution formally clarified to Israeli citizens what happened on October 7 (e.g. who was killed where and when). The IDF released one report and stopped after backlash; the police released no details. See: <https://x.com/nirhasson/status/1839604637596275142>

⁶⁷⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67165002>

⁶⁸⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/more-than-half-hamas-hostages-have-foreign-nationality-israel-2023-10-25/>

⁶⁸¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/more-than-half-hamas-hostages-have-foreign-nationality-israel-2023-10-25/>

⁶⁸² For example: <https://www.makorrishon.co.il/news/782103/>

⁶⁸³ Hamas, Our Narrative: Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, p. 7 at <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/PDF.pdf>. Note that in this document Hamas claims it attempted to avoid harm to civilians, a statement it repeated in a Human Rights Watch report. The NGO's report found that statement incredible considering the evidence it collected. For the HRW report see https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/08/israel_palestine0724web.pdf (Hamas' response at pp. 241-242; p. 235 for the conclusion).

⁶⁸⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65OXS7ymafI&rco=1> (3:40);

https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/08/israel_palestine0724web.pdf (p. 225)

⁶⁸⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/17/october-7-crimes-against-humanity-war-crimes-hamas-led-groups> ; https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/08/israel_palestine0724web.pdf (pp. 9, 12-13, 211, 225, 226); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65OXS7ymafI&rco=1>

⁶⁸⁶ The three leaders were Yahya Sinwar, Ismail Haniyeh and Mohammed Deif. All three were killed in the following months. For the application of arrest and arrest warrant: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-applications-arrest-warrants-situation-state> , <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-state-palestine-icc-pre-trial-chamber-i-issues-warrant-arrest-mohammed-diab-ibrahim>

released in 2011 to free a single IDF soldier, Gilad Shalit.⁶⁸⁷ Yahya Sinwar, Hamas's leader in the Gaza Strip on October 2023, and the reported mastermind behind the October 7 attack, was one of the Palestinian prisoners released in that deal.⁶⁸⁸

As October 7 completely surprised Israel, it took time to gather the human remains and forensic evidence from the various sites that were attacked, including at the Nova festival, the roads outside the Gaza Strip, the kibbutzim and other settlements.⁶⁸⁹ The evidence was analyzed in a dedicated center for identifying those killed and those taken hostage. The process took days to weeks, and during that time many families remained uncertain about the fate of their loved ones.⁶⁹⁰

Already from the first days and weeks after October 7, existing civil society groups offered various services, while others developed organically, for example to represent the families of the hostages as support and advocacy groups. Especially in the early period of the war, civil society groups, together with the hostage families, were effective in raising awareness about the hostages in the international sphere. For example, they created standardized visual material for dissemination around the world, and organized awareness-raising events in Israel, including demonstrations, encampments, and the designation of public spaces for commemoration.⁶⁹¹

The administrative and bureaucratic institutions of the state remained uninvolved for weeks, and families of hostages repeatedly stated that no state official had spoken to them.⁶⁹² The lack of state involvement on the ground contrasted with the state's use of the hostages in the international sphere. Accordingly, the hostages featured in Israel's official messages shortly after October 7, and releasing the hostages was quickly proclaimed a major objective of Israel's war on Gaza.⁶⁹³ The return of the hostages remained a proclaimed war goal by mid-January 2025, leading to the second ceasefire agreement.⁶⁹⁴

Evidence from the hostages released during the second ceasefire agreement reveals the harsh conditions in which they were held.⁶⁹⁵ Many of these conditions were known to Israeli

⁶⁸⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/18/gilad-shalit-palestine-prisoners-freed>

⁶⁸⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/26/world/middleeast/hamas-sinwar-israel-doctor-prison-swap.html>

⁶⁸⁹ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/newstv/p-11894/s1/571854/> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hjgk45hzt>

⁶⁹⁰ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/newstv/p-11894/s1/571854/> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hjgk45hzt>

⁶⁹¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hjok5jzqp> ; <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3637685> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hiiiffsup>

⁶⁹² <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/local/article/14709456> ; <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/612385/> . See also: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/mishpaha/2024-03-10/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-1830-d8fb-abff-5d3a63560000> ; <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1083582> ;

<https://x.com/N12News/status/1846944121740472419> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bky8ovgcc>

⁶⁹³ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/588169/>

⁶⁹⁴ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-return-of-the-hostages-a-war-goal-we-wont-let-up-until-its-completed/

⁶⁹⁵ For an testimony of a hostage released in the first agreement, see:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/03/we-were-constantly-in-terror-israeli-hostage-tells-of-captivity-in-gaza>

officials,⁶⁹⁶ also based on the experiences of hostages released in the first deal.⁶⁹⁷ Some hostages were held underground for most of their time in Gaza (some 500 days).⁶⁹⁸ One noted that he took a shower only once every several months and was barefoot most of the time.⁶⁹⁹ Another noted that he underwent a medical operation without anesthesia.⁷⁰⁰ One said his legs remained in chains for over a year.⁷⁰¹ Some hostages were moved frequently – one reported 33 such moves between places in Gaza.⁷⁰² Some reported physical and psychological torture.⁷⁰³ Many reported the lack of food,⁷⁰⁴ although some hostages received additional food before their release.⁷⁰⁵ Many reported the danger they experienced from Israeli attacks.⁷⁰⁶ Evidence from both Hamas officials and Israeli hostages indicates that Hamas responded to harsh Israeli treatment of Palestinian prisoners by worsening the conditions of Israeli hostages.⁷⁰⁷ Hamas also responded to Israeli rescue attempts: after the rescue of four hostages from Nuseirat in June 2024, Hamas worsened the conditions for other hostages in the area, moving some who had been held in safe houses above ground to the cramped tunnels underneath where they also received less food.⁷⁰⁸

Despite government proclamations otherwise, this report argues that freeing the hostages (59 remain in Gaza as of writing⁷⁰⁹) has been of low priority for the Israeli government, which has consistently preferred to prolong the war by refraining from releasing the hostages and risking their lives.⁷¹⁰ The evidence for this statement is multifactorial: the continued failure of military operations to release the hostages, Israel's reluctance to reach a deal with Hamas for releasing

⁶⁹⁶ https://www.mako.co.il/news-diplomatic/2025_q1/Article-c209c2d0ff90591027.htm

⁶⁹⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/s10puoksyg> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkmpy90bkl>

⁶⁹⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bjncumhkje> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-02-23/ty-article/00000195-33f9-d5d4-adf7-f3ffac310000> ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/10/world/middleeast/israel-hostages-abuse-hamas.html> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-03-06/ty-article/.premium/00000195-6ce0-d46d-a3f7-eded98570000>

⁶⁹⁹ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1171380>

⁷⁰⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-02-23/ty-article/00000195-33f9-d5d4-adf7-f3ffac310000>

⁷⁰¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bktsrhocie>

⁷⁰² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymanrc5yx>

⁷⁰³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-02-23/ty-article/00000195-33f9-d5d4-adf7-f3ffac310000> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/10/world/middleeast/israel-hostages-abuse-hamas.html> ;

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

⁷⁰⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-02-23/ty-article/00000195-33f9-d5d4-adf7-f3ffac310000> ; https://x.com/Uvda_tweet/status/189522023184665913 ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/10/world/middleeast/israel-hostages-abuse-hamas.html> ;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymanrc5yx> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2025-03-07/ty-article-live/00000195-6d91-d690-a39f-7d9dd7f30000?liveBlogItemId=986784789#986784789>

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

⁷⁰⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bjncumhkje>

⁷⁰⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-02-23/ty-article/00000195-33f9-d5d4-adf7-f3ffac310000> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/03/we-were-constantly-in-terror-israeli-hostage-tells-of-captivity-in-gaza>

⁷⁰⁷ https://x.com/Uvda_tweet/status/1895214428305735953 ;

<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1888300883655454951>

⁷⁰⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokrai4254462> . The reduction in food appears to have been the result of the difficulty to reach the hostages for operational reasons.

⁷⁰⁹ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/hostages-data>

⁷¹⁰ See <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/hostages-data>

⁷¹⁰ See <https://x.com/NimerSultany/status/1830157780499435693> ; <https://x.com/orlybarlev/status/1836646874951893071> ; https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2024_q3/Article-106ea7c9e070291026.htm?s=09 and in more detail below.

the hostages, the behavior and statements by Israeli government officials and state representatives, testimonies from people involved in the negotiation process and from families of the hostages, the government's treatment of hostages' families, and unofficial government attempts to prevent dissent centered around the hostage families. Each category of evidence is described in a section below.

The failure of military operations

Israel's military operations have not only failed to release hostages, but have also killed a substantial number of them, as well as many Gazan civilians. To date, only seven of the 251 hostages taken on October 7 have been released by military operations.⁷¹¹ Another hostage was found by himself in a tunnel by military forces in late August 2024.⁷¹² The military operation that released two hostages in February 2024 killed 74 Gazans according to one account, or more than 100 according to another, mostly civilians.⁷¹³ A military operation that freed four hostages in June 2024 killed 274 Gazans, many of whom were women and children, and wounded hundreds.⁷¹⁴ In at least some occasions the IDF operated in areas where it suspected to find hostages despite the risk to their lives since militants were ordered to execute their captives if cornered.⁷¹⁵

An investigation published in October 2024 cited statements from IDF sources that in the first weeks of the war the IDF bombed homes of Palestinians who were associated with taking hostages without knowing if the hostages were in those homes.⁷¹⁶ One source pointed out that early in the war "the hostages simply had no influence on attack policy".⁷¹⁷ The hostages who were released in the November 2023 deal repeatedly stated that the Israeli bombardments they experienced were among the most terrifying events of their captivity.⁷¹⁸ In one case, a hostage recounted that the IDF attacked the building where he was held. He managed to escape, but the IDF continued to fire at him as he fled. He survived for four days in Gaza until he was captured again and released in the 2023 exchange.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹¹ <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-ffcdbcdcoooo> ;

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

⁷¹² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rykidoso>; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ryxxr4iic>

⁷¹³ <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>

⁷¹⁴ <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.co.il/news/politics/2024-06-08/ty-article/0000018f-f7e1-do84-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/>

⁷¹⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/08/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-hostages.html>

⁷¹⁶ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/141114/>

⁷¹⁷ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/תוצר-לוואי-ידוע-מראש-הגז-שהרג-חטופים-1/>

⁷¹⁸ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-1061467>

⁷¹⁹ <https://www.ice.co.il/local-news/news/article/1051060> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-11-27/ty-article/0000018c-1008-d679-abdc-9638dc4d0000>

A *New York Times* report from March 2025 found that 41 hostages were killed in Gaza since the beginning of the war.⁷²⁰ According to Israeli sources by September 2024 the number was at least 26 hostages.⁷²¹ In November 2023, three hostages were killed by gas (carbon monoxide) released by bunker buster bombs the IDF used to target a Hamas commander.⁷²² Three Israeli hostages were killed by IDF forces within Gaza in December 2023 despite waving white flags and calling for help.⁷²³ In January 2024, a hostage was killed during an attempted rescue operation.⁷²⁴ In late February 2024 an Israeli report concluded that at least 10 hostages were killed by the IDF's actions.⁷²⁵ This included the IDF bombing a building that it suspected had an Israeli hostage and the execution of a hostage by his captor after the IDF bombed a nearby target.⁷²⁶ Another IDF report concluded that six hostages were executed in February 2024, yet noted that the IDF attacks in the area would have killed them even if they had not been executed.⁷²⁷

In late March 2024, a senior Israeli journalist specializing in military intelligence shared an estimate that only 60-70 of the hostages were still alive.⁷²⁸ US intelligence assessments at the time seemed to suggest a similar number.⁷²⁹ The number appeared to decrease by late May.⁷³⁰ By October 2024, the aforementioned military intelligence journalist relayed estimates that only 25-30 hostages were still alive,⁷³¹ yet in November another journalist claimed that 51 hostages were alive.⁷³²

⁷²⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/08/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-hostages.html>

⁷²¹ https://www.ha-makom.co.il/hostages_data2/. Hamas claimed 27 hostages were killed by Israeli attacks in the first week of the war: <https://www.mekomit.co.il/תוצר-לוואי-ידוע-מראש-הגז-שהרג-חטופים-1/>

⁷²² A later report found that the gas – originally a by-product of bunker-buster bombs – was purposefully used by the IDF to kill whoever was in the tunnels. See <https://www.mekomit.co.il/תוצר-לוואי-ידוע-מראש-הגז-שהרג-חטופים-1/>. The results were suspected long before:

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-09-15/ty-article/.premium/00000191-f5dd-d5f5-a7f9-ffffe7730000> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/15/world/middleeast/israel-hostages-killed-strike.html>; <https://twitter.com/tomashinyu3/status/1747651031737979233> ;

<https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-said-their-sons-were-murdered-by-hamas-these-mothers-werent-convicted-15461312>

⁷²³ <https://www.ft.com/content/2e299603-2fed-4855-9694-9801008c48dc>

⁷²⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjzpon17da>

⁷²⁵ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/post/revital-host-idf>

⁷²⁶ <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/bie4mwjea> . See also:

<https://ynet.co.il/news/article/ry7qkbjbc> , and Noa Argamani's account by which Yossi Sharabi was killed next to her in an IDF attack: <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1894487797031158054>

⁷²⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-12-04/ty-article/00000193-91ao-d6ba-afdb-9bbc5eag0000> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r1piqe07kx>

⁷²⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/yossimelman/2024-03-26/ty-article/0000018e-7564-d787-a5de-75e616c60000>

⁷²⁹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/hamas-may-not-have-enough-living-hostages-for-cease-fire-deal-61606c66>

⁷³⁰ <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)

⁷³¹ https://x.com/yossi_melman/status/184448557990355003

⁷³² <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/defense/article/16709273>

During several operations in the spring and summer of 2024, Israeli forces found the corpses of 19 additional hostages.⁷³³ Some were suspected to have been killed directly or indirectly by IDF fire.⁷³⁴ These included the six hostages (Ori Danino, Hersh Goldberg Polin, Carmel Gat, Alexander Lobanov, Almog Sarusi, and Eden Yerushalmi) who were killed by their captors shortly before the arrival of the IDF in late August, apparently to avoid release of the hostages in a military operation. The captors were not caught.⁷³⁵ This event – in which all the hostages were young and were executed together – prompted, for the first time, a substantial number of Israelis to cast the blame for the hostages’ deaths directly on the Israeli government (see also below).⁷³⁶ Shortly thereafter, high officials in the military claimed that the military had warned the government that any major ground operation would risk the lives of hostages.⁷³⁷ There were also indications that the IDF refrained from acting upon information that could have saved the six hostages.⁷³⁸ No other hostages or corpses were recovered until early December 2024, when one corpse was recovered.⁷³⁹ In early January 2025, two corpses of hostages were recovered⁷⁴⁰ near corpses of their captors, suggesting that they were all killed by an IDF attack.⁷⁴¹ The corpse of an IDF soldier held in Gaza since 2014 was recovered shortly afterwards, just before the second ceasefire.⁷⁴²

Anecdotal evidence from Israeli army units fighting in the Gaza Strip until early 2025 suggested that finding hostages was not part of their everyday mission. An Israeli journalist who visited several units and operations rooms in June 2024 said that images or names of hostages were absent, their existence was not mentioned in briefings before military operations, and their presence in the area was not mentioned as part of the IDF’s rules of engagement.⁷⁴³ IDF commanders acknowledged that the fighting precluded returning the hostages.⁷⁴⁴ As the war continued into the fall and winter of 2024, indications of the flagging morale of IDF troops increased. This was reflected for example in a significant drop in the

⁷³³ Four in mid-May: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rip9klsmc>, <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjjcsi70>; three in late May: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rkhpnsp7r>; five in late July: <https://www.mako.co.il/pzm-soldiers/Article-c8c7be07986e091027.htm>; six in mid August: <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3685713>; one in late August: <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/defense/article/16344859>

⁷³⁴ <https://www.mako.co.il/pzm-soldiers/Article-408964b7abe6191026.htm>; <https://x.com/JackyHugi/status/1825787237054763159>; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rye1ugbmsr>; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-08-20/ty-article/.premium/00000191-7037-dabo-agb7-f43f94a0000>

⁷³⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/byil5uw2r>. Later reports suggested the captors may have been killed: <https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/036814c74a0e1910/Article-4606a2c9b6e0491026.htm>

⁷³⁶ <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/israel-protests-hostage-deal-palestine/>

⁷³⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syhlkonnc>

⁷³⁸ <https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/036814c74a0e1910/Article-4606a2c9b6e0491026.htm>

⁷³⁹ Itay Svirsky, <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hjcihrmyl>

⁷⁴⁰ Youssef and Hamza al-Ziyadne <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sic3bm2ukg>

⁷⁴¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-01-08/ty-article/.premium/00000194-468d-d354-abff-76af9c7e0000>

⁷⁴² Oron Shaul, <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-01-19/ty-article/.premium/00000194-7d23-de1b-agbd-7d67f9790000>

⁷⁴³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-06-28/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000190-5aa7-de5e-abdo-fbf704260000>

⁷⁴⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkeh2hfbkl>

number of soldiers who were willing to report for reserve duty.⁷⁴⁵ One of the explicit reasons for refusing to enlist was the failure to release hostages.⁷⁴⁶ In October, for example, 130 soldiers signed a letter that stated that they would not continue to serve in the absence of a deal to free the hostages.⁷⁴⁷ In response, the IDF removed from its rolls those reservists who refused to serve.⁷⁴⁸ By early January 2025, soldiers participating in the large operation in North Gaza (see the Zoom in 3 section) emphasized the destruction of Hamas yet stated that the hostages were not part of their operation, which was intended to increase the pressure on Hamas.⁷⁴⁹ More indications of flagging morale appeared in early March 2025.⁷⁵⁰

While military pressure failed to free Israeli hostages, over the first stage of the second ceasefire deal over January and February 2025, 30 living hostages and 8 corpses were returned to Israel.⁷⁵¹ In early March, Netanyahu noted that of the 59 hostages still in Gaza after the first stage of the ceasefire, up to 24 were alive and at least 35 were dead.⁷⁵² Anonymous sources put the actual numbers at 21-22 living hostages and 37-38 dead.⁷⁵³

Israel's reluctance to reach a deal

There is much evidence that Hamas was willing to make a full hostage deal, which would have entailed releasing all the hostages and prisoners on both sides, on 8 October 2023, long before Israel's ground invasion of the Gaza Strip.⁷⁵⁴ Already by October 9, there were indications that Hamas was willing to make a "humanitarian" deal that would have freed women, children and the elderly on both sides, without preventing a subsequent Israeli military operation.⁷⁵⁵ Neither of these possible agreements specified a ceasefire or a cessation of fighting. Israel could have reached a deal early that might have limited or delayed its military response, and

⁷⁴⁵ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/idf-droppings/> ; <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/idf-absentees-request/> .
See also: <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/war-mental-price/> ;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14137642> (38,000 reservists who do not show up) ;

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/11/24/israel-war-gaza-lebanon-reservists-deaths/>

⁷⁴⁶ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/idf-droppings/>

⁷⁴⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-10-09/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-4ca8-dfda-ab92-6ded7a8a0000>

⁷⁴⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-15/ty-article/.premium/00000192-902f-d2db-ab97-ddffbfd80000>

⁷⁴⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-01-03/ty-article/.premium/00000194-28b8-ddaf-adb7-6bb89cfb0000>

⁷⁵⁰ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-03-06/ty-article/.premium/new-israeli-army-chief-set-to-present-plans-to-resume-fighting-in-gaza-retake-key-areas/00000195-6c9a-d0f8-a1f7-7cdb56ba0000>

⁷⁵¹ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1896218617408303170>

⁷⁵² <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1896218617408303170>

⁷⁵³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2025-03-02/ty-article-opinion/.premium/00000195-574f-d636-a3df-7f6f095d0000>

⁷⁵⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/palestinians-israel-military-prisoners-hostage-hamas-soldiers-e75729364f8cob453da272365c16d136>

⁷⁵⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/qatar-leads-talks-swap-hamas-held-hostages-palestinians-israeli-jails-2023-10-09/> ;

<https://x.com/RavivDrucker/status/1711349716842115533> ;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bj3l4dwu16> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2023-10-11/ty-article-opinion/0000018b-1a18-d2fc-a59f-db19e6e10000> ;

https://x.com/yossi_melman/status/1711704086356083152 ; <https://www.timesofisrael.com/no-doubt-netanyahu-preventing-hostage-deal-charges-ex-spokesman-of-families-forum/> ;

https://x.com/restart_israel/status/1893342160738533869

that would have returned more live hostages. The *Ha'aretz* editorial on October 11 and an interview with an unofficial negotiator published on October 12 demonstrated little willingness to do so on the Israeli side.⁷⁵⁶ By late October 2023, Hamas already blamed Israel openly for refusing a total exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, while voicing its willingness to conduct a partial deal.⁷⁵⁷ One of the hostages released for humanitarian reasons at that time, Yocheved Lifshitz, said later that Hamas wanted to release her and another hostage, but Israel refused to take them, fearing that the cost would be too high. Hamas then said it would just leave the two hostages near the border and let Israel take them if it wants. They were ultimately handed over “for free”.⁷⁵⁸ Biden administration officials throughout October also felt that while the Americans were prepared to negotiate with Hamas and worried about the hostages, Israel preferred to obliterate it and trusted its ability to rescue the hostages in daring operations.⁷⁵⁹

In late November 2023, the two sides agreed to a temporary ceasefire and a hostage deal that resulted in the release of 105 hostages.⁷⁶⁰ Of these, 80 were Israeli hostages released over seven consecutive days. In addition, 23 Thai hostages and one hostage from the Philippines were released due to a separate agreement between Hamas and the Thai government. A Russian-Israeli hostage was released as a gesture towards Russia's President Vladimir Putin.⁷⁶¹ In return, Israel released 240 Palestinian prisoners who were mostly young. Three quarters of them had not been convicted of a crime, and most of them had been in prison for less than one year.⁷⁶² Despite the very low exchange rate in this deal (one Israeli for three Palestinians), compared to the aforementioned Shalit deal, Israel refused to extend it. When Hamas offered to release seven living hostages and three corpses (who Hamas claimed died in Israeli bombardments) instead of the ten expected living hostages, Israel cut the exchange short and the fighting resumed.⁷⁶³

Instead of negotiating additional hostage releases, the Israeli government and Prime Minister Netanyahu in particular preferred to continue Israel's military operations. This was despite the obvious risk to the hostages, as evident from the deaths of hostages described above, who were killed by direct or indirect IDF action. Considerable evidence from both Israeli and American sources over 2024 indicates that Netanyahu purposefully obstructed a hostage deal, supposedly because he suspected that such a deal would lead to the collapse of his government. This evaluation was based on explicit public threats by senior members of his

⁷⁵⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2023-10-11/ty-article-opinion/0000018b-1a18-d2fc-a59f-db19e6e10000> ; <https://newmedia.calcalist.co.il/magazine-12-10-23/mo2.html>

⁷⁵⁷ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/Article-1048160>

⁷⁵⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rkijrqbde> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sycmqdema>

⁷⁵⁹ <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2024/09/israel-gaza-war-biden-netanyahu-peace-negotiations/679581/>

⁷⁶⁰ <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2023/12/world/hostage-israel-hamas-deal-dg/>

⁷⁶¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-frees-2-israeli-women-with-6-8-more-set-for-return-thursday-alongside-3-bodies/> ; <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/live-blog/israel-hamas-war-live-updates-rcna127130> ; <https://www.reuters.com/world/three-thai-hostages-released-gaza-good-health-thai-pm-2023-11-27/>

⁷⁶² <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/01/world/middleeast/palestinian-prisoners-released-gaza.html>

⁷⁶³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-11-30/ty-article/0000018c-1f68-da36-a1de-5f6fc4980000> ; see also Israelis who admitted their mistake only many months later: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14193739>

coalition.⁷⁶⁴ The hostages' relatives also blamed Netanyahu for not making a deal and increasing social tensions within Israel, and reported on several tense meetings with him.⁷⁶⁵ Despite this evidence, media and American officials publicly cast Hamas as the only obstacle for the deal, avoiding public pressure on Netanyahu which slowed negotiations.

One opportunity to reach a deal in April 2024 failed because of resistance inside the Israeli government.⁷⁶⁶ Subsequent negotiations from May to July failed as well. A leaked document revealed that Netanyahu attempted to prevent a deal (to which Hamas agreed) that would have released some of the hostages who were killed in late August (Hersh Goldberg Polin, Carmel Gat, and Eden Yerushalmi), by changing some of Israel's conditions for such a deal.⁷⁶⁷ Key to that document was Israel's new insistence on remaining in control of the Philadelphi corridor, which is on the border between Gaza and Egypt, and the Rafah crossing to Egypt.⁷⁶⁸ This insistence was formally agreed to in the Israeli cabinet.⁷⁶⁹ In parallel, Netanyahu declared that Israel would also not leave the Netzarim corridor in the middle of the Strip. However, Hamas declared that Israel's retreat from the Netzarim and Philadelphi corridors were core demands in any negotiations.⁷⁷⁰ Subsequent reports revealed that in early July, the differences between the demands of the negotiating sides were small.⁷⁷¹ Israel's Defense Minister at the time, Yoav Gallant, would later state in this context that Israel did not do everything possible to bring the hostages back, and that Israel could have brought back more hostages, earlier and at a lower price.⁷⁷² Israel refused to proceed with the negotiations, and in late July also assassinated Ismail Haniyeh, a Hamas leader who was a key figure on the negotiating team, thus further hindering any negotiations.⁷⁷³

Days after the discovery of the six aforementioned executed hostages (Danino, Goldberg Polin, Gat, Lobanov, Sarusi, and Yerushalmi) in late August 2024, Netanyahu declared publicly that

⁷⁶⁴ American sources: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/13/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-cease-fire-talks.html> ; <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2024/09/israel-gaza-war-biden-netanyahu-peace-negotiations/679581/> ; <https://jacobin.com/2024/09/netanyahu-israel-hamas-hostage-deal>. Israeli sources: https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2024_q3/Article-106ea7c9e070291026.htm?s=09 ; <https://x.com/orlybarlev/status/1836646874951893071> ; <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/hostages-data> ; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-03-28/ty-article-magazine/.premium/netanyahu-is-sabotaging-chances-for-a-hostage-deal-and-defense-chiefs-are-angry/0000018e-8136-d0d3-a98e-d7ffa0f00000> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-07-10/ty-article-timeline/.premium/00000190-9695-d0d3-a5f3-9ebd81f60000> ; <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-810551> ; <https://jacobin.com/2024/09/netanyahu-israel-hamas-hostage-deal> ; <https://www.timesofisrael.com/no-doubt-netanyahu-preventing-hostage-deal-charges-ex-spokesman-of-families-forum/>

⁷⁶⁵ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/group-of-hostage-families-say-pm-continues-to-sabotage-hostage-deal/ ; https://www.mako.co.il/news-israel/2024_q3/Article-1fi8083ec658191026.htm ; <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/domestic/internal/dklkf-904243646/>

⁷⁶⁶ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2024_q4/Article-b48c14cc5be5391027.htm

⁷⁶⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14060618> ; <https://x.com/eranetzion/status/1830514863132586170> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/biuhlwm3r>

⁷⁶⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/biuhlwm3r>

⁷⁶⁹ https://x.com/academic_la/status/1829581501559865555

⁷⁷⁰ <https://www.makorishon.co.il/news/779331/> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkpo48mnr>

⁷⁷¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14119332>

⁷⁷² <https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1887919951295696943>

⁷⁷³ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/07/31/middleeast/ismail-haniyeh-death-hamas-profile-intl-hnk/index.html> ; https://x.com/MBA_AlThani/status/1818572584327221303 (Qatar attempted to facilitate the negotiations)

the Philadelphi corridor is necessary for Israel's security. This was allegedly because of the tunnels through which Hamas would continue to smuggle weapons into the Strip, and possibly also smuggle hostages out. Not only did Netanyahu's statement considerably obstruct the chance for negotiations,⁷⁷⁴ but a few days later, it was revealed publicly that long before the current war, the tunnels that had been uncovered under the Philadelphi corridor were sealed.⁷⁷⁵ At the time, Israel's security chiefs were said to have assured Netanyahu that Israel could afford to withdraw from the Philadelphi and Netzarim corridors.⁷⁷⁶

In early September, a spokesperson for Netanyahu leaked to the German newspaper *Bild* quotes from a secret document allegedly from the computer of Hamas' leader Yahya Sinwar.⁷⁷⁷ The document described the supposed strategy of Hamas in the negotiations over a hostage deal, specifically highlighting Hamas's attempt to encourage demonstrations for a hostage deal in Israel. The spokesperson then asked Israeli media outlets, who could not publish the document by themselves because of military censorship, to echo the *Bild* piece.⁷⁷⁸ The plan was apparently to influence public opinion to stop the demonstrations calling for a hostage deal, which had intensified after the discovery of the six executed hostages.⁷⁷⁹ A subsequent investigation concluded that there was no proof that the leaked document could be associated with Sinwar.⁷⁸⁰ A separate publication, in the British *Jewish Chronicle*, quoted another Hamas document that mentioned smuggling hostages through the Philadelphi corridor to Egypt, and from there to Iran or Yemen. This second piece had no supporting evidence and the newspaper removed it later and ended its association with its author.⁷⁸¹ Nonetheless, Netanyahu cited both the *Bild* and the *Jewish Chronicle* pieces in a government meeting and a foreign press conference, as aligning well with his position at the time – to prevent a hostage deal.⁷⁸² Netanyahu's wife also cited the *Bild* article when she met with families of the

⁷⁷⁴ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/the-latest-poison-pill-in-the-israel-hamas-ceasefire-negotiations>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/03/opinion/netanyahu-trump-harris.html>; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-09-03/ty-article/.premium/netanyahus-gaza-map-failed-to-show-the-route-he-used-to-funnel-qatari-cash-to-hamas/00000191-b46f-dc3b-a7df-f77f9c820000>

⁷⁷⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-09-12/ty-article/00000191-e71a-dbaa-a195-ffbf7a510000> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-09-16/ty-article/.premium/00000191-f6f8-db99-adfb-f6fa8ef00000>; <https://www.mako.co.il/pzm-soldiers/Article-212ff371b85f191026.htm>; but see also the contradictory (but less reliable in my opinion) claims by:

<https://x.com/shailevy6/status/1834472798980329787>.

⁷⁷⁶ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1129004> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-09-16/ty-article/.premium/00000191-f6f8-db99-adfb-f6fa8ef00000>

⁷⁷⁷ The spokesperson received the document through an IDF reservist,

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syu700cpmke> . See also: <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/bild-exklusiv-zum-schaudern-das-plant-der-hamas-chef-mit-den-geiseln-66d98503cofd674dd9f5d092>

⁷⁷⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syu700cpmke> ; original coverage:

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

⁷⁷⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syu700cpmke> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/s1c9npgye>

⁷⁸⁰ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/797987/> . The *Bild* did not suffer any immediate backlash for publishing this misinformation, see: <https://www.g72mag.com/bild-german-media-netanyahu-bibileaks/>

⁷⁸¹ For the piece: <https://archive.md/xinJg> . For the story: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/jewish-chronicle-removes-fabricated-articles-investigated-israeli-intelligence> ;

<https://www.newarab.com/news/jewish-chronicle-axes-journalist-over-fabricated-hamas-report> ;

<https://www.g72mag.com/jewish-chronicle-elon-perry-netanyahu-intelligence/>

⁷⁸² <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/spoke-starto80924> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/s1c9npgye> .

See also the slightly earlier statements that fit the content: <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/pm-netanyahu->

hostages.⁷⁸³ The spokesperson who leaked the document to the *Bild* was later interrogated and arrested.⁷⁸⁴ The military official who leaked the document to the spokesperson was similarly investigated but received considerable support by coalition Knesset members.⁷⁸⁵ According to the spokesperson, Netanyahu was involved in the leak.⁷⁸⁶ As of writing, this case is ongoing.

Netanyahu continued to avoid reaching a deal during the latter part of 2024. In October, he was recorded stating that Israel “can’t agree” to ending the war.⁷⁸⁷ In November, he promised Gazans a 5-million-dollar reward for each hostage that would be freed, thus drawing on a similar initiative that had been presented by an Israeli CEO who had made such an offer as well.⁷⁸⁸ As of writing, to the best of my knowledge, no one has claimed such a reward. By early December, a coalition Knesset member openly stated that the war objectives were to dismantle Hamas’ infrastructure and that a deal to release the hostages would cancel those war objectives; and therefore he would not support it.⁷⁸⁹ Negotiations stopped in November and resumed in December,⁷⁹⁰ but multiple actors and commentators from all sides appeared to agree that Netanyahu objected to ending the war.⁷⁹¹ A poll from late December found that 47 percent of Israelis believed that the main reason there was no hostage deal was Netanyahu’s fear that his government would fall (43 percent blamed Hamas).⁷⁹²

In early January 2025, Israel’s Minister of National Security Itamar Ben Gvir asserted that on multiple occasions since the beginning of the war, he had used his political power to obstruct a deal.⁷⁹³ This was widely understood as proof that Netanyahu also obstructed a deal to prevent the collapse of his government, which depended on Ben Gvir’s support.⁷⁹⁴ Notably,

[holds-press-conference-for-the-foreign-media-4-sep-2024](#) ;

<https://www.foxnews.com/world/netanyahu-dismisses-claims-imminent-cease-fire-deal-fox-friends-appearance>

⁷⁸³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14071321>

⁷⁸⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sicr9npgye>

⁷⁸⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bks808qikg> ; <https://www.kikar.co.il/israel-news/ari-rosenfeld-court-hearing> ; <https://www.srugim.co.il/1079525-7ד7ה-אין-רונזנפלד-את-ארי-רוזנפלד> ;

<https://www.inn.co.il/news/658118> ;

https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1169556447868985&id=100044439219465&set=a.513948996763070&locale=ko_KR ;

⁷⁸⁶ <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3717731>

⁷⁸⁷ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/in-recording-netanyahu-pessimistic-on-hostage-deal-israel-looking-for-partial-agreement/

⁷⁸⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/19/world/middleeast/israel-5-million-dollars-hostage.html> ;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ry3hhodwjl> . A few weeks earlier, a CEO promised a \$100,000 reward: <https://x.com/NTarnopolsky/status/1848035782449074389>

⁷⁸⁹ <https://x.com/RadmanMoshe/status/1863172477335032102>

⁷⁹⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14193739>

⁷⁹¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra1419332> ; https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2024_q4/Article-b48c14cc5be5391027.htm ; <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/828185/> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syu70ocpmke> ;

<https://x.com/muhammadshedad2/status/1866904405418574122>

⁷⁹² https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/poll-plurality-of-israelis-think-reason-for-no-hostage-deal-is-pms-fear-coalition-will-collapse/

⁷⁹³ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/ben-gvir-says-he-repeatedly-foiled-a-hostage-deal-over-the-last-year-sparking-outcry/

⁷⁹⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2025-01-15/ty-article-opinion/00000194-656e-de89-a5df-656fb20a0000>

already during the first ceasefire in late November 2023 Ben Gvir had tweeted “stopping the war = the dissolution of the government”.⁷⁹⁵

The second hostage deal was agreed upon in mid-January 2025. It is very likely that the main reason for the deal was a demand by incoming US President Donald Trump to have a ceasefire in place during his inauguration, as indeed happened.⁷⁹⁶ In the deal, Israel was willing to waive several of its formerly defined red lines (such as an Israeli retreat from Philadelphi corridor).⁷⁹⁷ It included three stages, each of which would last for 42 days. In the first stage that would include a temporary ceasefire, Hamas would release 33 hostages in return for 30-50 Palestinian prisoners and detainees per released hostage. Israel would significantly increase humanitarian aid and gradually leave the Gaza Strip. In the second stage, Israel and Hamas would end the war and exchange the remaining hostages according to yet undetermined ratio. The third stage would include an exchange of corpses between both sides and more significant action on reconstructing Gaza after the war.⁷⁹⁸

The deal Israel signed had been on the table for 13 months since December 2023. According to the Prime Minister of Qatar, who played a major role in the negotiation as a mediator, those 13 months went to waste as the details negotiated during them had “no meaning”, i.e. were of minor importance.⁷⁹⁹ An Israeli document in Hebrew leaked to the public included the core parts of the eventual deal already in May 2024.⁸⁰⁰ Hamas had accepted the final draft before Israel.⁸⁰¹

Several members of Israel’s government were reluctant to sign the deal. The Minister of Finance Betzalel Smotrich – another ally upon which Netanyahu depended– agreed to the temporary ceasefire only if Netanyahu would guarantee that after the first stage of 42 days Israel would return to war (i.e. without releasing all the hostages), reduce the humanitarian aid to Gaza, take over Gazan territory permanently and encourage emigration of Gazans.⁸⁰² Smotrich had obstructed other deals in Gaza in the past.⁸⁰³ Netanyahu himself claimed that he had guarantees from both US Presidents Biden and Trump that Israel could return to war after the first stage of the ceasefire agreement.⁸⁰⁴ During the first stage of the deal, Israel’s Deputy

⁷⁹⁵ <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1729567921989419239>

⁷⁹⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/yossimelman/2025-01-22/ty-article-magazine/00000194-8d16-d288-afd4-dd5689b40000> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14261639>. Domestic Israeli pressure was seen by many as a major factor as well: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/h1a28zy5ke>. I do not believe this was the case.

⁷⁹⁷ For example: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14225655> ; https://x.com/academic_la/status/1878889705837842653

⁷⁹⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sk3thhlma> ; <https://www.davar1.co.il/573055/>

⁷⁹⁹ <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1880372566298358054>

⁸⁰⁰ <https://x.com/ehadihaam/status/1878818442855211045> ; <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/844824/> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14225655> ;

<https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1887919951295696943> ; see also a different potential deal not pursued: <https://x.com/gershonbaskin/status/1879604797361246584>

⁸⁰¹ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1878875724561445298>

⁸⁰² https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2025_q1/Article-b532c4400696491026.htm

⁸⁰³ <https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1887919951295696943>

⁸⁰⁴ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1880685885408338063> ; <https://x.com/mtracey/status/1880683156766110044>

Speaker of the Knesset said that Israel could fool Hamas and not stick to the agreement's second stage by returning the hostages but then unexpectedly continuing the war.⁸⁰⁵

In light of these reservations, the first stage of the deal was completed partially. Hamas released all the hostages it was supposed to, and Israel released the agreed-upon prisoners and detainees.⁸⁰⁶ Both sides repeatedly accused the other of violating the ceasefire agreement. Many violations were minor or symbolic, and were often corrected quickly.⁸⁰⁷ The most substantial violations on Hamas' side included putting up ceremonies for the release of Israel hostages that humiliated them as well as using the hostages for propaganda purposes.⁸⁰⁸ Israel retaliated in kind by humiliating the Palestinians it released in different ways.⁸⁰⁹ Israeli violations of the deal included sporadic attacks in the Gaza Strip which resulted in the deaths of at least 116 people and the injury of over 490 during the first stage of the ceasefire.⁸¹⁰ An Israeli commentator counted over 50 such attacks,⁸¹¹ and an NGO recorded at least 16 attacks on civilians during the ceasefire until February 9.⁸¹² At the same time, Hamas allegedly fired a single rocket from the Strip that fell inside the Strip.⁸¹³

The more substantial violation on Israel's side, however, was its refusal to negotiate the second stage with Hamas according to the agreed-upon timeline.⁸¹⁴ An anonymous source provided five examples that demonstrate that Israel had no intention to continue to the second stage of the deal.⁸¹⁵ Finally, Israel refused to evacuate from the Philadelphi corridor even though it was part of the first stage of the deal.⁸¹⁶ Upon the completion of the first stage of the deal in early March 2025 Israel stopped all humanitarian aid to Gaza.⁸¹⁷ This increased pressure on Hamas as well as made a return to hostilities more likely. Israel also appeared to prepare to continue fighting despite polls that showed that the Israeli public predominantly preferred to continue

⁸⁰⁵ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1889703204868460726>

⁸⁰⁶ Regarding the prisoners Israel released: <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3720024> ; <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/israel-refusing-to-release-marwan-barghouti-ahmad-saadat> ; <https://www.gov.il/he/departments/dynamiccollectors/is-db?skip=0>

⁸⁰⁷ For examples: <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1883103157951283668> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/11/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-ceasefire-hostages.html> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkqooxvootyx> ; <https://x.com/AbubakerAbedW/status/1889771157470982487>

⁸⁰⁸ <https://www.lbc.co.uk/world-news/netanyahu-delay-release-palestinian-prisoners-hamas/>

⁸⁰⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hjrfscwckg> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sk1hrwxkje>

⁸¹⁰ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/at-least-116-palestinians-killed-by-israeli-fire-since-gaza-ceasefire/3497767> ;see for example: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hia28zy5ke>

⁸¹¹ <https://x.com/AirFreelance/status/1896165562562310237>

⁸¹² <https://x.com/ForensicArchi/status/1895539459040391643> ; https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025.02.25_FA_Ceasefire_Report.pdf

⁸¹³ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-says-it-is-striking-source-of-rocket-launch-in-southern-gaza-that-fell-in-strip/

⁸¹⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14261639> ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/11/world/middleeast/trump-israel-gaza-cease-fire-deal-jordan.html>

⁸¹⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14261639>

⁸¹⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-02-27/ty-article/.premium/00000195-466b-de32-ad9d-76ffaa3b0000>. Some Israeli analysts had expected this as an attempt to force Hamas back into fighting after the first stage of the ceasefire: <https://x.com/eranetzion/status/1888515601473196127>

⁸¹⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2025-03-02/ty-article-live/00000195-5409-d544-a795-dc99faf10000?liveBlogItemId=1977840289#1977840289>

the deal than to resume fighting.⁸¹⁸ A poll among Israelis from February 2025 found that 73 percent of Israelis wanted to continue to the second stage of the deal.⁸¹⁹ Another poll in early March found that only 9 percent preferred to resume fighting.⁸²⁰

Behavior and statements by government officials, state representatives, and members of society

Negative sentiments towards the hostages' families were voiced by government supporters immediately after October 7.⁸²¹ Already during the winter of 2023, a propaganda array appeared to support the government by attacking hostages' families online, sometimes leading to violence.⁸²² As early as March 2024, several government members scorned the hostages' family members.⁸²³ In May, coalition Knesset members ramped up their explicit attacks against the hostages' families,⁸²⁴ while police and government supporters acted with violence and scorn against them in the streets.⁸²⁵ Additional events, including counter-demonstrations against the hostages' families and vandalism, took place in subsequent months.⁸²⁶ In late May, a top aide to the Israeli Prime Minister stated that Israel would not end the war in a deal that would free all the hostages, and verbally attacked family members of the hostages who visited him.⁸²⁷ He also reportedly told families that the government's moves were driven by polling.⁸²⁸

⁸¹⁸ <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-845162> ; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-03-06/ty-article/.premium/new-israeli-army-chief-set-to-present-plans-to-resume-fighting-in-gaza-retake-key-areas/00000195-6c9a-d0f8-a1f7-7cdb56ba0000> ; https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/report-us-believes-israel-leaked-information-about-direct-talks-with-amas-in-attempt-to-sabotage-them/

⁸¹⁹ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/58604> ; also: <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/article-1174561>

⁸²⁰ https://x.com/kann_news/status/1896633246408142994

⁸²¹ <https://www.mako.co.il/news-money/tech12/Article-457a7b32ff48d81026.htm>

⁸²² <https://www.themarker.com/captain-internet/2024-02-12/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-9d76-d92c-aged-ffff9ca60000> ; <https://www.themarker.com/magazine/2024-01-07/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-bfe2-d3e0-abac-ffe2bbb40000>

⁸²³ <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>

⁸²⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkooou9uma>

⁸²⁵ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/local/article/15767757> ;

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

⁸²⁶ For example: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-07-21/ty-article-live/00000190-d23d-d89a-a1f7-f6bd1c640000?liveBlogItemId=418259821#418259821>;

<https://x.com/AllHostages/status/1804339519967367190>;

<https://www.rehovot.muni.il/articles/item/6467/> ; <https://x.com/freyisraeli/status/1831714432864452750>;

<https://x.com/ArzaKuttner/status/1806052536350134591>. As more evidence for tensions in Israeli society, a mother of one of the hostages (supposedly a Netanyahu supporter) suggested on live TV to swap between the current hostages and the children of Israel's security elite:

https://x.com/Nifla_Po/status/1826120032964706403.

⁸²⁷ <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/sjn8wnino> ;

<https://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/Article-1103425>

⁸²⁸ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/government-sacrificing-hostages-families-say-after-fraught-hanegbi-meet/>

In July, the media reported that Hamas sent to Ben Gvir, Israel's Minister of National Security, videos showing torture of Israeli hostages. This was presumably a means to convince him to improve the conditions of Palestinian prisoners, as he was personally involved in enforcing harsher conditions on these prisoners. However, the Minister allegedly refused and claimed the videos legitimized further worsening of the conditions of Palestinian prisoners.⁸²⁹ In mid-September it was revealed that some hostages were removed from the list of voters in upcoming municipal elections, suggesting that the state had given up on releasing them alive.⁸³⁰ In parallel, hostage families experienced increasing threats of death and violence, which were generally perceived to emanate from government supporters.⁸³¹ In September 2024, a number of representatives of the hostages' families were refused entrance to an event of the Likud, Netanyahu's political party, while subjected to verbal abuse. This was despite advanced coordination of their attendance with the Likud.⁸³² Eggs were thrown at other representatives of hostages outside another formal Likud event.⁸³³ Hostage relatives were also attacked regularly on an Israeli TV channel.⁸³⁴

The hostage exchange deal over January and February 2025 led to a resurgence in negative attention to the hostages especially among segments of the Israeli religious right. The Minister of Settlements stated that "winning the war" is more important than returning the hostages.⁸³⁵ Several groups of rabbis rejected the deal as it formed. More than 400 Israeli rabbis, members of the so-called Rabbinical Congress for Peace, called upon US President Donald Trump to support Israel's war instead of push towards a deal.⁸³⁶ A different group of about 100 rabbis publicly rejected the deal.⁸³⁷ Another group of Israeli rabbis urged Netanyahu to prioritize the defeat of Hamas in context of the second stage of the hostage deal, i.e. keep fighting and not return the remaining hostages.⁸³⁸ An Israeli TV channel broadcast an interview with an Israeli who called to destroy everyone in Gaza, "including our hostages".⁸³⁹ Many Israeli online voices attacked hostages and their family members, such as a released hostage who stated that he promised his former guards that he will teach them agriculture when peace will come was attacked online, or family members who were not grateful to Netanyahu or criticized him or government officials.⁸⁴⁰ Some of these attackers were public figures. One, for example, attacked Amit Susana, a hostage released in the first deal who testified that she was sexually assaulted, stating that she exploited her experience for publicity.⁸⁴¹ When released hostage Eli Sharabi explicitly linked the conditions he experienced to Ben Gvir's statements about the

⁸²⁹ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/07/28/hamas-sends-hostage-torture-video-with-direct-warning/>; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sj2wvrqyr>

⁸³⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skvlxniao>

⁸³¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hy15tj7ca>

⁸³² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bykbzfxac>

⁸³³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/dailynews/2024-09-25/ty-article-live/00000192-25fd-d1f6-a596-6dfdb2bf0000?liveBlogItemId=1815058734#1815058734>

⁸³⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/28/magazine/einav-zangauker-hamas-hostages-netanyahu.html>

⁸³⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rk557bc5ke>

⁸³⁶ <https://ladaat.co/archives/81505>

⁸³⁷ <https://www.inn.co.il/news/658660>

⁸³⁸ <https://www.emess.co.il/radio/1662956> ; <https://hm-news.co.il/535493/>

⁸³⁹ <https://x.com/DvirKariv/status/189110578812248227>

⁸⁴⁰ <https://x.com/FakeReporter/status/1886102873848557818>

⁸⁴¹ <https://x.com/Mistaclim/status/1884618904103760034> ; <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/forreal/localy/article/17257859> ; he later apologized: <https://x.com/dovhalbertal/status/1885211667316797945>

harsh treatment of Palestinian prisoners, Ben Gvir stated that this was Hamas propaganda and called upon Israeli media not to echo it.⁸⁴²

Testimonies from people involved in the negotiations and from families of the hostages

Over time, several testimonies from people involved in the negotiations indicated that the government was not committed to releasing the hostages. This echoed concerns voiced by the hostages' families. In a meeting with Netanyahu in December 2023 some relatives of hostages heckled Netanyahu by saying "Shame",⁸⁴³ while others left the meeting in outrage.⁸⁴⁴ A brother of an Israeli hostage killed by the IDF threatened Israeli Defense Minister by stating that he would haunt him in his sleep.⁸⁴⁵ Criticism arrived from hostages as well. One of the hostages who was later killed in Gaza, Haim Peri, had reportedly said to another hostage who was released in the November 2023 hostage deal that he expected they would stay in captivity for two years because the Prime Minister "is Netanyahu and we're leftists".⁸⁴⁶

In mid-March 2024, the chief of staff of the IDF unit that was responsible for the hostages resigned as he felt that Israel's political leadership was not interested in moving towards a deal.⁸⁴⁷ Similar feelings were expressed within Israel's security apparatus.⁸⁴⁸ In late March some of the hostages' family members publicly blamed Israel's Prime Minister for continuously postponing a deal to release the hostages.⁸⁴⁹ Nearly 600 relatives of 81 hostages wrote a letter to US President Biden expressing frustration with the Israeli government's lack of commitment to reaching a deal and asking him to put pressure on Netanyahu.⁸⁵⁰ As early as March 2024, some family members stated that Netanyahu's conduct regarding the hostages amounted to "a crime".⁸⁵¹ In mid-April, two members of Israel's negotiations team, at least one of whom was involved in it for six months, stated explicitly that the government and especially Israel's prime minister were trying to delay and even prevent a deal to release the hostages.⁸⁵² A former spokesperson for the hostage families agreed that Israel's Prime Minister was preventing a deal due to personal political reasons.⁸⁵³ Several domestic and foreign sources,

⁸⁴² <https://x.com/danielpet4/status/1895892543331844277>

⁸⁴³ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/06/middleeast/leaked-audio-of-heated-meeting-reveals-hostages-fury-at-netanyahu/index.html>

⁸⁴⁴ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/chaos-and-yelling-freed-hostages-family-members-clash-with-netanyahu-in-meeting>.

⁸⁴⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2023/12/21/israel-hamas-war-live-global-condemnation-as-gaza-death-toll-hits-20000?update=2572293>

⁸⁴⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hiqvoodufr>

⁸⁴⁷ <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/politics/security/sqpwy-903972705/>

⁸⁴⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/yossimelman/2024-03-26/ty-article/0000018e-7564-d787-a5de-75e616c60000>

⁸⁴⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bjebbohyc>

⁸⁵⁰ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/nearly-600-relatives-of-81-hostages-ask-biden-to-press-pm-for-deal-to-free-them/>

⁸⁵¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/28/magazine/einav-zangauker-hamas-hostages-netanyahu.html>

⁸⁵² https://twitter.com/Uvda_tweet/status/1778496650798833931

⁸⁵³ <https://www.zman.co.il/481871/>

including sources from Qatar, said similar things.⁸⁵⁴ Family members of the hostages agreed as well.⁸⁵⁵ In May, families said that the government was sacrificing the hostages.⁸⁵⁶

In June 2024, a senior Israeli politician and former member of the war cabinet stated that the Prime Minister rejected a deal for political reasons.⁸⁵⁷ In late July, a senior official involved in the hostage negotiations stated that Netanyahu was leading the negotiation to a crisis and that the negotiation team was an illusion that served him.⁸⁵⁸ In early August, a high official involved in the negotiations said that the high officials in Israel's security apparatus believed that Netanyahu did not want to reach a deal.⁸⁵⁹ In late August, the mother of hostage Matan Zangauker testified that the head of the Mossad told her that in the current political configuration a hostage deal was impossible.⁸⁶⁰ Another source involved in the negotiations claimed that Netanyahu was sabotaging the talks "once again".⁸⁶¹ A semi-official negotiator who had successfully negotiated with Hamas in the past claimed that he had reached breakthroughs in the current negotiations as early as May 2024, but that he was told to stop his negotiations channel. In more informal negotiations, during August, he reached a potential agreement with Hamas. However, he stated that Netanyahu did not want to end the war and refused those agreements.⁸⁶² By late December, the father of a hostage went as far as meeting with the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, who had issued arrest warrants against Netanyahu, in hopes to increase the pressure on Netanyahu to reach a hostage deal.⁸⁶³ The mother of one of the hostages noted in December 2024 that after speaking to Netanyahu she realized that the government will not agree to a complete deal.⁸⁶⁴

In context of the final negotiations for the second exchange deal in January 2025, Israel's main negotiators allegedly felt that Netanyahu was purposefully disrupting negotiations.⁸⁶⁵ Another senior member of the Israeli negotiation team gave a full interview in which he reiterated that a deal could have been reached at least twice during the first half of 2024 had Israel been more flexible in its approach to the negotiations.⁸⁶⁶ A father of one of the hostages accused

⁸⁵⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-14/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-de16-deb6-afee-ded71d10000> ; <https://twitter.com/selftitled/status/1784272179817041951> ;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokrai3937291> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hyw3njro>

⁸⁵⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/28/magazine/einav-zangauker-hamas-hostages-netanyahu.html>

⁸⁵⁶ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/government-sacrificing-hostages-families-say-after-fraught-hanegbi-meet/>

⁸⁵⁷ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/760712/>

⁸⁵⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-07-26/ty-article/.premium/00000190-ef0e-d8b8-a59a-ef0ea1250000>

⁸⁵⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-08-02/ty-article/.premium/00000191-1442-db7e-a99d-1edabb590000>

⁸⁶⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ryugauja> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-09-14/ty-article-live/00000191-ed46-d2a0-a7f5-ed5e21960000?liveBlogItemId=844356126#844356126>

⁸⁶¹ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-08-20/ty-article/sources-involved-in-cease-fire-negotiations-say-netanyahu-is-once-again-sabotaging-talks/00000191-7168-dadb-a1f9-7dfb63870000>

⁸⁶² <https://x.com/gershonbaskin/status/1829807974006571448>

⁸⁶³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/kolkore/2024-12-30/ty-article/00000194-1396-da22-affe-1b9661f10000>

⁸⁶⁴ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1154424>

⁸⁶⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/yossimelman/2025-01-22/ty-article-magazine/00000194-8d16-d288-afd4-dd5689b40000>

⁸⁶⁶ https://www.mako.co.il/news-diplomatic/2025_q1/Article-c209c2d0ff90591027.htm

Netanyahu of “playing games” with the return of his son in March 2025.⁸⁶⁷ Some of the released hostages joined in these attempts to publicly pressure Netanyahu to agree to a deal. In a letter to Netanyahu, 56 of the released hostages called upon him to sign a deal and bring the remaining hostages back.⁸⁶⁸ Seven released hostages also visited US President Donald Trump in attempt to expedite the return of the remaining hostages.⁸⁶⁹

Government treatment of hostages’ families and released hostages

Throughout the war, the Israeli government weaponized the hostage issue domestically and internationally but did not supporting the hostage families and released hostages in a commensurate manner.

Family members of hostages repeatedly pointed out the lack of communication from government officials. Some families did not get information from a government-authorized party for two weeks after October 7.⁸⁷⁰ Netanyahu first met representatives of the hostage families only on October 15, and the families received no update that the IDF was beginning its ground offensive in late October despite its relevance for their situation.⁸⁷¹ These communication issues were pervasive throughout the war.⁸⁷² In April 2024, for example, the father of a hostage stated that Netanyahu’s “lack of communication with us is a ‘national embarrassment’”.⁸⁷³ On several occasions Israeli media referred to cases in which families attempted to meet with Netanyahu or government officials but were ignored or refused.⁸⁷⁴ Released hostages also noted the lack of attention by government officials. Amit Sousana noted on TV that nobody from the government contacted her after her release.⁸⁷⁵ Another freed hostage said in a meeting with Israel’s war cabinet in December 2023 that “the feeling we had there was that no one was doing anything for us”.⁸⁷⁶ Although the IDF discovered that hostages were killed by its own airstrikes in March 2024, it notified their families only in September.⁸⁷⁷ When the Ministry of Health published a report on the experiences of hostages in Gaza it did not update the released hostages about its details.⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁶⁷ <https://www.thetimes.com/world/middle-east/israel-hamas-war/article/stop-playing-games-over-israeli-hostages-families-tell-netanyahu-hqjctjomp>

⁸⁶⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2025-03-07/ty-article-live/00000195-6d91-d690-a39f-7d9dd7f30000?liveBlogItemId=986784789#986784789>

⁸⁶⁹ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/17488516>

⁸⁷⁰ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/no-doubt-netanyahu-preventing-hostage-deal-charges-ex-spokesman-of-families-forum/>

⁸⁷¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/no-doubt-netanyahu-preventing-hostage-deal-charges-ex-spokesman-of-families-forum/>

⁸⁷² <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/11/21/world/gaza-hostages-families-frustrations-netanyahu-intl-hnk/index.html> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-04/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-0939-d6be-afff-4d79aa980000>

⁸⁷³ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-795842>

⁸⁷⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bky8ovgcc> ; <https://www.gly.co.il/item?id=49406>

⁸⁷⁵ <https://x.com/RotemShtarkman/status/1884346229452157055> ; also

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

⁸⁷⁶ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/06/middleeast/leaked-audio-of-heated-meeting-reveals-hostages-fury-at-netanyahu/index.html>

⁸⁷⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/08/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-hostages.html>

⁸⁷⁸ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/local/841378/>

This approach is not new. In the case of Avera Mengistu, an Israeli hostage held by Hamas for over a decade and released in the early 2025 prisoner exchange, already in 2015 Israeli media revealed government attempts to intimidate and pressure his family to avoid publicly blaming Netanyahu for not doing enough to release him. The official coordinator threatened the family that such behavior, or attempts to turn the Mengistu's case into an issue of the Ethiopian community (Mengistu is Ethiopian) would result in Mengistu remaining in Gaza for additional years.⁸⁷⁹ In 2019 as part of attempted negotiations for returning the pre-October 7 hostages, the Hamas' spokesperson claimed that Israel did not inquire into Mengistu's well-being or ask if he is dead or alive.⁸⁸⁰ According to a prominent Israeli MK, Israel had negotiated with Sinwar over a pre-October 7 hostage deal until the summer of 2023.⁸⁸¹

In other occasions, government officials criticized relatives of hostages. In a January 2024 meeting Netanyahu's wife, who accompanied him in a meeting with hostages' relatives, told them that their statements in the media helped Hamas.⁸⁸² A Likud MK accused a hostage's brother of using the situation to promote a political agenda.⁸⁸³ In parallel, government institutions were used to scorn the families of the hostages. In early January 2025, Einav Zangauker, the mother of a hostage and vocal critic of the government's reluctance to reach a deal, was prohibited from entering the Israeli Knesset for one week.⁸⁸⁴ In early March 2025, a group of relatives of hostages and of soldiers who had been killed during the war was forcibly evacuated from the entrance to the Knesset's main hall.⁸⁸⁵

In one indicative case in February 2025, the hostage Yarden Bibas and the corpses of his wife Shiri and their two small children Ariel and Kfir were returned to Israel. Although the deaths of the latter three were widely expected,⁸⁸⁶ the return of a family that became one of the symbols of the war drew much public attention in Israel and abroad.⁸⁸⁷ The cause of the deaths of Shiri and the children became a central issue. While the Palestinian group that held them had claimed they had died in an Israeli airstrike already in November 2023,⁸⁸⁸ the IDF spokesperson stated that based on forensic evidence they were killed by their captors'

⁸⁷⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2015-07-09/ty-article/0000017f-ea02-d639-af7f-ebd7baad0000> ; <https://x.com/ArikW/status/1893223789640450275>

⁸⁸⁰ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-says-real-opportunity-for-prisoner-swap-if-israel-gets-serious/>

⁸⁸¹ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/620173/>

⁸⁸² https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/report-sara-netanyahu-accused-hostage-families-of-helping-hamas/

⁸⁸³ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/government-sacrificing-hostages-families-say-after-fraught-hanegbi-meet/>

⁸⁸⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syxhpvmiyg> ; <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1876301687197204960> ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/144508/>

⁸⁸⁵ <https://x.com/N12News/status/1896569248274932215> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkuo3xmoix> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1896826182504767619>

⁸⁸⁶ https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2024_q3/Article-106ea7c9e070291026.htm

⁸⁸⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkblxoorcyl> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2025-02-19/ty-article-opinion/.premium/00000195-1a1f-d785-a3dd-3a1f76160000> ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/20/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-hostages-bodies.html>

⁸⁸⁸ <https://x.com/jeremyscahill/status/1892170530209337573>

hands.⁸⁸⁹ Neither side offered evidence for their claims.⁸⁹⁰ An Israeli reporter suggested that the truth of both claims would likely remain unknown because of the time that passed since the deaths and the decomposition of the corpses.⁸⁹¹

Although the Bibas family members had died over a year earlier, the state of Israel and in particular Netanyahu weaponized their deaths both domestically and internationally.⁸⁹² At the same time, Yarden and his family publicly declined to have any state representative at the funeral.⁸⁹³ They also repeatedly asked high Israeli officials, including Netanyahu, to cease from providing additional information about the manner of the deaths of Shiri and the children (Yarden's sister called it "abuse"), and sent a formal letter to that effect, noting in it that they had not received a forensic report.⁸⁹⁴ Despite these requests, Netanyahu spoke publicly about those details in two separate cases (at a military ceremony and at AIPAC).⁸⁹⁵ A couple of weeks later, Yarden wrote a letter to Netanyahu asking him to take responsibility for his role in the October 7 fiasco.⁸⁹⁶

Unofficial government attempts to prevent dissent

There have been indications that the government, or people associated with it, have attempted to prevent dissent in Israeli society by pressuring or dividing between the hostages' families.⁸⁹⁷ A strategic advisor testified that two weeks after the beginning of the war, a government official attempted to hire him to split or destroy the group that unified the hostage families.⁸⁹⁸ Such a split among the hostage families did indeed occur early, with a small "Tikvah [Hope] Forum" developing by November 2023. The Tikvah Forum represented the few families who supported the government's policy regarding the hostages.⁸⁹⁹ Already early in the war, the government appointed a coordinator for the hostages and their families,

⁸⁸⁹ <https://www.tiktok.com/@13newsil/video/7473877029788814600> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-02-21/ty-article/.premium/00000195-28da-d293-a1d5-eedf81ab0000> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ryvpvvr5kg> ; but see also: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-02-27/ty-article/.premium/amid-forensic-challenges-israel-may-never-fully-determine-how-hostages-died-in-gaza/00000195-46cd-dfb4-a1f7-f7ed65f00000>

⁸⁹⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/08/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-hostages.html>

⁸⁹¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-02-27/ty-article/.premium/00000195-4343-de32-ad9d-73d7229a0000>

⁸⁹² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjdz05d51x> ; <https://x.com/netanyahu/status/1892938637559603683> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/s1qlsf59jl> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymimqf5ye>

⁸⁹³ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/at-bibas-familys-request-no-government-minister-to-attend-funeral-for-shiri-ariel-and-kfir/

⁸⁹⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bioly8sq1x> ; <https://www.timesofisrael.com/bibas-family-tells-netanyahu-to-shut-up-as-he-details-the-murders-of-shiri-ariel-and-kfir/> ; <https://img.haaretz.co.il/bs/00000195-3dea-d574-a3b5-7ffaad640000/21/1f/19cdccc6439fae0a919707ffe0ae/pnia.pdf> . Also: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkfownq9kl>

⁸⁹⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bioly8sq1x>

⁸⁹⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-03-06/ty-article/.premium/00000195-6ceo-d46d-a3f7-eded98570000> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skdq4rxie> ; <https://x.com/NTarnopolsky/status/1896579284992753898>

⁸⁹⁷ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/508670>

⁸⁹⁸ <https://x.com/talschneider/status/1825832401030807846>

⁸⁹⁹ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/hkqcmmqi6

who told them that they should not hold demonstrations.⁹⁰⁰ The spokesperson for the Likud, the largest party in the Israeli parliament, met the families of the hostages in January 2024 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”.⁹⁰¹

Most of the hostages’ families organized through the Hostages and Missing Families Forum that came into being in early-mid October 2023 and generally attempted to maintain an apolitical position regarding the government to avoid antagonizing it. This organization changed its key personnel on several occasions, often in context of alleged or implied meddling by Netanyahu or his government. One of the Forum’s three founders left already in late October 2023 after he allegedly was associated with Netanyahu and his staff (two other organizers left as well).⁹⁰² The original chairman (also a founder) left his position in February 2024 after several family members received threats from Israeli MKs who predicated their support to the Forum upon the departure of the chairman.⁹⁰³ The original spokesman for the Forum (the third founder) left in March 2024 during a bout of negotiations for a deal and suggested that he was threatened to do so. In April 2024 he claimed that Netanyahu’s meddling with the Forum led him to quit.⁹⁰⁴ The CEO changed as well in July 2024 after the original CEO was accused of sexual harassment and verbal abuse.⁹⁰⁵ The Forum’s strategic advisor changed three times by November 2024 (one left in March after rumors that he was Netanyahu’s associate,⁹⁰⁶ the third left in November 2024⁹⁰⁷). At the same time, the Forum hired an advisor who had worked with Netanyahu and participated in a Likud campaign.⁹⁰⁸ Netanyahu’s involvement took other forms as well. In July 2024 an Israeli TV channel revealed that a Likud activist and Netanyahu associate set up several meetings between hostage family members and Netanyahu’s spouse.⁹⁰⁹

There is additional evidence from early in the war that families of the hostages feared that if they spoke up too loudly their family members might be pushed to the end of the list of hostages to be released.⁹¹⁰ An Israeli TV journalist considered supportive of Netanyahu implied

⁹⁰⁰ <https://www.zman.co.il/481871/popup/>

⁹⁰¹ https://twitter.com/Bar_ShemUr/status/1757852992215056477

⁹⁰² Dudi Zalmanovitch: <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/article-1048587> ;
<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rkxvdbpz6> ;
<https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001461283>

⁹⁰³ Ronen Tzur: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sjrnc5j2t> ; he was a political figure:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hh4Tx6ipcK4> ; <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/article-1157747>

⁹⁰⁴ Haim Rubinstein: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sjssnema6> ;
<https://www.timesofisrael.com/no-doubt-netanyahu-preventing-hostage-deal-charges-ex-spokesman-of-families-forum/>

⁹⁰⁵ Yossi Moatti: https://www.mako.co.il/news-israel/2024_q3/Article-8032fe621b5a091026.htm ;
https://www.mako.co.il/news-israel/2024_q2/Article-ee39dfe15564091027.htm. He was replaced by Uri HaCohen.

⁹⁰⁶ Daniel Kogan: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rylgedoca> ;
<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjnfzwdap>

⁹⁰⁷ Lior Horev: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-11-27/ty-article/00000193-6d1d-d7d8-adbb-fd5db6e0000> ; Horev was pressured out of a different position by Netanyahu and his allies before the war, <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/229937/>

⁹⁰⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-11-27/ty-article/00000193-6d1d-d7d8-adbb-fd5db6e0000>

⁹⁰⁹ <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/politics/politics/y4nlr-904150478/> ; <https://www.zman.co.il/213246/>

⁹¹⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bjkutcon6>

the same in January 2025 when saying that one of the hostages' mothers was more outspoken early on in speaking against the government, but then moderated her tone and was able to receive her daughter back.⁹¹¹ In this light as well as the aforementioned details in this section it is very likely that other relatives of the hostages prefer to self-censor their critique of the government as well.

⁹¹¹ <https://x.com/idobenbaji/status/1881929356978897390> . The video includes two separate clips.

The West Bank

Last updated: June 18, 2024

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.⁹¹² 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).⁹¹³ About 4,000 Palestinians have been displaced in the West Bank in 2023,⁹¹⁴ and 2,155 have been displaced since October 7 because of the destruction of their homes.⁹¹⁵ Jewish settlers have killed several Palestinians, and have wounded, terrorized and abused others.⁹¹⁶ Settlers conducted periodic larger rampages against Palestinian villages as well.⁹¹⁷ 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.⁹¹⁸ 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.⁹¹⁹ In late May the IDF announced it would provide rifles to settlers who are not part of the territorial defense units.⁹²⁰

A total of 521 Palestinians have been killed between October 7 and the time of writing.⁹²¹ 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

⁹¹² <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/magazine/israel-west-bank-settler-violence-impunity.html>

⁹¹³ <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/-קהילה-פלסטינית-10-ימים-לאחר-שקם-לי-גורשה-10-ימים-לאחר-שקם-לי> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-30/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018f-1068-d97f-abc-fce987090000> (18)

⁹¹⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/about-4000-palestinians-displaced-west-bank-2023>

⁹¹⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-178-west-bank>

⁹¹⁶ 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/lssaamro/status/1796595059259044284> ;

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

⁹¹⁷ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-hamas-west-bank-war-f85997a95d5579159ffe83d2c0cb988e> ; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-west-bank-7e75e1ef8f5307946d24f8b9a19ofd66> ; <https://twitter.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1779136328480805197>

⁹¹⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra13889978>

⁹¹⁹ <https://x.com/btselem/status/1793384580046565608> ;

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

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

⁹²⁰ <https://x.com/tzvisuccot/status/1796110479816818955>

⁹²¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-178-west-bank>

Palestinian rioters, killing five in early-mid October.⁹²² Since October 7, 5,200 Palestinians have been injured in the West Bank.⁹²³ A *Wall Street Journal* investigative report found that after Oct. 7 Israeli settlers have rapidly built both illegal roads and settlements in the West Bank. The Israeli government refused to review the evidence the newspaper supplied.⁹²⁴ In late March the IDF was still blocking the entrances to West Bank villages, forcing residents to make long detours to enter or leave.⁹²⁵ 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.⁹²⁶ In some cases, Israel has also prevented Palestinians from working their agricultural lands for many months.⁹²⁷

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,⁹²⁸ including the single largest land seizure since at least 1993.⁹²⁹ 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.⁹³⁰ 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.⁹³¹

Evidence for the killing of Palestinians

Several videos depict the killing of unarmed and unthreatening Palestinians.⁹³² When an Israeli police officer shot and killed a 12 year old boy who launched a firework, Israel's National

⁹²² <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1754079208643420204>

⁹²³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-178-west-bank>

⁹²⁴ <https://www.wsj.com/video/series/in-depth-features/visual-evidence-shows-illegal-settler-construction-in-west-bank-surgings/BF11225B-45A7-430A-A39C-48336B5B8286>

⁹²⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-19/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-50c4-dca4-ad8e-f4fe5f020000>

⁹²⁶ <https://news.sky.com/story/the-war-may-be-in-gaza-but-its-effects-can-mean-starvation-in-the-west-bank-13101929>

⁹²⁷ <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-bcfeai270000>

⁹²⁸ <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>

⁹²⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/22/israel-largest-west-bank-settlement-blinken-visit/>

⁹³⁰ <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>

⁹³¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkfau7iqo> (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/--%27%202137%20מסמ%20אחומש%20מרמחב%20במרתקות%20ההתנתקות%20חוק%20ביטול%20בדרב%20אחומש%20.pdf>

⁹³² <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>

Security minister commended him and said he should receive a medal.⁹³³ 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.⁹³⁴ 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.⁹³⁵ Two Palestinian herders were killed by settlers when IDF soldiers were present but did not get involved.⁹³⁶

Abuse, humiliation and detainment of Palestinians

Multiple videos present Israeli troops abusing and humiliating Palestinians,⁹³⁷ hitting or firing at them,⁹³⁸ parading them half-naked in the streets,⁹³⁹ destroying their property⁹⁴⁰ or public infrastructure,⁹⁴¹ blocking roads,⁹⁴² defacing Palestinian symbols,⁹⁴³ and calling for another

⁹³³ <https://twitter.com/Kahlissee/status/1767976353532383504> ;
<https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1767860298432528673> ;
<https://twitter.com/origivati/status/1767806214254002619>

⁹³⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-forces-kill-3-gunmen-west-bank-hospital-army-says-2024-01-30/>

⁹³⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hym4dpyot> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkop5nact> ;
<https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1773557971831632078>

⁹³⁶ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/133998/>

⁹³⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1741445118333222937> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1748100280560845092> ;
<https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1747358396519493874> ;
<https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1751689800254476390> ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760462497943839127> ;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1765200009580925182> ;
<https://twitter.com/masafering/status/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>

⁹³⁸ <https://twitter.com/AdameMedia/status/1761508331598848224> ;
<https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1781945504240214016> ;

⁹³⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1787112612880105776>

⁹⁴⁰ <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>

⁹⁴¹ <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1751125745701671025>

⁹⁴² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1782135295204262065>

⁹⁴³ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1768010284860416327>

Nakba.⁹⁴⁴ One soldier shared an image in which he claimed to have stolen a bag full of money notes.⁹⁴⁵ Another shows a soldier celebrating his birthday(?) with balloons while a handcuffed and blindfolded Palestinian is lying on the ground behind him.⁹⁴⁶ 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.⁹⁴⁷ As in Gaza, here too there are video clips humiliating and dehumanizing Palestinians,⁹⁴⁸ describing them as Amalek,⁹⁴⁹ as well as images of soldiers posing with lingerie inside Palestinian houses they raided.⁹⁵⁰ There are several video clips of settler youths confronting and attacking Palestinians,⁹⁵¹ as well as settlers dressed up as soldiers who detain Palestinians, including on their own lands.⁹⁵² Yet other videos show settlers stealing Palestinian property,⁹⁵³ or soldiers who do not intervene when settlers harm Palestinian civilians and their property.⁹⁵⁴ 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.⁹⁵⁵

More Palestinians, including children,⁹⁵⁶ 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.⁹⁵⁷ Until late May, almost 5,000 people were arrested in the West Bank (the number does not include people arrested and released before they were brought in front of a judge).⁹⁵⁸ At that moment,

⁹⁴⁴ <https://x.com/btselem/status/1793384580046565608>

⁹⁴⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1756695309239939117>

⁹⁴⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1758619734809928130>

⁹⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/TameeOliveFern/status/1752615765092815206>

⁹⁴⁸ <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> ;

⁹⁴⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1790921496421937522>

⁹⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1782837821432082700>

⁹⁵¹ <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/1785895596108400359> ;

<https://twitter.com/Issaamro/status/1790820035201466412>

⁹⁵² <https://twitter.com/masafering/status/1769453241929011501>

⁹⁵³ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1753732272816029757> ;

<https://x.com/Mistaclim/status/1794071598372172056>

⁹⁵⁴ https://twitter.com/Yesh_Din/status/1779501559379849229

⁹⁵⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-20/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-9268-d212-abcfd66d978d0000>

⁹⁵⁶ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1775555921151693151>

⁹⁵⁷ <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/>

⁹⁵⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-05-28/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018f-beff-dob7-abdf-feff4aag0000> ; 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>

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).⁹⁵⁹

Many descriptions of released detainees refer to constant abuse by their prison staff.⁹⁶⁰ 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.⁹⁶¹ 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.⁹⁶² Online social media content includes more evidence.⁹⁶³ 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.⁹⁶⁴

⁹⁵⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-05-28/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018f-beff-dob7-abdf-feff4a90000>

⁹⁶⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/2023-12-30/ty-article/0000018c-b51e-d45c-a98e-bf5e7a340000> ; <https://twitter.com/RZabaneh/status/1784223150156181904>

⁹⁶¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-c6e5-d6c4-ab8d-e7f561840000>

⁹⁶² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/twilightzone/2024-03-22/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-62b4-d541-a78e-ffff79470000>

⁹⁶³ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761463527489900685> ; <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1801267126956618150>

⁹⁶⁴ <https://x.com/QudsNen/status/1801743540436771252> ; <https://x.com/Palestinecapti1/status/1801781895413555571>

The media, propaganda and the war (disclaimer)⁹⁶⁵

Last updated: June 18, 2024

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”).⁹⁶⁶

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.⁹⁶⁷ 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.⁹⁶⁸ This section assumes that the information conveyed by state, non-state and media actors is biased, but is also not completely reliable or unreliable by definition. Rather, these actors author and disseminate information that fits within their different interests (e.g. political, economical or ideological). The main problem is not “fake news” – but rather the fact that much of the information conveyed is used out of context and weaponized to further these interests, leading to misinformation and disinformation.⁹⁶⁹ 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.⁹⁷⁰ 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.⁹⁷¹ When the censor intervenes in an article, the media outlet cannot convey that information to readers (for example by blacklining excised content).⁹⁷² Israel’s Prime Minister has pressured the chief censor of the IDF to intervene in additional cases, including cases without a security justification.⁹⁷³ In a similar case, a website without formal affiliation that was created by the

⁹⁶⁵ 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.

⁹⁶⁶ https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/התעמולה_הישראלית ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/272146>

⁹⁶⁷ <https://lib.civics.cet.ac.il/pages/item.asp?item=9260&kwd=2079>

⁹⁶⁸ <https://lib.civics.cet.ac.il/pages/item.asp?item=9260&kwd=2079>

⁹⁶⁹ <https://firstdraftnews.org/long-form-article/understanding-information-disorder/>

⁹⁷⁰ <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/07/gaza-israel-netanyahu-propaganda-lies-palestinians/>

⁹⁷¹ See for example: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2022-07-26/ty-article-opinion/00000182-39f9-d145-a3df-7dfb21db0000>

⁹⁷² <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-cod3-dade-edef-ecfb884f0000>

⁹⁷³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-11-29/ty-article/.highlight/0000018c-1adf-d4e4-a1df-3edf52340000>

Israeli Ministry of Hasbara and aimed at international consumption had been blocked from access within Israel.⁹⁷⁴

The state of Israel has been buying positive coverage in international media since 2018, claiming that many other countries have been doing the same.⁹⁷⁵ A long list of local politicians and government offices have been doing the same in national media.⁹⁷⁶ Government offices have sometimes used contracts that allow them to veto the content of the positive coverage that they had bought.⁹⁷⁷ 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.⁹⁷⁸ 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).⁹⁷⁹ The Israeli government had worked with hundreds of these organizations and likely maintains these connections.⁹⁸⁰ 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.⁹⁸¹ In January 2024, Israel acquired a technological system for mass influence that can create content suitable for online influence operations and began using it.⁹⁸² In addition to state-led efforts, several start-up companies have attempted to influence discourse on their own both before and during the war.⁹⁸³

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

⁹⁷⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-04-02/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018e-9ef0-d9c2-afbe-bef6abb00000> ; <https://saturday-october-seven.com/>

⁹⁷⁵ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/281581>

⁹⁷⁶ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/281581> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/268428> ; many examples in <https://shakuf.co.il/books/critical-reading.html>

⁹⁷⁷ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/281581>

⁹⁷⁸ <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.jpost.com/israel-news/article-713678> ; <https://forward.com/israel/453286/us-pro-israel-groups-failed-to-disclose-grants-from-israeli-government/>

⁹⁷⁹ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/272146>

⁹⁸⁰ <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/Ccommittees/20_ptv_348357.doc&ved=2ahUKEwjE5r24_ZCFAxVhElkFHcatCNwQFnoECBEQAQ&usq=AOvVaw2FYnze1NfDxOLulPUg-2rX (p. 8).

⁹⁸¹ <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-d1f-a5cf-e7cb62af0000>

⁹⁸² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-01-16/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-e8c1-d765-ab9d-f8fd29800000>

⁹⁸³ <https://www.israelhayom.com/opinions/can-ai-help-hasbara/> ; <https://wordsofiron.com/> ; <https://www.calcalistech.com/ctechnews/article/rkrug57na>

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.⁹⁸⁴ This was at least partially related to complaint campaigns by right-wing lobby groups, which produced a chilling effect.⁹⁸⁵ 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.⁹⁸⁶

Following a pattern from earlier wars in Gaza,⁹⁸⁷ the current war has been enabled and facilitated by massive media efforts⁹⁸⁸ to shape discourse in Israel as well as in the West – in countries such as the United States, Canada,⁹⁸⁹ the United Kingdom and Germany⁹⁹⁰. 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”.⁹⁹¹ 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.⁹⁹² 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.⁹⁹³ 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.⁹⁹⁴ A different review found that in less than two weeks, Israel targeted

⁹⁸⁴ <https://breachmedia.ca/cbc-whitewashed-israels-crimes-gaza-firsthand/>

⁹⁸⁵ <https://breachmedia.ca/cbc-whitewashed-israels-crimes-gaza-firsthand/>

⁹⁸⁶ <https://www.semafor.com/article/11/09/2023/billionaires-discuss-50-million-anti-hamas-media-blitz>

⁹⁸⁷ Amer, “War Reporting in the International Press: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Gaza War of 2008-2009”, Ph.D Dissertation (Hamburg, 2015).

⁹⁸⁸ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/israel-social-media-twitter-messaging-david-saranga-1234874381/>

⁹⁸⁹ <https://breachmedia.ca/cbc-whitewashed-israels-crimes-gaza-firsthand/>

⁹⁹⁰ <https://adamtooze.substack.com/p/chartbook-271-reasons-of-state-memory>

⁹⁹¹ <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/07/gaza-israel-netanyahu-propaganda-lies-palestinians/> ; also <https://newyorkwarcrimes.com/a-continuous-series-of-insults-to-our-understanding>

⁹⁹² <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/03/11/israel-gaza-hamas-netanyahu-warfare-misinformation/>

⁹⁹³ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/israel-social-media-twitter-messaging-david-saranga-1234874381/>

⁹⁹⁴ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israel-social-media-opinion-hamas-war/>

audiences in Western Europe in particular with some 88 ads, spending \$7.1 million to reach nearly a billion impressions.⁹⁹⁵ 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.⁹⁹⁶ In the first month of the war, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' digital team estimated they had reached 2 billion people.⁹⁹⁷ 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.⁹⁹⁸ 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 an attempt to 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).⁹⁹⁹

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.¹⁰⁰⁰ Most Israeli media chose not to inform the public that these stories had been refuted.¹⁰⁰¹ 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."¹⁰⁰² 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.¹⁰⁰³ The IDF accepted and claimed to have verified evidence of beheaded babies, later found out to be false.¹⁰⁰⁴ 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

⁹⁹⁵ <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/>

⁹⁹⁶ <https://www.eurogamer.net/rovio-blocks-disturbing-pro-israel-ad-found-in-angry-birds-and-other-games>

⁹⁹⁷ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/israel-social-media-twitter-messaging-david-saranga-1234874381/>

⁹⁹⁸ <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/12/06/israel-palestinian-advocacy-groups-social-media-spending-00130118>

⁹⁹⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-19/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-4cd5-d26a-afbf-eed552de0000>; <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>

¹⁰⁰⁰ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-sexual-violence-zaka-ca7905bf9520b1e646f86d72cdf03244>

¹⁰⁰¹ 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

¹⁰⁰² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rq5hTirpL9s>

¹⁰⁰³ <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-b5f5e24f0000>

¹⁰⁰⁴ <https://twitter.com/i/broadcasts/1MYGNorgigLJw>; <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/07/gaza-israel-netanyahu-propaganda-lies-palestinians/>

as well.¹⁰⁰⁵ Israeli officials such as Israel's Minister of Economy continued to repeat these falsified stories in international interviews at least as late as April.¹⁰⁰⁶

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.¹⁰⁰⁷ Other stories during the war, such as the Israeli claim that the central Hamas bunker is located under al-Shifa hospital, were found to be false (see also the discussion of the flour massacre above).¹⁰⁰⁸

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.¹⁰⁰⁹ When Amnesty International claimed war crimes were conducted by both sides in late October, Israel attacked it as antisemitic.¹⁰¹⁰ 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).¹⁰¹¹ Greta was subsequently removed from the Ministry of Education's materials in Israel.¹⁰¹² Supporters of a ceasefire in Gaza in November were smeared as “pro-Hamas” or “pro-Palestinians” in both Israel and the

¹⁰⁰⁵ <https://twitter.com/Israel/status/1717553687025815817> ; <https://www.mako.co.il/culture-articles/Article-cdbeedo8dedib81027.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/171646231370633484> . 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).

¹⁰⁰⁶ <https://twitter.com/waleedshahid/status/1775934807165272158>

¹⁰⁰⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skt8jo3rt>; <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/hjnoxpfoa . 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-magazine/article/israel-hamas-rape-investigation-evidence-october-7-6kzphszsj> . On antisemitism see also: <https://www.972mag.com/ihra-antisemitism-israel-inversion-projection/>

¹⁰⁰⁸ <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/>

¹⁰⁰⁹ <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1649970> ;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qoTFxpp7pc0> ;

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

¹⁰¹⁰ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israel-calls-amnesty-international-antisemitic-and-biased-after-it-criticized-war-crimes-by-all-parties/>

¹⁰¹¹ <https://www.dw.com/en/greta-thunberg-faces-backlash-for-pro-palestinian-post/a-67172344>

¹⁰¹² <https://www.ynet.co.il/environment-science/article/biuzeagf6>

US.¹⁰¹³ 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.¹⁰¹⁴ 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.¹⁰¹⁵

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”.¹⁰¹⁶ To place this harsh criticism in context, Khan was Israel’s preferred candidate for the position back in 2021.¹⁰¹⁷ Israel’s Prime Minister also described the issue of warrants as “an antisemitic hate crime”.¹⁰¹⁸ A joint investigative report by the *Guardian* and *+972 Magazine/Local Call* found that Israel conducted a long covert operation against the ICC in an attempt to sway its officials and Khan’s predecessor from investigating Israel’s war crimes and issuing arrest warrants to Israeli officials.¹⁰¹⁹ 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.¹⁰²⁰

Limiting information flow from Gaza

¹⁰¹³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skttx81uba>; <https://theintercept.com/2023/11/09/republican-debate-hamas-gaza-ceasefire/>

¹⁰¹⁴ https://www.lemonde.fr/en/les-decodeurs/article/2023/11/11/photojournalists-embedded-with-hamas-on-october-7-heavy-but-unsubstantiated-israeli-accusations_6247085_8.html ; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-photographers-attack-200be1ba47361f1c1f13cdaeb65d04>

¹⁰¹⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/12/21/metaspromises/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>

¹⁰¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8O2ioG9qQUM>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cw4490z75v30>; also <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-absurd-icc-bid-to-arrest-israeli-leaders-is-the-new-antisemitism/>

¹⁰¹⁷ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/uks-karim-khan-elected-next-icc-prosecutor-will-replace-controversial-bensouda/>

¹⁰¹⁸ <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>

¹⁰¹⁹ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/חשיפה-המלחמה-המלוכלכת-של-ישראל-נגד-בית-בית/>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/28/israeli-spy-chief-icc-prosecutor-war-crimes-inquiry>

¹⁰²⁰ https://www.mako.co.il/news-columns/2024_q2/Article-6736c6e7f3ebf81027.htm

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,¹⁰²¹ and hindering investigations of atrocities within the Strip such as the “flour massacre”.¹⁰²² 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.¹⁰²³ CNN, for example, has admitted that it runs all its Gaza coverage through its Jerusalem bureau, itself monitored by the censor.¹⁰²⁴ 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.¹⁰²⁵ Already in December, Israeli researchers declared that the media was becoming a propaganda arm of the government.¹⁰²⁶ 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).¹⁰²⁷ In total, the censors intervened in 31% of the articles sent to it.¹⁰²⁸ 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.¹⁰²⁹ 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.¹⁰³⁰

Rallying the Israeli public around the war

To rally the Israeli public around the war, Israel strongly limits the boundaries of acceptable public discourse. Israeli police has been repressing anti-war protests since the beginning of the

¹⁰²¹ <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>

¹⁰²² <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/17/opinion/gaza-journalists-censorship-israel.html>

¹⁰²³ <https://theintercept.com/2023/12/23/israel-military-idf-media-censor/>

¹⁰²⁴ 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/>

¹⁰²⁵ <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>

¹⁰²⁶ <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>

¹⁰²⁷ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/134881/>

¹⁰²⁸ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/134881/>

¹⁰²⁹ <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>

¹⁰³⁰ <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>

war, often with excessive violence.¹⁰³¹ 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,¹⁰³² 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".¹⁰³³ 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.¹⁰³⁴ 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.¹⁰³⁵ The Minister for National Security established a police team to track and remove human rights activists from the West Bank.¹⁰³⁶ The police has repeatedly seized and shredded signs with anti-war messages held in "a long list of demonstrations and vigils".¹⁰³⁷ 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.¹⁰³⁸ The Israeli Channel 12 decided to minimize attention to protests by the families of the Israeli hostages in Gaza against the government.¹⁰³⁹ In June it was revealed that an elite police unit was tasked with disrupting anti-government or pro-hostage release protests in Jerusalem.¹⁰⁴⁰

Palestinian citizens of Israel were not allowed to protest early during the war with the support of Israel's Supreme Court,¹⁰⁴¹ a situation that has only partially improved subsequently.¹⁰⁴² Freedom of speech, particularly among Palestinian citizens of Israel, has been curtailed significantly.¹⁰⁴³ 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.¹⁰⁴⁴ Israel has attempted to pressure Palestinian journalists from the West Bank from publishing about the war.¹⁰⁴⁵ In early April Israel passed a law to shut down the operations of the critical channel Al-Jazeera in the country.¹⁰⁴⁶ After some deliberation, the government decided to shut down the channel in early May, sending police to immediately raid some of its local offices.¹⁰⁴⁷ Also in

¹⁰³¹ <https://www.972mag.com/israel-police-repression-protests-gaza/>

¹⁰³² <https://twitter.com/JoshBreiner/status/1772662679225635054>

¹⁰³³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/b1pqgh4yr>

¹⁰³⁴ <https://twitter.com/OmerArvili/status/1776192429709812033>

¹⁰³⁵ <https://twitter.com/RedRevDanny/status/1779844167226609787>

¹⁰³⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra13887273>

¹⁰³⁷ https://www.acri.org.il/post/_1084 ; also <https://twitter.com/ofercass/status/1783896320933036133>

¹⁰³⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkj7dmdvo>

¹⁰³⁹ <https://www.themarket.com/blogs/2024-06-06/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-ecfe-dcb4-a38f-fdffd470000?gift=4cc430b6ec7c45b3adaf05ab9b1oba52>

¹⁰⁴⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rkotbkyba>

¹⁰⁴¹ <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/>

¹⁰⁴² For example: <https://x.com/nirhasson/status/1796567421412938129>

¹⁰⁴³ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/ryzhcrogo

¹⁰⁴⁴ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/521195>

¹⁰⁴⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1774836624280473643>

¹⁰⁴⁶ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-al-jazeera-qatar-hamas-war-gaza-49c2aa4afb3c3boee6ac314b63d80716>; <https://www.ynet.co.il/entertainment/article/r17bidyo>

¹⁰⁴⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rkdg31nhfc#autoplay> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/entertainment/article/rj8nuc4fa#autoplay>

May, an Israeli teacher who attended “a pro Palestinian demonstration” with “Palestinian flags” in Israel (a Nakba commemoration) was immediately suspended from teaching in her school.¹⁰⁴⁸ In the same month, the University of Haifa forbade a student demonstration against the war in its area,¹⁰⁴⁹ 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.¹⁰⁵⁰ 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.¹⁰⁵¹

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.¹⁰⁵² 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.¹⁰⁵³

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 by 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”.¹⁰⁵⁴

¹⁰⁴⁸ <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

¹⁰⁴⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/2024-05-20/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-91a1-d17a-a9df-91f1247f0000>

¹⁰⁵⁰ <https://x.com/rafaelshimunov/status/1795813951940202938> ; <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/rasha-kraiem>

¹⁰⁵¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/gallery-news/2024-06-08/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-f899-df2e-a5df-fefd24c30000>

¹⁰⁵² <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> ;

¹⁰⁵³ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/idf-pr>

¹⁰⁵⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2023-12-28/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018c-aafo-d22d-a3dd-bff9c4ad0000>

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.¹⁰⁵⁵ 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.¹⁰⁵⁶ For example, despite Israeli claims to have killed large amounts of Hamas militants (10,000-13,000 as of late February-early March),¹⁰⁵⁷ the number has not been challenged in Israeli media, while a *BBC* examination found almost no evidence for this in hundreds of IDF videos, and little support for the number in the IDF's own reporting.¹⁰⁵⁸ For several months, the IDF spokesperson presented the IDF's perspective on prime time every day on all Israeli TV channels with little criticism.¹⁰⁵⁹

There is almost no attention in Israeli media to the experiences of civilians in Gaza or the horrors of war.¹⁰⁶⁰ Destruction, when showed, is sanitized through images of buildings destroyed from far away.¹⁰⁶¹ 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.¹⁰⁶² For example, the dozens of civilian deaths caused by the military operation that released two hostages in February were barely covered in Israeli media.¹⁰⁶³ 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.¹⁰⁶⁴ The main challenges to dominant Israeli narrative in Hebrew language discourse come from independent media such as +972

¹⁰⁵⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/inside-israel-its-a-very-different-war-628097b2>

¹⁰⁵⁶ <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>

¹⁰⁵⁷ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/defense/article/15395367> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/blogs/118daysofwar/article/sksjxiy9a> ; <https://www.politico.eu/article/israels-netanyahu-says-he-will-defy-bidens-red-line-and-invade-rafah/>

¹⁰⁵⁸ 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>

¹⁰⁵⁹ <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>

¹⁰⁶⁰ <https://hazmanhazeh.org.il/dehumanization-by-disregard/> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/503665> ; <https://www.kikar.co.il/journalism/s6b07x> ;

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>

¹⁰⁶¹ <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>

¹⁰⁶² <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/53666>

¹⁰⁶³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-03/ty-article/.highlight/0000018e-ao4c-dedo-a18f-e2fc22fc0000>

¹⁰⁶⁴ <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>

Magazine/Local Call and *The Seventh Eye*, which nonetheless have very limited reach and resources¹⁰⁶⁵ and are themselves under military censorship¹⁰⁶⁶ as well as NGOs such as B'Tselem and Gisha.¹⁰⁶⁷

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".¹⁰⁶⁸ In this context, Israel has obstructed external official investigations into the Oct. 7 atrocities, for example one led by the UN Human Rights Council,¹⁰⁶⁹ and another that aimed to investigate sexual violence on Oct. 7.¹⁰⁷⁰ When these reports were published, they received little attention in Israeli media, which often focused on discrediting them.

Israeli 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.¹⁰⁷¹ The new CEO of Channel 13 told his employees in mid-March that they should unite the nation by providing entertainment and Israeli hasbara (i.e. public diplomacy/propaganda).¹⁰⁷² An important Israeli journalist has stated that he believes that journalism should be used to bolster Israeli morale during the war.¹⁰⁷³ 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.¹⁰⁷⁴

The Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* (considered to be leftist by Israeli standards), for example, waited for five months until it called for a ceasefire,¹⁰⁷⁵ despite overwhelming evidence for the

¹⁰⁶⁵ <https://www.972mag.com/> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/>

¹⁰⁶⁶ https://www.democracynow.org/2023/12/1/israel_gaza_war_gospel_artificial_intelligence

¹⁰⁶⁷

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

¹⁰⁶⁸ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/54307>

¹⁰⁶⁹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/government-forbids-doctors-from-speaking-to-un-group-investigating-oct-7-atrocities/>

¹⁰⁷⁰ <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/>

¹⁰⁷¹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/inside-israel-its-a-very-different-war-628097b2>

¹⁰⁷² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2024-03-13/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-38a2-d21d-a3ef-3be6160f0000>

¹⁰⁷³ <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-bfcf6d6d0000>

¹⁰⁷⁴ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/503392>

¹⁰⁷⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2024-03-01/ty-article-opinion/0000018d-f607-da4e-adbf-f6bf7c300000> ; compare to the newspaper's position during the 2014 war in Gaza: <https://www.the7eye.org.il/128234>

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,¹⁰⁷⁶ 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.¹⁰⁷⁷ An important journalist in the newspaper flipped his own position without any admission of his earlier mistake.¹⁰⁷⁸ 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 antisemitic¹⁰⁷⁹ while *Ha'aretz* featured no less than four pieces against him.¹⁰⁸⁰ 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'.¹⁰⁸¹

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.¹⁰⁸² 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.¹⁰⁸³ 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.¹⁰⁸⁴ 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?"¹⁰⁸⁵ while the popular news website Ynet uncritically conveyed an official response that

¹⁰⁷⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2024-03-27/ty-article-opinion/0000018e-7bc4-d680-a1cf-ffc775940000>

¹⁰⁷⁷ 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>

¹⁰⁷⁸ <https://twitter.com/idanlandau/status/1777753047789117499>

¹⁰⁷⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2024-02-26/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-e6ee-d7f4-a3dd-e6ee92270000>

¹⁰⁸⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/opinion/2024-02-28/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018d-ef8e-d1e0-aidd-ffffe46f0000>; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-02-28/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018d-eedc-d7f4-a3dd-eedc0040000>; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-03-05/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018e-ob2c-d9cb-afdf-obbc88e20000>; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/opinion/2024-03-04/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-0a17-d9cb-afdf-0a9f2b770000>

¹⁰⁸¹ Discussion of her speaking in another podcast at:

<https://youtu.be/WHCMVqNOreo?si=PlZXwSpzeJ4boVyR&t=2430>

¹⁰⁸² <https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/6361323ddea5a810/Article-831cb8cdf6d6b81026.htm>, https://twitter.com/brown_johnbrown/status/1768222848361881615

¹⁰⁸³ <https://twitter.com/FakeReporter/status/1761696937256853788>

¹⁰⁸⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-21/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-2bb4-daf5-a1bf-aff41ac80000>

¹⁰⁸⁵ https://twitter.com/kann_news/status/1770492431990956343

“there is no humanitarian crisis in Gaza” and blamed the UN for any problems in the distribution of food in Gaza.¹⁰⁸⁶

American media

In American media, several studies and experts have pointed out that there has been a pervasive bias against Palestinians for a century.¹⁰⁸⁷ 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.¹⁰⁸⁸ The media coverage of the beginning of the war remained strongly pro-Israeli.¹⁰⁸⁹ A *Newsweek* editor, for example, called for large parts of Gaza to be flattened to resemble a parking lot.¹⁰⁹⁰ *The New York Times* supplied direct quotes from Israeli government and military officials four times as much as the equivalent Palestinian quotes.¹⁰⁹¹ In another example, an investigation by *The Guardian* demonstrated that *CNN*’s coverage is heavily biased towards Israel,¹⁰⁹² a critique that surfaced within the channel as well.¹⁰⁹³ 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.¹⁰⁹⁴ A different investigation found a similar effect continuing throughout February in *The New York Times*.¹⁰⁹⁵ 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.¹⁰⁹⁶ 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.¹⁰⁹⁷ Similar editorial guidelines at the global news syndicate AFP were similarly pro-Israeli.¹⁰⁹⁸

¹⁰⁸⁶ <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

¹⁰⁸⁷ 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>

¹⁰⁸⁸ <https://www.972mag.com/us-media-palestinians>. The Nation included a higher ratio (10.5%); the New Republic had no pieces authored by Palestinians.

¹⁰⁸⁹ <https://www.columnblog.com/p/massacred-vs-left-to-die-documenting>

¹⁰⁹⁰ https://twitter.com/josh_hammer/status/1711185635229282605

¹⁰⁹¹ <https://newyorkwarcrimes.com/the-times-quotes-israeli-and-american-sources-more-than-3-times-as-much-as-palestinians>

¹⁰⁹² <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/feb/04/cnn-staff-pro-israel-bias>

¹⁰⁹³ <https://theintercept.com/2024/03/01/cnn-christiane-amanpour-israel-gaza-coverage/>

¹⁰⁹⁴ <https://theintercept.com/2024/01/09/newspapers-israel-palestine-bias-new-york-times/>

¹⁰⁹⁵ <https://newyorkwarcrimes.com/the-times-quotes-israeli-and-american-sources-more-than-3-times-as-much-as-palestinians>

¹⁰⁹⁶ <https://fair.org/home/brutal-is-a-word-mostly-reserved-for-palestinian-violence/>

¹⁰⁹⁷ <https://theintercept.com/2024/04/15/nyt-israel-gaza-genocide-palestine-coverage/>

¹⁰⁹⁸ <https://www.declassifieduk.org/analysis-how-the-uk-and-us-media-dehumanise-palestinians/>

While Israeli casualties are individuated in reporting, the far greater number of Palestinian casualties is frequently described collectively and in passive terms.¹⁰⁹⁹ An examination of 5 leading media outlets reveals how Palestinians are dehumanized and often reduced to numbers, which are then doubted.¹¹⁰⁰ 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.¹¹⁰¹ As a result, for example, a February poll found that half of Americans do not know whether Israelis or Palestinians have had a higher death toll, despite the massive discrepancy in reality between both sides (about 20 Palestinians had been killed for each Israeli).¹¹⁰² 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.¹¹⁰³

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 discussed widely in Israeli media.¹¹⁰⁴ 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.¹¹⁰⁵ *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.¹¹⁰⁶ 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 interviews¹¹⁰⁷ – 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

¹⁰⁹⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/11/a-new-abyss-gaza-and-the-hundred-years-war-on-palestine> ; <https://newyorkwarcrimes.com/the-times-quotes-israeli-and-american-sources-more-than-3-times-as-much-as-palestinians>

¹¹⁰⁰ <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>

¹¹⁰¹ <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/new-york-times-complicit-plausible-genocide> ;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1763453379811098672>;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1764012307385053635>;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1764815517548994866>;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1764752005673984066>;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1763254348942037335>;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1762992473067130934>;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/176197931779824767> ;

<https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1767686506939068845>; the author of these tweets includes many other examples. See also: <https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1799543857539108962>

¹¹⁰² <https://www.pewresearch.org/2024/03/21/emotions-news-and-knowledge-about-the-israel-hamas-war/>

¹¹⁰³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/opinion/israel-military-aid.html>

¹¹⁰⁴ <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/>

¹¹⁰⁵ <https://fair.org/home/shielding-us-public-from-israeli-reports-of-friendly-fire-on-october-7/>

¹¹⁰⁶ <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/new-york-times-complicit-plausible-genocide>

¹¹⁰⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/28/world/middleeast/oct-7-attacks-hamas-israel-sexual-violence.html>

that called upon Israel to “turn the [Gaza] strip into a slaughterhouse”.¹¹⁰⁸ After its release, independent media as well as *The Intercept* found a long list of fundamental problems with the account.¹¹⁰⁹ The *New York Times* itself had to admit that some of the information it had published was false,¹¹¹⁰ and later cut its ties with the reporter.¹¹¹¹ *The Nation* described the piece as “the biggest failure of journalism” at the *Times* in the past two decades,¹¹¹² while *Ha’aretz* compared the collapse of the *Times*’ piece to its October 7.¹¹¹³ 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.¹¹¹⁴ 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.¹¹¹⁵

The treatment of UNRWA as a case of media misrepresentation

One example of the actions of Israel’s media strategy is the treatment of UNRWA, the UN body responsible for the support of Palestinian refugees. The same day after the ICJ found that it was plausible that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza (Jan. 26), Israel asserted that 12 UNRWA employees (out of about 13,000 in the Strip) participated in the Oct. 7 attacks against Israel.¹¹¹⁶ Almost immediately, 16 of UNRWA’s donors – western countries – declared they would suspend their funding of UNRWA.¹¹¹⁷ 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,¹¹¹⁸ a story in the British Channel 4 revealed the document Israel supposedly sent UNRWA’s donor

¹¹⁰⁸ <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.

¹¹⁰⁹ <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>

¹¹¹⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/25/world/middleeast/video-sexual-assault-israel-kibbutz-hamas.html>

¹¹¹¹ <https://www.ynetnews.com/culture/article/rkoh8h8ya>

¹¹¹² <https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/new-york-times-intercept-hamas-rape/>

¹¹¹³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/galleryfriday/2024-03-28/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-7ab6-de80-a78f-7bf747280000>

¹¹¹⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/media/2024/04/29/new-york-times-oct-7-journalism-professors-letter/> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/entertainment/article/bk8ntgcwo> ;
https://www.democracynow.org/2024/5/8/nyt_investigation ; the letter is at:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/documents/adc3143c-ecc7-477f-8a38-a76308b18cca.pdf>

¹¹¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/PulitzerPrizes/status/1787561713291645419> ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/06/business/pulitzer-prize-winners.html>

¹¹¹⁶ <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> .

¹¹¹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/01/unrwa-funding-pause-employees-october-7-hamas-attack-claims-no-evidence-un>

¹¹¹⁸ 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/>

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.¹¹¹⁹ A different intelligence dossier released by Israel contains no evidence either.¹¹²⁰ 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.¹¹²¹ Other claims made by Israel were never made to UNRWA but directly to the media.¹¹²² 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".¹¹²³ The weak evidence supporting the Israeli claim has led to several of the countries that stopped funding to resume it in March and April.¹¹²⁴ Other countries did so subsequently or expressed plans to do so, and some even increased their humanitarian support for Gaza.¹¹²⁵ 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.¹¹²⁶ 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.¹¹²⁷ In late March an Israeli organization released a report that revealed a pro-Israeli influence operation that targeted US Black Democrat legislators, in an attempt to sway their opinion against UNRWA and the Palestinians.¹¹²⁸ A few months later it was revealed that the operation was orchestrated by Israel's Diaspora Affairs Ministry and run by a political campaigning firm.¹¹²⁹ In late April, an independent review by a former French foreign minister

¹¹¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/DrSakriKaia/status/1754685268454785074>

¹¹²⁰ <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/>

¹¹²¹ <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/UNLazzarini/status/1760764594644013287>

¹¹²² <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-press-release-26feb2024/>

¹¹²³ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-finds-claims-that-u-n-aid-agency-staff-took-part-in-hamas-attack-credible-957b747e>

¹¹²⁴ <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>

¹¹²⁵ <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>

¹¹²⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/no-evidence-israel-back-unrwa-accusations-says-eu-humanitarian-chief-2024-03-14/>

¹¹²⁷ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/unrwa-report-says-israel-coerced-some-agency-employees-to-falsely-admit-hamas-links/

¹¹²⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-19/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-4cd5-d26a-afbf-eed52de0000>; https://fakereporter.net/pdf/pro-israel_influence_network_report-0324.pdf?v=2

¹¹²⁹ <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-d1f-a5cf-e7cb62af0000>; https://fakereporter.net/pdf/pro-Israeli_influence_network-new_findings-0624.pdf

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 2011.¹¹³⁰

Israeli officials have long stated that they want to shut UNRWA down.¹¹³¹ Israel has recently stated again this aim,¹¹³² and has acted upon it,¹¹³³ going as far as proposing a bill that designated UNRWA as a terrorist organization in late May.¹¹³⁴ These indicate that Israel has been weaponizing its allegations against UNRWA for this purpose.¹¹³⁵ 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,¹¹³⁶ 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.¹¹³⁷ UNRWA also fired several employees who were found to be linked to Hamas in the past.¹¹³⁸ 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 shelters¹¹³⁹).

Another case of successful propaganda: doubting the Palestinian death toll¹¹⁴⁰

¹¹³⁰ <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>

¹¹³¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hobMANfCoBQ> ; <https://jewishcurrents.org/the-campaign-to-abolish-unrwa>

¹¹³² <https://www.kikar.co.il/israel-news/sa7idg> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-11/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-2dbc-d468-a9ff-2fbdabaf0000>

¹¹³³ <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>

¹¹³⁴ <https://www.msf.org/israeli-proposal-designate-unrwa-terrorist-organisation-outrageous>

¹¹³⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-24/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-1017-d361-a3ef-52f798500000>

¹¹³⁶ <https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are/frequently-asked-questions> [under oversight of UNRWA spending]; https://youtu.be/LA_xtBh3eLw?si=DXUkq3gct46VbEgO&t=445

¹¹³⁷ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-press-release-26feb2024/> ; <https://jewishcurrents.org/the-campaign-to-abolish-unrwa>

¹¹³⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/10/world/middleeast/unrwa-hamas-gaza.html>

¹¹³⁹

<http://pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/Poll%2091%20English%20press%20release%2020%20March%202024.pdf> (pp. 7-8); <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/980>

¹¹⁴⁰ 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

Early during the war, Israel had publicly disputed the Palestinian death toll, claiming that it was exaggerated and unrealistic. Here too the media played a major role in propagating this claim, planting the seeds of doubt in the minds of many. Until today, the media retains these doubts, often by mentioning that Palestinian casualties are reported by, e.g. the “*Hamas-led Ministry of Health in Gaza*” (emphasis mine). The doubts reached as high as US President Joe Biden, who publicly doubted the number of casualties in a well-covered speech on Oct. 25 in which he stated he had “no confidence” in these numbers.¹¹⁴¹ 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 tank groups.¹¹⁴²

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.¹¹⁴³ To the best of my knowledge, nobody, including Israel who holds the population registry for Gaza, has doubted the veracity of this list.¹¹⁴⁴ Subsequently, Biden himself apologized for casting public doubt on the Palestinian death toll.¹¹⁴⁵ 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.¹¹⁴⁶ Although several experts and observers quickly refuted it as a case of shoddy statistics,¹¹⁴⁷ a series of Israeli media outlets (as well as AIPAC) attempted to boost this message without any criticism to sow doubt.¹¹⁴⁸

both my methodology while also presenting another case of media bias, propaganda and their lingering effects throughout the war.

¹¹⁴¹ <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-WXQUdN2EwX9EZO3lhziq>

¹¹⁴² <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/2019116031839/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.

¹¹⁴³ <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/10/this-is-a-list-of-the-names-of-more-than-6000-palestinians-that-israel-has-killed-in-gaza/>

¹¹⁴⁴ <https://theintercept.com/2023/10/31/gaza-death-palestine-health-ministry/>

¹¹⁴⁵ <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>

¹¹⁴⁶ <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/how-gaza-health-ministry-fakes-casualty-numbers/>

¹¹⁴⁷ 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/BallouxFrancois/status/1769476779234721915>

¹¹⁴⁸ <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->

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).¹¹⁴⁹ 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).¹¹⁵⁰ Although the “halving” narrative was soon refuted by the Deputy Spokesperson for the UN’s Secretary-General as well as several media outlets,¹¹⁵¹ the information warfare damage has been done.¹¹⁵²

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.¹¹⁵³

<https://www.jns.org/hamas-fakes-casualty-figures-the-numbers-are-not-real/> ; <https://twitter.com/AIPAC/status/1769387362289655835>

¹¹⁴⁹ <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>

¹¹⁵⁰ <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-children-killed-previously-reported> . 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/>

¹¹⁵¹ <https://x.com/marcowenjones/status/1790086787764715922> ; <https://www.newsweek.com/fact-check-did-un-halve-gaza-death-toll-1900325>

¹¹⁵² For example: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2024/05/gaza-death-count/678400/>

¹¹⁵³ 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.wsj.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/1FAIpQLScndnMojlJoflfSPTD25uqkZSzUH--G05AMwcbbyJB42bNQcw/viewform>)

Several serious media outlets have accepted the Gaza death count¹¹⁵⁴ and declared that “the figure is widely viewed as the most reliable one available”.¹¹⁵⁵ 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.¹¹⁵⁶ 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)¹¹⁵⁷ and to *NPR* (a report on the death count, unpublished).¹¹⁵⁸ 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.”¹¹⁵⁹ In late April, both a UN official and IDF military officials agreed that the number is reliable.¹¹⁶⁰

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.¹¹⁶¹ 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.¹¹⁶² This has been confirmed by the *Wall Street Journal*.¹¹⁶³ Israel’s Prime Minister himself has claimed in an interview that Israel has killed 13,000 Hamas militants (see below on this number) and that 1-1.5 civilians died for each militant, indicating a total Palestinian death count of 26,000-32,500 as of March 10.¹¹⁶⁴ This range includes the Palestinian death count the next day, 31,112.¹¹⁶⁵ 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).¹¹⁶⁶ In late April, IDF officials estimated that the death toll was around 36,000 (the Ministry estimate was more than 34,000).¹¹⁶⁷ 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).¹¹⁶⁸

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

¹¹⁵⁴ <https://time.com/6909636/gaza-death-toll/>

¹¹⁵⁵ <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/29/1234159514/gaza-death-toll-30000-palestinians-israel-hamas-war>

¹¹⁵⁶ [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)

¹¹⁵⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NICzT9_YEgY

¹¹⁵⁸ <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/29/1234159514/gaza-death-toll-30000-palestinians-israel-hamas-war>

¹¹⁵⁹ <https://time.com/6909636/gaza-death-toll/>

¹¹⁶⁰ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694>

¹¹⁶¹ <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/25/1208577490/biden-says-hes-worried-about-civilian-deaths-in-gaza-but-questions-death-toll-st>

¹¹⁶² <https://www.mekomit.co.il/הצבא-בדק-ומצא-שדיווחי-ההרוגים-במשד-הב/>

¹¹⁶³ <https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/u-s-and-israels-unprecedented-intelligence-sharing-draws-criticism-a85979b4>

¹¹⁶⁴ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israels-netanyahu-says-he-will-defy-bidens-red-line-and-invade-rafah/>

¹¹⁶⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-136>

¹¹⁶⁶ <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>

¹¹⁶⁷ <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.

¹¹⁶⁸ <https://www.barrons.com/news/netanyahu-hamas-fighters-comprise-almost-half-gaza-s-death-toll-42cfe029>

tolls have been negligible. Thus for example, for the 2014 Operation Protective Edge, Israel officially estimated 2,125 Palestinian deaths¹¹⁶⁹ whereas the Palestinian Ministry of Health counted 2,310 Palestinian deaths¹¹⁷⁰ (the UN Human Rights Committee's count reached 2,251¹¹⁷¹). 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.¹¹⁷² The death toll does not include more than 10,000 people missing under the rubble.¹¹⁷³ Gaza's own electronic system for counting the dead was disrupted already on Nov. 12.¹¹⁷⁴ By April there were clear indications that the Ministry was unable to reach many of the dead.¹¹⁷⁵

Estimates of Hamas militant deaths by Israelis are often exaggerated, as is natural and unsurprising in military engagements on both sides.¹¹⁷⁶ 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".¹¹⁷⁷ The overall Palestinian count back then was only 9,770.¹¹⁷⁸ The exaggerations on the Israeli side have been strongly suggested, for example, by a BBC fact checking analysis of all IDF videos.¹¹⁷⁹

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 propaganda campaign during the beginning of the war, and the tenacity of Israel's information war that continues to be waged as of writing.

¹¹⁶⁹ <https://mfa.gov.il/ProtectiveEdge/Documents/PalestinianFatalities.pdf>

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<https://web.archive.org/web/2015011023729/http://www.maannnews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=751290>

¹¹⁷¹ http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIGaza/A_HRC_CRP_4.doc

¹¹⁷² <https://twitter.com/BallouxFrancois/status/1743019663913537943>

¹¹⁷³ <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>

¹¹⁷⁴ <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/29/1234159514/gaza-death-toll-30000-palestinians-israel-hamas-war>

¹¹⁷⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694>

¹¹⁷⁶ 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.

¹¹⁷⁷ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/thpkoegl5

¹¹⁷⁸ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-death-toll-numbers-injured-5c9dc40bec95a8408c83f3c2fb759da0>

¹¹⁷⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68387864>

US involvement in the war

Last updated: June 18, 2024

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).¹¹⁸⁰ 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).¹¹⁸¹ Over the decade before the war (2013-2022), 68% of Israel’s weapon imports came from the US.¹¹⁸²

The US began providing military support to Israel within hours of the Oct. 7 attack. In the next ten days, the US sent five shipments of military aid to Israel.¹¹⁸³ 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.¹¹⁸⁴ 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

¹¹⁸⁰ <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>

¹¹⁸¹ <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>

¹¹⁸² <https://theconversation.com/where-do-israel-and-hamas-get-their-weapons-220762>

¹¹⁸³ <https://web.archive.org/web/2023110173047/https://time.com/6325247/us-military-assistance-israel/> ; for example: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-10-10/boeing-spied-1-000-smart-bombs-to-israel-after-the-hamas-attacks>

¹¹⁸⁴ <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>

pound bombs, as well as over 57,000 155mm artillery shells¹¹⁸⁵ (Israel used over 100,000 artillery shells in less than two months of fighting).¹¹⁸⁶ Additional munitions requested include kamikaze drones, dive-bombing drones, missiles, rockets and mortar rounds.¹¹⁸⁷ Subsequent months saw more sales of the same and similar items.¹¹⁸⁸

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.¹¹⁸⁹ Only two approved sales to Israel had been made public by that point.¹¹⁹⁰ At the same time, officials claimed there were 600 active cases of potential military transfer or sales to Israel, worth more than \$23 billion.¹¹⁹¹ 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.¹¹⁹² In early April, the US administration authorized the transfer of over 2,000 smaller bombs (five-hundred pounds or smaller) to Israel.¹¹⁹³

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 the US's own supplies.¹¹⁹⁴ The US continued selling weapons to Israel during April, considering a deal of more than \$18 billion to sell up to 50 fighter jets.¹¹⁹⁵ 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).¹¹⁹⁶ 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).¹¹⁹⁷ Almost in parallel,

¹¹⁸⁵ <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>

¹¹⁸⁶ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-775523>

¹¹⁸⁷ <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>

¹¹⁸⁸ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-plans-to-send-weapons-to-israel-amid-biden-push-for-cease-fire-deal-184e75bc>

¹¹⁸⁹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/how-the-u-s-arms-pipeline-to-israel-avoids-public-disclosure-e238de75>

¹¹⁹⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/03/06/us-weapons-israel-gaza/>

¹¹⁹¹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/how-the-u-s-arms-pipeline-to-israel-avoids-public-disclosure-e238de75>

¹¹⁹² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/03/29/us-weapons-israel-gaza-war/> .

These sales had been approved years before.

¹¹⁹³ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/04/politics/us-israel-bombs-transfer/index.html>

¹¹⁹⁴ <https://www.wsj.com/world/how-the-u-s-arms-pipeline-to-israel-avoids-public-disclosure-e238de75>

¹¹⁹⁵ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/01/politics/biden-administration-f15-fighter-jets-israel/index.html>

¹¹⁹⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-house-vote-long-awaited-95-billion-ukraine-israel-aid-package-2024-04-20/>

¹¹⁹⁷ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-delays-sending-precision-weapons-to-israel-253f12fo>

however, it continued to push existing deals – including one worth over \$1 billion – through the pipeline.¹¹⁹⁸

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.¹¹⁹⁹ Other assets, such as some of the US' most powerful missile defense systems were also deployed to the Middle East.¹²⁰⁰ In mid October, the US prepared about 2,000 US troops for possible deployment to Israel.¹²⁰¹ 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 from Israel (more than 600,000 people).¹²⁰² In addition, the US sent a general and several other officers to help advise Israel's military leadership in the war.¹²⁰³

Some US forces operated within Israel. At least two US bases are known within Israel.¹²⁰⁴ 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.¹²⁰⁵ There were also Delta Force troops in Israel early in the war.¹²⁰⁶ 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.¹²⁰⁷ Other personnel involved in the war and in Israel include CIA officers, FBI agents, and DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency) personnel.¹²⁰⁸ 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”.¹²⁰⁹

¹¹⁹⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r1wdjobma> ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/14/us/politics/biden-arms-sale-israel.html>

¹¹⁹⁹ <https://web.archive.org/web/2023110173047/https://time.com/6325247/us-military-assistance-israel/>

¹²⁰⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/22/world/middleeast/patriot-israel-hamas-iran-gaza-eisenhower-pentagon.html>

¹²⁰¹ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/10/16/politics/us-marines-pentagon-israel/index.html>

¹²⁰² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/10/23/us-evacuation-plans-israel-lebanon-hamas-war/>

¹²⁰³ <https://www.axios.com/2023/10/23/israel-gaza-war-marine-general-ground-operation>

¹²⁰⁴ <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/>

¹²⁰⁵ <https://theintercept.com/2023/12/11/tiktok-military-contractor-recruiting-israel/>

¹²⁰⁶ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/us/news/2023/10/20/white-house-shares-identities-secret-special-ops-israel/>

¹²⁰⁷ <https://web.archive.org/web/2023110173047/https://time.com/6325247/us-military-assistance-israel/> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/middleeast/gaza-hostage-rescues-israel.html>

¹²⁰⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/06/14/us-israel-intelligence-cia-hostages/>

¹²⁰⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/06/14/us-israel-intelligence-cia-hostages/>

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.¹²¹⁰ When the Houthis began attacking Israeli-affiliated ships and ships sailing to Israel,¹²¹¹ the US began to bomb them as well, with strikes beginning in mid January and continuing as of the writing of this document.¹²¹² American support for Israel during the war led to over 170 attacks against US bases in Iraq and Syria.¹²¹³ After three US service members were killed in an attack on a base in or near Jordan in late January,¹²¹⁴ 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.¹²¹⁵

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).¹²¹⁶ After allegedly shooting down more than half of the Iranian missiles and drones of what was one of the largest drone strikes in history,¹²¹⁷ the US quickly declared that it would not join Israel in counterattacking Iran.¹²¹⁸ As such, it likely played an important role in deescalating the subsequent immediate tensions between Israel and Iran.

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

¹²¹⁰ <https://abcnews.go.com/International/security-incident-involving-us-navy-destroyer-red-sea/story?id=104147141>

¹²¹¹ For example <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/houthi-missile-drone-attack-red-sea-shipping-vessels-uss-gravelly-dwight-eisenhower/>

¹²¹² <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/>

¹²¹³ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-january-28-2024>

¹²¹⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/29/us/politics/us-troops-drone-attack-jordan-iran.html>

¹²¹⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/us-strike-iraq-milita.html>

¹²¹⁶ <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>

¹²¹⁷ <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-portends-for-the-future-of-warfare/>

¹²¹⁸ <https://www.axios.com/2024/04/14/biden-netanyahu-iran-israel-us-wont-support>

violence/bloodshed” and “restoring calm”.¹²¹⁹ 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.¹²²⁰ 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).¹²²¹ 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).¹²²² 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).¹²²³ 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).¹²²⁴ 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 applaud in hope that the war was about to end.¹²²⁵ Nonetheless, the US quickly declared that the resolution was not binding.¹²²⁶ This resolution had no impact.

The US was also involved in stopping other motions from moving forward.¹²²⁷ Therefore, for example, it vetoed the Palestinian request for full UN membership in mid April (12 countries in favor, the US against, 2 abstentions).¹²²⁸ 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”).¹²²⁹ 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.¹²³⁰ In June the US made more serious efforts 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

¹²¹⁹ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/state-department-internal-emails-gaza-israel_n_65296395e4boa304ff6ff95d

¹²²⁰ <https://twitter.com/RobbieGramer/status/1711366571665342603>

¹²²¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142507>

¹²²² <https://www.reuters.com/world/un-overwhelmingly-calls-aid-truce-between-israel-hamas-2023-10-27/>

¹²²³ https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-12-08-23/h_a7ad699a7e1acbc51205feb2276cdf29

¹²²⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/20/us-vetoes-un-resolution-ceasefire-israel-gaza>

¹²²⁵ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147951>;

<https://twitter.com/tparsi/status/1772281999358648553>

¹²²⁶ <https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1772315270880866802> ;

https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/us-says-ceasefire-resolution-non-binding-less-influential-security-council-members-object/ ;

¹²²⁷ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-blocks-security-council-motion-blaming-israel-for-deadly-gaza-aid-convoy-incident/>

¹²²⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/apr/18/us-veto-palestine-membership-request-united-nations-council>

¹²²⁹ <https://x.com/halalflow/status/1792944530389393422>

¹²³⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/22/world/middleeast/us-cease-fire-resolution-vetoes.html>

Prime Minister, Israel announced to the US that it will punish the Palestinian Authority, potentially causing its collapse.¹²³¹ 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.").¹²³²

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".¹²³³ The US administration followed by signaling that it will censure the ICC with sanctions,¹²³⁴ 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.¹²³⁵

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 Israel 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.¹²³⁶ 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".¹²³⁷ 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.¹²³⁸

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

¹²³¹ <https://www.axios.com/2024/05/01/us-israel-palestinian-authority-icc-arrest-warrant>

¹²³² <https://twitter.com/mehdirhasan/status/1787503022299332951>. 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>

¹²³³ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/live/2024/may/20/biden-trump-democrats-immigration-latest>

¹²³⁴ <https://www.ft.com/content/6700a246-e0cd-49d8-b5ef-d2379e86290f>

¹²³⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/jun/04/us-house-icc-sanctions-netanyahu-?>

¹²³⁶ <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2024/01/04/us-hasnt-formally-assessed-if-israel-violating-human-rights-00133799>

¹²³⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/blinken-says-daily-toll-gaza-too-high-israel-genocide-charge-meritless-2024-01-09>

¹²³⁸ <https://www.propublica.org/article/israel-gaza-blinken-leahy-sanctions-human-rights-violations?taid=662030f9d453a4000uf6bcc>

intentionally low and does not require proof or clear and convincing evidence.¹²³⁹ Israel, however, has long been treated leniently on this issue.¹²⁴⁰ 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”).¹²⁴¹ A former director of the State Department office responsible for Leahy laws vetting said the same.¹²⁴² 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.¹²⁴³

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.¹²⁴⁴ Some officials and lawmakers expressed the same concerns.¹²⁴⁵ As noted above, there were no indications that the US limited its intelligence sharing with Israel in response.¹²⁴⁶

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.¹²⁴⁷ On April 20 (the same day the US House voted to pass \$26 billion in Emergency Israel Aid),¹²⁴⁸ 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,¹²⁴⁹ 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).¹²⁵⁰ 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

¹²³⁹ <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

¹²⁴⁰ <https://www.propublica.org/article/israel-gaza-blinken-leahy-sanctions-human-rights-violations?taid=662030f9d453a40001f6bcc>

¹²⁴¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/18/us-supply-weapons-israel-alleged-abuses-human-rights>

¹²⁴² <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

¹²⁴³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/18/us-supply-weapons-israel-alleged-abuses-human-rights> ; <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

¹²⁴⁴ <https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/u-s-and-israels-unprecedented-intelligence-sharing-draws-criticism-a85979b4>

¹²⁴⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/06/14/us-israel-intelligence-cia-hostages/>

¹²⁴⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/06/14/us-israel-intelligence-cia-hostages/>

¹²⁴⁷ <https://www.propublica.org/article/israel-gaza-blinken-leahy-sanctions-human-rights-violations>

¹²⁴⁸ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/house-overwhelmingly-passes-26-billion-aid-israel-gaza-tensions-iran-escalate>

¹²⁴⁹ <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

¹²⁵⁰ <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/>

“remediation” efforts.¹²⁵¹ The same day that the *Axios* scoop was released, the Israeli Prime Minister responded with outrage against 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”).¹²⁵² The story drew much attention for a few days,¹²⁵³ 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 forward rather than sanctions.¹²⁵⁴ A former director of the State Department office responsible for Leahy vetting later said this approach was unprecedentedly lenient.¹²⁵⁵

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.¹²⁵⁶ 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.¹²⁵⁷ 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.¹²⁵⁸ 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.¹²⁵⁹ An independent task force published a detailed account that strongly disputed the conclusions of the report.¹²⁶⁰

¹²⁵¹ <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>

¹²⁵² <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-fdob-d140-a3ee-fddf9a1c0000> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/21/us-poised-impose-sanctions-israel-defense-force-netzah-yehuda-battalion>

¹²⁵³ <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>

¹²⁵⁴ <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/biden-sanction-israeli-military-units-accused-human-rights/story?id=109651562>

¹²⁵⁵ <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

¹²⁵⁶ <https://www.devex.com/news/exclusive-usaid-officials-say-israel-breached-us-directive-on-gaza-aid-107545>

¹²⁵⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/some-us-officials-say-internal-memo-israel-may-be-violating-international-law-2024-04-27/>

¹²⁵⁸ <https://theintercept.com/2024/05/10/israel-human-rights-gaza-report/>

¹²⁵⁹ <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>

¹²⁶⁰ <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>

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.¹²⁶¹

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.¹²⁶² 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.¹²⁶³ 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.¹²⁶⁴ Although at first Israeli banks blocked the seven settlers from using their personal and business bank accounts,¹²⁶⁵ 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 claimed the ease of sanctions was consistent across other sanctions programs).¹²⁶⁶ 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.¹²⁶⁷ A fourth round of sanctions in mid June was directed at a settler organization that attacked humanitarian aid convoys to Gaza.¹²⁶⁸ The sanctions themselves, especially in their moderated version, remain limited in scale and ineffective.¹²⁶⁹ The settlers themselves, as well as local rights groups and Palestinians in the West Bank, described the sanctions as having minimal impact.¹²⁷⁰ The few individuals involved so far suggests that the US administration used the sanctions in an 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.

¹²⁶¹ <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

¹²⁶² <https://apnews.com/article/biden-west-bank-israeli-settlers-palestinians-80f0e6be6f6a7bb75dc86360ac2fa6ce>

¹²⁶³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-68173904>

¹²⁶⁴ <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/14/us-settler-sanctions-west-bank>

¹²⁶⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-banks-heed-us-anti-settler-sanctions-far-right-ministers-object-2024-02-05/>

¹²⁶⁶ <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>

¹²⁶⁷ <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>

¹²⁶⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-impose-sanctions-israeli-group-that-attacked-gaza-aid-2024-06-14/>

¹²⁶⁹ <https://jacobin.com/2024/03/biden-sanctions-israeli-settlers-palestine>

¹²⁷⁰ <https://apnews.com/article/us-sanctions-israeli-settlers-west-bank-palestinians-354f8boa44b70c25bfo13614b4775900> ; 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>

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".¹²⁷¹ 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."¹²⁷²

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.¹²⁷³ Biden expressed confidence that "Israel is going to act under the measure... the rules of war" and that "the innocents in Gaza [would] be able to have access to medicine and food and water",¹²⁷⁴ and pressed Netanyahu to get more humanitarian aid into Gaza.¹²⁷⁵ 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.¹²⁷⁶ 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.¹²⁷⁷ 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.

¹²⁷¹ <https://www.c-span.org/video/?530992-1/president-biden-remarks-situation-israel>

¹²⁷² <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>

¹²⁷³ <https://www.reuters.com/world/behind-bidens-shift-israel-hamas-war-gaza-deaths-international-pressure-2023-10-27/>

¹²⁷⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/15/politics/biden-60-minutes-interview-gaza-israel/index.html>

¹²⁷⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/30/politics/biden-netanyahu-aid-gaza/index.html>

¹²⁷⁶ <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.

¹²⁷⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/behind-bidens-shift-israel-hamas-war-gaza-deaths-international-pressure-2023-10-27/>

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.¹²⁷⁸ Biden and his top advisers warned Israel that international backlash would soon erode support for Israel with dire consequences to the IDF and Israel.¹²⁷⁹ The US President reiterated that the two-state solution was the only way to resolve the broader conflict,¹²⁸⁰ said that al-Shifa hospital “must be protected” in the context of the first Israeli raid on it in November,¹²⁸¹ and also noted that extremist settlers in the West Bank must be held accountable for their violent acts.¹²⁸² Blinken criticized Israel for not doing enough to minimize harm to civilians in Gaza, stating that “far too many” Palestinians have died and suffered.¹²⁸³ He even compared the Palestinian children he saw pulled from the wreckage to his own children, because “how can we not?”¹²⁸⁴ 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.¹²⁸⁵ Despite these warnings, the US did not establish any red lines for Israel.¹²⁸⁶

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”.¹²⁸⁷ Blinken reiterated the need for Israel to protect civilians and sustain humanitarian assistance,¹²⁸⁸ and pointed out the gap between Israel’s “declared intentions to protect civilians [sic] and the mounting casualties seen on the ground”.¹²⁸⁹ He added that “there must be no enduring internal displacement” in the Strip.¹²⁹⁰ At meetings in one of his visits to Israel, Blinken clarified that Israel would have until early January to finish its ground operation,¹²⁹¹ although Israel’s army chief stated that the war will continue for “many more

¹²⁷⁸ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-11-03/blinken-shifts-israel-message-as-backlash-grows-over-gaza-deaths>

¹²⁷⁹ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/02/politics/biden-administration-warning-israel-gaza-civilians/index.html>

¹²⁸⁰ <https://apnews.com/article/biden-revitalized-palestinian-authority-israel-hamas-war-bf8defe81079d6e6371f228157f9be10>

¹²⁸¹ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/watch-al-shifa-hospital-in-gaza-must-be-protected-biden-says>

¹²⁸² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/11/06/readout-of-president-bidens-call-with-prime-minister-netanyahu-of-israel-8/>

¹²⁸³ <https://apnews.com/article/blinken-israel-gaza-hamas-850cf28c13d8df087f75c0536462b604>

¹²⁸⁴ <https://x.com/Channel4News/status/1720452839435038986>

¹²⁸⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/nov/14/biden-letter-israel-gaza-war-ceasefire>

¹²⁸⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/02/politics/biden-administration-warning-israel-gaza-civilians/index.html>

¹²⁸⁷ <https://apnews.com/article/biden-israel-hamas-oct-7-44c4229d4c1270d9cfa484b664a22071>

¹²⁸⁸ <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/>

¹²⁸⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/08/us-israel-hamas-war-gaza-civilian-protection-anthony-blinken>

¹²⁹⁰ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/blinken-said-to-warn-war-cabinet-it-may-not-have-months-to-topple-hamas/>

¹²⁹¹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/us-pressures-israel-to-end-war-against-hamas-in-a-month-3vzb52wfg>

months”.¹²⁹² Blinken also said that bringing the war to an end “as quickly as possible” was a top priority for the US administration.¹²⁹³

In January, both Biden and Blinken attempted to discuss regional peace within the framework of the two state solution,¹²⁹⁴ and even reviewed the options for the US to recognize a Palestinian state after the war.¹²⁹⁵ 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.¹²⁹⁶ 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.¹²⁹⁷ Blinken stated that Palestinians must be allowed to return to their homes in Gaza and must not be displaced from the Gaza Strip.¹²⁹⁸ On a different occasion he described the conflict as “gutwrenching” and that “the suffering breaks my heart”.¹²⁹⁹

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”.¹³⁰⁰ 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.”¹³⁰¹ 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”.¹³⁰² At the same time, three US officials admitted that the US will not punish Israel if it launches such a military campaign into Rafah.¹³⁰³ 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”.¹³⁰⁴ 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.¹³⁰⁵ Perhaps in response, Blinken stated that Israel’s expansion of settlements in the West Bank

¹²⁹² <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67824421>

¹²⁹³ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/biden-presses-netanyahu-on-protecting-gaza-civilians-discusses-phasing-of-war/>

¹²⁹⁴ <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/>

¹²⁹⁵ <https://www.axios.com/2024/01/31/palestine-statehood-biden-israel-gaza-war>

¹²⁹⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/1/19/israels-war-on-gaza-live-us-support-for-israel-ironclad-despite-rebuff?update=2635028>

¹²⁹⁷ <https://www.axios.com/2024/01/14/biden-netanyahu-israel-gaza-war-tensions> ;

<https://www.axios.com/2024/01/26/biden-netanyahu-israel-amas-war-gaza-timetable>

¹²⁹⁸ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/09/politics/blinken-israel-gaza-war-talks/index.html>

¹²⁹⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/blinken-says-us-demand-he-mourns-gutwrenching-scenes-gaza-2024-01-17/>

¹³⁰⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/02/08/biden-israel-gaza-speech-netanyahu/>

¹³⁰¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/02/08/biden-israel-gaza-speech-netanyahu/>

¹³⁰² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/2/11/israels-war-on-gaza-live-leaders-warn-of-catastrophe-if-rafah-invaded?update=2700975>

¹³⁰³ <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2024/02/13/us-wont-punish-israel-for-rafah-op-that-doesnt-protect-civilians-00141013>

¹³⁰⁴ <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-a-press-availability-46/>

¹³⁰⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/blinken-netanyahu-israel-amas-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>

was “inconsistent with international law”, returning to US policy before the Trump administration.¹³⁰⁶

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”.¹³⁰⁷ To date no such ceasefire has materialized. As the US admitted that the entire population of Gaza was experiencing “severe levels of acute food insecurity”,¹³⁰⁸ the US began airdropping aid into Gaza and began work on a temporary pier (see above for both).¹³⁰⁹ In mid March, the US Senate Majority Leader criticized Netanyahu, declaring that he was “a major obstacle to peace” that “lost his way”.¹³¹⁰ Biden later praised the “good” speech.¹³¹¹ Biden himself said that Netanyahu was “hurting Israel more than helping Israel”,¹³¹² and asserted that “Humanitarian assistance cannot be a secondary consideration or a bargaining chip... Protecting and saving innocent lives has to be a priority”.¹³¹³ 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.¹³¹⁴ 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”.¹³¹⁵ Biden’s Vice President Harris said that the US did not rule out any action against Israel if it attacks Rafah.¹³¹⁶ Netanyahu, however, declared that if the US will not support an attack on Rafah, “we’ll do it by ourselves”.¹³¹⁷

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”.¹³¹⁸ 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.¹³¹⁹ Biden also said that Netanyahu was

¹³⁰⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/23/blinken-oppose-new-israeli-settlements>

¹³⁰⁷ <https://x.com/KamalaHarris/status/1764409522553082344>

¹³⁰⁸ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/blinken-says-all-of-gaza-facing-unprecedented-food-insecurity/>

¹³⁰⁹ <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/>

¹³¹⁰ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/biden-schumer-speech-netanyahu-gaza/>

¹³¹¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/18/politics/joe-biden-netanyahu-phone-call/index.html>

¹³¹² <https://apnews.com/article/biden-netanyahu-red-line-frustration-gaza-of23fa8d02288c1b9d862ddc4035872e>

¹³¹³ <https://time.com/6898685/biden-israel-pressure-gaza-aid-pier-in-state-of-the-union/>

¹³¹⁴ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/how-israel-avoided-bidens-red-line-ad715144>

¹³¹⁵ <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>

¹³¹⁶ <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/harris-us-ruled-consequences-israel-invades-rafah/story?id=108431225>

¹³¹⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/22/israel-blinken-hamas-doha-negotiations/>

¹³¹⁸ <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/>

¹³¹⁹ <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-3591fb5f82b22cf8e5d1060fccaef15> ; <https://www.axios.com/2024/04/05/biden-netanyahu-us-support-israel>

making a “mistake” in his approach to Gaza.¹³²⁰ Blinken warned that Israel risked becoming indistinguishable from Hamas if it didn’t protect Gazan civilians.¹³²¹ 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).¹³²² 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).¹³²³ 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.¹³²⁴

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 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.”¹³²⁵ 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),¹³²⁶ but a few days later his administration pushed forward a \$1 billion arms sale to Israel.¹³²⁷ In late May, the US administration clarified that it will not change its Israel policy,¹³²⁸ as the Israeli operation in Rafah expanded.¹³²⁹ Furthermore, the bipartisan leadership of the United States House of Representatives and Senate invited Netanyahu to address a Joint Meeting of Congress.¹³³⁰ At the same time, Biden called for a permanent ceasefire, making public an earlier proposal and urging both Israel and Hamas to agree.¹³³¹ In parallel to this inconsistent messaging, the US nonetheless ramped up its critique of Israel. Biden admitted that Israeli forces used US bombs to kill Palestinian civilians,¹³³² and anonymous top officials described

¹³²⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68766592>

¹³²¹ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/blinken-warns-israel-risks-becoming-indistinguishable-from-hamas-if-it-doesnt-protect-gaza-civilians/

¹³²² <https://www.axios.com/2024/04/09/israel-genocide-gaza-us-austin-palestinians>

¹³²³ <https://apnews.com/article/blinken-israel-hamas-war-gaza-saudi-arabia-c0425791dc59e745021d3dd726dc8f09>

¹³²⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/blinken-israel-hamas-war-gaza-saudi-arabia-c0425791dc59e745021d3dd726dc8f09>

¹³²⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/08/politics/joe-biden-interview-cnntv/index.html>

¹³²⁶ <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/sjnzepogr> , 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>

¹³²⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/14/us/politics/biden-arms-sale-israel.html>

¹³²⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-vp-harris-says-israels-deadly-strike-rafah-was-beyond-tragic-2024-05-28/>

¹³²⁹

https://www.democracynow.org/2024/5/30/headlines/israel_seizes_entire_gaza_egypt_border_continues_deadly_invasion_of_rafah

¹³³⁰ <https://x.com/SpeakerJohnson/status/1796628344269623520>

¹³³¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/31/us/politics/biden-israel-remarks-speech.html>

¹³³² <https://theintercept.com/2024/05/10/israel-human-rights-gaza-report/>

Israel's strategy in Gaza as "self-defeating".¹³³³ In response, some Israeli voices attempted to draw links between the US and Hamas based on some of their shared interests,¹³³⁴ while Israel's Minister of National Security declared that "Hamas ❤️ Biden" in a tweet.¹³³⁵

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.¹³³⁶ His statement fitted a CIA assessment that concluded that Netanyahu would defy pressure to define an "end state" for Gaza.¹³³⁷ 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".¹³³⁸ For context, a Palestinian poll found that 51% of the respondents in the Gaza Strip claimed that the Rafah attack specifically displaced them.¹³³⁹

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.¹³⁴⁰ In early May, officials who resigned said they identified an uptick in non-public resignations.¹³⁴¹ According to one of those who resigned publicly, over 24 people may have resigned privately.¹³⁴² 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.¹³⁴³ 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).¹³⁴⁴ Several senior US officials noted in an internal memo that they

¹³³³ <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/05/21/biden-admin-hammering-israel-military-strategy-gaza-00159262>

¹³³⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-05-09/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018f-5d88-d1d4-afcf-fd8aae1d0000>

¹³³⁵ <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1788458123436433783> ; <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-800531>

¹³³⁶ <https://time.com/6984968/joe-biden-transcript-2024-interview/>

¹³³⁷ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/07/politics/cia-netanyahu-assessment/index.html>

¹³³⁸ <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/biden-administration-israel-crossed-red-line-rafah-110739181>

¹³³⁹ <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/980>

¹³⁴⁰ <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>

¹³⁴¹ <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>

¹³⁴² <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/may/30/two-more-us-officials-resign-over-biden-administrations-position-on-gaza-war>

¹³⁴³ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-ivTbqPLjzDpGdamN2LWLia-LLCkgsonDOmgBN3MT-U-3-t5DigIgrc5KORsHfO9nEIuOBdCnD-5tDKX/pub>

¹³⁴⁴ <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-0015488>

doubted the credibility of Israel's assurances on its use of US weapons.¹³⁴⁵ Others anonymously described Biden's policy on Israel as "a blatantly horrific and stupid mistake".¹³⁴⁶

The war has polarized Americans. While support for Israel remained stronger among Republican voters, many polls indicate 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%.¹³⁴⁷ Already in January, 35% of Americans thought that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza (49% Democrats, 18% of Republicans).¹³⁴⁸ The ratio increased in May to 39% (56% Democrats, 23% Republicans).¹³⁴⁹ 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.¹³⁵⁰ 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.¹³⁵¹ In May, 51% of American Jews supported Biden's decision to withhold arms shipments to Israel if it continued its Rafah offensive (see above).¹³⁵² In May, 70% of likely voters supported a permanent ceasefire in Gaza.¹³⁵³ 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.

¹³⁴⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/some-us-officials-say-internal-memo-israel-may-be-violating-international-law-2024-04-27/>

¹³⁴⁶ <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/04/03/biden-israel-strike-aid-workers-gaza-00150356>

¹³⁴⁷ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/642695/majority-disapprove-israeli-action-gaza.aspx>

¹³⁴⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/jan/24/americans-believe-israel-committing-genocide-poll>

¹³⁴⁹ <https://zeteo.com/p/gaza-israel-genocide-poll-ceasefire-us-voters>

¹³⁵⁰ <https://cepr.net/press-release/poll-majority-of-americans-say-biden-should-halt-weapons-shipments-to-israel/>

¹³⁵¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/04/02/younger-americans-stand-out-in-their-views-of-the-israel-hamas-war/>

¹³⁵² <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/article-804548>

¹³⁵³ <https://zeteo.com/p/gaza-israel-genocide-poll-ceasefire-us-voters>

Zoom-in 1: The Second Israeli invasion of al-Shifa hospital (18 March-1 April)¹³⁵⁴

Last updated: June 18, 2024

The second Israeli invasion of al-Shifa hospital in mid-late March stands out as a major yet distinct operation that fits into several of the sections in this document. The following section zooms into this particular event to highlight how this operation reflects the themes discussed above.

In mid-late March, the IDF conducted another military operation in the al-Shifa hospital.¹³⁵⁵ Early reports from within the Strip asserted that the IDF had killed or executed some 150 young men.¹³⁵⁶ An NGO received testimonies of systematic crimes conducted that included deliberate killings and extrajudicial executions, as well as arbitrary detention of some 400 individuals and torturing of local residents and patients.¹³⁵⁷ After the IDF released a 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.¹³⁵⁸ Several doctors and other health practitioners have been killed or executed,¹³⁵⁹ including a pharmacist who was among those executed in front of patients.¹³⁶⁰ People who escaped provide similar testimonies,¹³⁶¹ 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.¹³⁶² Footage of released detainees shows them in their underwear.¹³⁶³ Some of the released detainees were in wheelchairs.¹³⁶⁴ An adjacent hospital to al-Shifa (al-Helu) was bombed in the operation, hitting patient rooms as well.¹³⁶⁵ 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.¹³⁶⁶ People who did not evacuate when ordered were regarded as suspects and killed.¹³⁶⁷

¹³⁵⁴ 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=IlerY4MqkQc>

¹³⁵⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/24/world/middleeast/al-shifa-hospital-gaza-israel.html>

¹³⁵⁶ <https://twitter.com/HossamShabat/status/1770813640251195394> ; the IDF claimed these were “terrorists”, <https://twitter.com/ClubReel/status/1770822632725700746>

¹³⁵⁷ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6236>

¹³⁵⁸ <https://twitter.com/HCWWatch/status/1771307184145502250>

¹³⁵⁹ <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>

¹³⁶⁰ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1771370478906822877>

¹³⁶¹ 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>

¹³⁶² <https://twitter.com/trhxianl/status/1771648909753864280>

¹³⁶³ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771565663535960309>

¹³⁶⁴ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771565663535960309>

¹³⁶⁵ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771495855587000429>

¹³⁶⁶ <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> ;

Other eyewitnesses stated that they were not able to move and get food and water for days.¹³⁶⁸ An NGO's initial research found evidence for the execution of 13 children,¹³⁶⁹ 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.¹³⁷⁰ Several consistent testimonies also reveal that the IDF used civilians as human shields.¹³⁷¹

Israeli footage from al-Shifa revealed that the IDF has made the hospital into a makeshift center of operations, with widespread destruction and tied, blindfolded and placed detained Palestinians along its corridors.¹³⁷² Civilians living in the vicinity of al-Shifa hospital were left without food and water for days. According to one eyewitness, she was among 65 families that the IDF forced out of their building. The IDF then burned their clothes as well as the building in which they lived; other buildings and civilians were allegedly burned as well.¹³⁷³ 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.¹³⁷⁴ Doctors who were in al-Shifa during the siege reported on their extreme experiences.¹³⁷⁵ At least 22 patients died due to lack of oxygen, food and water.¹³⁷⁶

After the IDF finally left al-Shifa, hundreds of corpses were found amidst widespread destruction of and in the hospital.¹³⁷⁷ 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.¹³⁷⁸ An independent research agency based in academia found evidence that the bodies of those killed during this invasion were bulldozed.¹³⁷⁹

<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>

¹³⁶⁷ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/04/come-out-you-animals-how-the-massacre-at-al-shifa-hospital-happened>

¹³⁶⁸ <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>

¹³⁶⁹ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6246/In-a-week,-Israeli-army-executes-13-children-in-and-near-Al-Shifa-Hospital>

¹³⁷⁰ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6254/Al-Shifa-Medical-Complex-Witnesses-One-of-the-Largest-Massacres-in-Palestinian-History>

¹³⁷¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-israeli-army-uses-palestinian-civilians-human-shields-its-operation-shifa-medical-complex-and-its-vicinity-enar>

¹³⁷² <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1772757426887926144>

¹³⁷³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mN1SRUxoR8>

¹³⁷⁴ <https://twitter.com/PHRIIsrael/status/1771499307478229244> ; also <https://twitter.com/DrTedros/status/1771276290315653372>

¹³⁷⁵ <https://twitter.com/DrMadsGilbert/status/1774371251881984169>

¹³⁷⁶ <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>

¹³⁷⁷ A few here, and see also the next footnote: <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1777321386991612112> ; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1777299876885241930> ; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1777306768802038012> ; <https://twitter.com/HossamShabat/status/177726280084963393>

¹³⁷⁸ <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> ;

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.¹³⁸⁰ 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.¹³⁸¹ Despite the large amount of contrary evidence, the IDF Chief of the General Staff claimed that not a single medical person or local patient was harmed.¹³⁸² Israel's former Prime Minister also claimed that not a single civilian was killed, "unprecedented in urban warfare".¹³⁸³

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.¹³⁸⁴ 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 dozen".¹³⁸⁵ 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.¹³⁸⁶

many images and videos at the following:

<https://twitter.com/HossamShabat/status/1774741588226273379> ;

<https://twitter.com/KufiyyaPS/status/1774751378377773162> ;

<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>

¹³⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/ForensicArchi/status/1778106742737375471>

¹³⁸⁰ <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>

¹³⁸¹ <https://twitter.com/DrMadsGilbert/status/1775300379967729675>

¹³⁸² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymd23pka>

¹³⁸³ <https://twitter.com/naftalibennett/status/1774663364314091870>

¹³⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1774816428916412574> ; the number was "over 200" in

Israeli media: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymd23pka>

¹³⁸⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/01/gaza-al-shifa-hospital-israel/>

¹³⁸⁶ <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)

Last updated: June 18, 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.¹³⁸⁷ *The Guardian* described these protests as “perhaps the most significant student movement since the anti-Vietnam campus protests of the late 1960s”.¹³⁸⁸ 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.¹³⁸⁹ 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.¹³⁹⁰

The protests were mainly an elite college phenomenon,¹³⁹¹ 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.¹³⁹² 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

¹³⁸⁷ 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/>

¹³⁸⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/28/us-student-protests-gaza-israel>

¹³⁸⁹ Graph at: <https://theconversation.com/media-coverage-of-campus-protests-tends-to-focus-on-the-spectacle-rather-than-the-substance-229172>

¹³⁹⁰ For student demands, organized per university, see <https://students4gaza.directory/>

¹³⁹¹ <https://washingtonmonthly.com/2024/05/24/are-gaza-protests-happening-mostly-at-elite-colleges/>

¹³⁹² <https://washingtonmonthly.com/2024/05/24/are-gaza-protests-happening-mostly-at-elite-colleges/>

that were sent to clear encampments. Property damage was found in two cases.¹³⁹³ Serious clashes between protestors on both sides took place only in UCLA, where video evidence showed pro-Israeli counterprotestors attacking the encampment.¹³⁹⁴ Police waited for a few hours before separating both sides, resulting in dozens of injuries among protestors in the Gaza encampment.¹³⁹⁵

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.¹³⁹⁶ At least two university presidents later lost their jobs as a result.¹³⁹⁷ Prominent donors used their donations to apply pressure to universities, publicly or privately threatening and sometimes actually pulling their support.¹³⁹⁸ 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 protestors in Columbia.¹³⁹⁹ Such pressure was likely felt within universities 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

¹³⁹³ <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-acledd-brief/>

¹³⁹⁴ <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-counterprotestors-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-clash-university-california>. It appears that a single pro-Israeli counter-protester was arrested, <https://forward.com/fast-forward/617536/arrest-in-ucla-encampment-violence-edan-on/>

¹³⁹⁵ <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>

¹³⁹⁶ 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.

¹³⁹⁷ 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>

¹³⁹⁸ <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>

¹³⁹⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2024/05/16/business-leaders-chat-group-eric-adams-columbia-protesters/>

videos from campuses showed heavily armed police forces using rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse protesters.¹⁴⁰⁰ Physical violence was also prevalent, with students and faculty getting beaten up by the police, sometimes on camera.¹⁴⁰¹ As a result, over a month of protests at least 3,025 people were arrested in 61 colleges and universities.¹⁴⁰² Many others were suspended or expelled from their universities. Faculty members were among those arrested as well, sometimes using excessive force.¹⁴⁰³ 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,¹⁴⁰⁴ keeping police on campus,¹⁴⁰⁵ moving ceremonies out of campus, or canceling valedictorian speeches.¹⁴⁰⁶

Some university administrations eventually negotiated with students, sometimes reaching an agreement that fulfilled some student demands.¹⁴⁰⁷ In many other cases, however, universities did not change their policies towards Israel/Gaza. Some universities preferred to resolve the issue by declaring that they would no longer comment on political issues not central to university functions.¹⁴⁰⁸ 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,¹⁴⁰⁹ raising Palestinian flags or symbols or associated signs,¹⁴¹⁰ or demanding the cancellation of graduation ceremony speakers.¹⁴¹¹

Coverage and reactions

- ¹⁴⁰⁰ <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>
- ¹⁴⁰¹ 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/>
- ¹⁴⁰² <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-campus-protests-50d754675b710c9b983faf9ec9164d81>
- ¹⁴⁰³ <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>
- ¹⁴⁰⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/22/business/columbia-tensions-passover-virtual-classes/index.html>
- ¹⁴⁰⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/30/nyregion/columbia-shafik-protests-police.html>
- ¹⁴⁰⁶ <https://dailytrojan.com/2024/04/15/valedictorian-will-not-speak-at-class-of-2024-commencement/>
- ¹⁴⁰⁷ <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-abc-f6e9711670000> ;
https://newbrunswick.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2024-05/AGREEMENT_05072024.pdf
- ¹⁴⁰⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/may/28/harvard-policy-issues-institutional-neutrality>
- ¹⁴⁰⁹ https://x.com/JalalAK_jojo/status/1793672275809718459 ;
<https://twitter.com/iamschvitzing/status/1789666643141914965>
- ¹⁴¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/brainnotonyet/status/1789796916022157770>
- ¹⁴¹¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/10/us/xavier-vermont-cancel-linda-thomas-greenfield.html>

Instead of dealing with the protestors' demands and grievances, media coverage was sensationalized.¹⁴¹² 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.¹⁴¹³ 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).¹⁴¹⁴

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".¹⁴¹⁵ 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".¹⁴¹⁶ In Israel, the campus protests were framed as a form of antisemitism and covered far more superficially.¹⁴¹⁷ *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".¹⁴¹⁸ A lead to the next page presented readers with a solution ("Despite everything, there is only one place for Jews in the world [today]", i.e. Israel).¹⁴¹⁹

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*

¹⁴¹² <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/>

¹⁴¹³ <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>

¹⁴¹⁴ <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>

¹⁴¹⁵ <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>

¹⁴¹⁶ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-says-college-protesters-chanting-from-the-river-to-the-sea-are-supporting-genocide/

¹⁴¹⁷ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/517399>

¹⁴¹⁸ <https://www.pressreader.com/newspapers/n/israel-hayom/20240425>

¹⁴¹⁹ <https://www.pressreader.com/newspapers/n/israel-hayom/20240425>

Journal opinion piece, for example, claimed with no evidence that the protestors were “groomed” by Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houtis.¹⁴²⁰ Other right-wing commentators blamed George Soros for them.¹⁴²¹ 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.¹⁴²² 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.¹⁴²³ This talking point was amplified by the work of an initiative heavily promoted by pro-Israel elites.¹⁴²⁴

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”.¹⁴²⁵ 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.¹⁴²⁶

¹⁴²⁰ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/whos-behind-the-anti-israel-protests-hamas-gaza-hezbollah-talking-points-d2f538ca>

¹⁴²¹ <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>

¹⁴²² 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>

¹⁴²³ E.g. <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/Article-1095319>

¹⁴²⁴ 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-blitz>; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2024/05/16/business-leaders-chat-group-eric-adams-columbia-protesters/>

¹⁴²⁵ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-1094819>

¹⁴²⁶ <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=o&eav=Afbn2KFTtoO1qrHWpcUKB5K_GouVHfCoqdzwc_QxQih_5pjL23tHM_3585PmFbxxIxeK& rdr

Zoom-in 3: The ethnic cleansing campaign in northern Gaza, October-December 2024

Last updated:¹⁴²⁷ December 5, 2024

In October 2024, Israel began another operation in the northern part of the Gaza Strip. Almost immediately, it became clear that this operation was qualitatively different from those that preceded it. Israel de facto began a complete siege of northern Gaza, directly attacked civilians and hospitals, and attempted to remove the local population from the area in what was quickly recognized as ethnic cleansing.

This section focuses on this operation, beginning with its framing and purpose in Israeli and international discourse, and thus providing evidence that the events were well evident from early on. The section proceeds to examine the siege itself, Israel's use of starvation as a weapon, and the attacks on the civilian population in northern Gaza, all of which supported the ethnic cleansing campaign. It also focuses on the attacks on healthcare facilities and workers in the area.

Plans, voices and media coverage

The blueprint for this operation had long been discussed in Israel as the so-called "Generals' Plan". The strongest and most vocal supporter was the former general and former head of the National Security Council, Giora Eiland. The plan itself proposes that Israel warn all residents in North Gaza that they would have one week to evacuate. Those who would choose to evacuate would be supplied food and water in a designated area. The IDF would then tighten the siege and stop the entry of all food, water and humanitarian aid to the evacuated area, forcing the remaining residents to surrender or starve to death (for more details, see the section Ethnic Cleansing/Prominent voices and plans in this document).¹⁴²⁸ Israeli investigations revealed that the plan was designed by other organizations such as "Tzav 9",¹⁴²⁹ which was responsible for blocking aid from entering Gaza over the spring and summer of 2024 (and was sanctioned by the US in response).¹⁴³⁰

Within Israeli discourse, the plan received considerable media attention, which was generally supportive. The plan was published by an NGO that claimed more than 1,500 IDF officers as

¹⁴²⁷ I would like to thank an anonymous reader who commented on the Nov. 2024 version of this document.

¹⁴²⁸ <https://x.com/bokeralmog/status/1831247052828786708> ; see also <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hpsjosnc> for additional supporters

¹⁴²⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=430705303386981> ; <https://x.com/omrimaniv/status/1847700434716160328>

¹⁴³⁰ <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-5f5fco740000> ; sanctions: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bigdos7da> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jun/14/us-imposes-sanctions-on-extremist-israeli-group-for-blocking-gaza-aid>

members.¹⁴³¹ Already in mid-September, Israeli media noted that IDF generals were considering the Generals' Plan (also described as Eiland's Plan),¹⁴³² while a letter signed by 27 ministers and MKs (Members of the Israeli Knesset) called upon Israel's prime minister to formally accept it.¹⁴³³ The plan received some support in Israeli academia as well.¹⁴³⁴ In late September, the prime minister stated that the plan "made sense and was under consideration".¹⁴³⁵ An MK stated in early October that the plan was being executed.¹⁴³⁶ In late October, an Israeli settler NGO held a major event in preparation for Jewish settlement in Gaza. The event was attended by 19 Israeli ministers and MKs.¹⁴³⁷

Soon after the military operation in North Gaza began (see below), it became clear that the Generals' Plan, or a version of it, was being executed de facto. Israeli journalists stated it already on Oct. 6.¹⁴³⁸ More Israeli media recognized this by mid-October,¹⁴³⁹ with indications that it was neither discussed in detail nor formally decided upon politically.¹⁴⁴⁰ Many international voices also became aware of the plan at this point.¹⁴⁴¹ In response, Eiland himself claimed that what was being implemented was not his plan because the IDF began the military operation before evacuating the civilians, which would increase casualties.¹⁴⁴²

Some voices in Israeli discourse – including the *Ha'aretz* editorial in late October – called for IDF soldiers to refuse to serve and implement the plan.¹⁴⁴³ These voices had no obvious

¹⁴³¹ <https://hamefakdim-bemiluim.org/%d7%aa%d7%95%d7%9b%d7%9a%d7%99%d7%aa-%d7%94%d7%90%d7%9c%d7%95%d7%a4%d7%99%d7%9d/> ; <https://hamefakdim-bemiluim.org/%d7%90%d7%95%d7%93%d7%95%d7%aa/>

¹⁴³² <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/799622/> ; also: https://x.com/yuval_ganor/status/1848406512609231172 ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sjqc4suur> ; <https://www.972mag.com/northern-gaza-liquidation-scenario-eiland-rabi/>

¹⁴³³ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/politics/article/16463062>

¹⁴³⁴ <https://x.com/radio103fm/status/1835207918087483732?s=48>

¹⁴³⁵ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/803098/>

¹⁴³⁶ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1842878570307219842>

¹⁴³⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-16/ty-article/.premium/00000192-94aa-d9c2-a7f3-9cae337a0000> ; <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DBZR6anA-q4/> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-21/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-af02-d049-a3db-bf76397e0000> ; for the list of attendees: <https://x.com/nitayp/status/1848282311281766869>

¹⁴³⁸ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1842898570673852729>

¹⁴³⁹ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1848469118363582692> ;

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/explainers/israel-gaza-palestine-what-generals-plan>

¹⁴⁴⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-13/ty-article/.premium/00000192-8282-de72-afba-b2d79d410000> ; <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/editorial/2024-10-29/ty-article-opinion/if-it-looks-like-ethnic-cleansing-it-probably-is/00000192-dao4-d91e-agdf-dbad3f940000> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/byuiwjajje> ;

¹⁴⁴¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-21/ty-article/.premium/00000192-aeaf-da5c-agb7-febf25980000> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5y5zyivvml0>

¹⁴⁴² <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/185001191281652154> . Eiland said he would have accepted a deal for the hostages. See also: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14124023> . He also defended his plan: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-10-31/ty-article-opinion/.premium/00000192-e2a6-dd31-agbe-fbaf597b0000> ; and in this interview he threatened to maintain control of northern Gaza, and potentially occupy it: <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1857291886014206402>

¹⁴⁴³ <https://x.com/eranetzion/status/1848635092463132779> ;

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx24ngy9g700> ;

<https://x.com/TomerPersico/status/1848610983670899017> (and more emphatically a couple of weeks

later: <https://x.com/TomerPersico/status/1854403910305505520>;

<https://x.com/TomerPersico/status/1855858123602309152> ;

immediate effect on soldiers. Other Israeli voices called for widespread action by international institutions – including sanctions – to stop Israel. Among these was a petition signed by a few thousand Israelis who called for “every possible sanction” on Israel to stop its attack on Gaza.¹⁴⁴⁴ This, too, had little effect. However, soon after, Israel’s Minister of Justice called for a 20-year prison sentence for Israeli citizens promoting sanctions against Israel.¹⁴⁴⁵

By mid-late October there were clear indications that the operation was following a formal plan. This was supported by Israel’s prime minister himself, who declined US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken’s request to state publicly that Israel was not planning to remove or starve the population in northern Gaza. Blinken warned that not reversing Israel’s action could risk US military support.¹⁴⁴⁶ In late October, IDF generals admitted that despite reaching their military objectives in the area, IDF forces were preventing Palestinians from returning to their homes.¹⁴⁴⁷ International voices were similarly alarmed. A UN relief official stated that “the entire population of North Gaza is at risk of dying”.¹⁴⁴⁸

By early November, an IDF general explicitly stated that Palestinians would not be able to return to their homes in Jabaliya after the end of the military operation.¹⁴⁴⁹ The *Ha’aretz* editorial stated that the IDF was ethnically cleansing the northern part of the Gaza Strip.¹⁴⁵⁰ International voices used harsher words to voice their alarm. In a joint message, the leaders of 15 United Nations and humanitarian organizations stated that “the situation unfolding in North Gaza is apocalyptic” and reiterated that the entire population in North Gaza “is at

<https://x.com/TomerPersico/status/1858035974783009228>) ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2024-10-23/ty-article-opinion/00000192-b4d9-d006-a5b3-fed91a400000> ; <https://x.com/PeaceNowIL/status/1853430263423910399> ;

<https://x.com/selftitled/status/1851698751733404138> ;

<https://x.com/eliavl/status/1845476781576380672> . See also <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3703552> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-11-17/ty-article-opinion/.premium/00000193-35e5-d19b-afbb-37f5b2080000> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-11-16/ty-article-opinion/.premium/00000193-2b85-d506-a5d3-2f97180e0000>

¹⁴⁴⁴ <https://x.com/btselem/status/1848770778462060744> ; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-10-31/ty-article/.premium/haaretz-publisher-clarifies-hamas-remarks-as-netanyahu-govt-threatens-sanctions/00000192-e326-df50-a1bf-fbee3fco0000> ; see also: <https://maki.org.il/en/?p=32171> ;

<https://www.newarab.com/news/3000-israelis-call-every-possible-sanction-israel>

¹⁴⁴⁵ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/11/israeli-justice-minister-calls-for-20-year-prison-sentence-for-citizens-promoting-sanctions-against-the-state/>

¹⁴⁴⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/22/blinken-israel-netanyahu-gaza-aid/>, specifically: <https://x.com/eranetzion/status/1848817655115092252>

¹⁴⁴⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-30/ty-article/.premium/00000192-dc99-dbce-a7be-ff9f45a0000>

¹⁴⁴⁸ <https://www.commondreams.org/news/northern-gaza-risk-dying>

¹⁴⁴⁹ <https://archive.md/oTJKW> (the tweet was later deleted);

https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1853844668535955848 ;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/06/palestinians-will-not-be-allowed-to-return-to-homes-in-northern-gaza-says-idf> ; <https://x.com/idanlandau/status/1854412734168772892> . Note that the

next day the IDF distanced itself from the remarks about not letting Gazans return:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/07/idf-israel-military-no-return-remarks-north-gaza> ,

see also <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-11-08/ty-article/.premium/00000193-obb2-de12-adbb-8bf721150000>

¹⁴⁵⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2024-11-10/ty-article-opinion/00000193-11b9-d3a2-a3d7-5bf956bf0000>

imminent risk of dying from disease, famine and violence”.¹⁴⁵¹ By mid-November, Israel’s Finance Minister said Israel should remain in northern Gaza indefinitely to pressure Hamas to release its hostages.¹⁴⁵² A major Israeli TV channel aired an interview with an Israeli professor who called for resettling Gaza and explicitly agreed to ethnically cleanse up to two million Palestinians, killing hundreds of thousands who would not leave.¹⁴⁵³

By late November, Oxfam stated that Israel was in the late stages of ethnically cleansing the North Gaza governorate.¹⁴⁵⁴ A few days later Moshe Ya’alon, a former Israeli Chief of Staff and defense minister, accused Israel of ethnically cleansing Palestinians from northern Gaza.¹⁴⁵⁵ Many politicians – including the leaders of the two Jewish center-left parties – and media outlets, as well as the IDF attacked Ya’alon for his statements.¹⁴⁵⁶

Siege and ethnic cleansing

The siege

On the ground, the first step in the operation was the implementation of three nested sieges. The overall siege on the Gaza Strip, originating in 2007 but beginning in its current form at the beginning of the war, was tightened. During October 2024, Israel shut down almost all humanitarian aid entering Gaza. The average entrance of 58 trucks/day in this month was the lowest since November 2023 (the previous minimum was 113 trucks/day in Dec. 2023).¹⁴⁵⁷ The amount of supplies (food, water, medical equipment) entering was one quarter of the average of the nine preceding months of 2024 (26.4 thousand tons in October 2024 compared to 103.4).¹⁴⁵⁸ These numbers correspond to the entire Gaza Strip. They began to be reported in the Israeli media in late October.¹⁴⁵⁹

Compounding the overall siege, a stricter siege was placed on the northern part of the Strip, i.e. the area north of the Netzarim Corridor, which included Gaza City and North Gaza. The

¹⁴⁵¹ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-standing-committee/statement-principals-inter-agency-standing-committee-stop-assault-palestinians-gaza-and-those-trying>

¹⁴⁵² <https://www.timesofisrael.com/smotrich-israel-must-vow-to-stay-in-northern-gaza-forever-unless-hostages-returned/> ; see also: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hitakgizig>

¹⁴⁵³ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/dig/digital/p-11685/s2024/825913/>

¹⁴⁵⁴ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/no-aid-or-access-israel-intensifies-its-ethnic-cleansing-north-gaza-governorate-says>

¹⁴⁵⁵ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/02/middleeast/israel-idf-gaza-moshe-yaalon-palestinians-ethnic-cleansing-intl/index.html>

¹⁴⁵⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sixbixj71g>

¹⁴⁵⁷ Numbers are based on COGAT’s counting: <https://gaza-aid-data.gov.il/main/#AidData>. According to OCHA the number was 37 truckloads/day over October: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-november-2024> ; the trend began already in the beginning of the month: <https://www.npr.org/2024/10/18/nx-s1-5156064/north-gaza-is-starving-as-humanitarian-aid-declines> .

The amount of aid entering Gaza increased in November (OCHA: 65 truckloads/day: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-3-december-2024>; COGAT: 89 trucks/day by Nov. 26: <https://gaza-aid-data.gov.il/main/#AidData>)

¹⁴⁵⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-31/ty-article/.premium/00000192-de68-d6c4-adfe-fee52230000>

¹⁴⁵⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-31/ty-article/.premium/00000192-de68-d6c4-adfe-fee52230000> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-af4-fidd75c60000> ; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-humanitarian-aid-military-funding-1bdf4ffd22e0f4c68b2b7boe24bda77>

amount of supplies and humanitarian aid that entered this area was one fraction of the meagre amount that entered the southern part of the Strip.¹⁴⁶⁰

The third and tightest siege was placed on North Gaza – the northern-most governorate of the Strip’s five governorates, north of Gaza City – specifically on Jabaliya, Beit Hanoun, and Beit Lahiya. These were also the areas where the most military force was used, as evident by many daily attacks, commonly by airstrikes (see below). As many observers noted already in mid and late October, no food or water entered this area for weeks.¹⁴⁶¹ The IDF soon established another East-West corridor, separating North Gaza from Gaza City.¹⁴⁶² Evidence from witnesses indicates the absence of food.¹⁴⁶³ Video footage showed an IDF tractor destroying humanitarian aid supplies in a warehouse in Jabaliya.¹⁴⁶⁴

Both the UN and 39 humanitarian organizations raised the alarm regarding the situation in North Gaza. The UN reported in early November that all attempts by humanitarian organizations to deliver food to the besieged areas of North Gaza in October were blocked by Israel.¹⁴⁶⁵ Israel falsely claimed that there was “no population” left in places like Beit Lahiya, where it continued to bomb civilians for many more days.¹⁴⁶⁶ Only 11 percent of coordinated aid movements to provide humanitarian assistance to the northern Gaza Strip were facilitated by Israel.¹⁴⁶⁷ One mission supplying humanitarian assistance was finally allowed in on November 11, but delays in movement authorization and crowded routes led to the convoy’s

¹⁴⁶⁰ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-5-november-2024> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-november-2024> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-19-november-2024> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-26-november-2024> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-3-december-2024> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-241-gaza-strip> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-243-gaza-strip>

¹⁴⁶¹ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1848819280730853559> ; <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1848810576828305645> ; <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1851452023117660582> (a journalist on the ground in northern Gaza); <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1846626226951409921> (another journalist from northern Gaza); <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1850583598782353415> (he was outside Gaza but his family remained in northern Gaza; many died during the military operation); <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/22/blinking-israel-netanyahu-gaza-aid/> (the first two weeks of October). See also <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-15/ty-article.premium/00000192-8c88-d953-afbe-9fd9be790000>

¹⁴⁶² <https://x.com/ForensicArchi/status/1860005331897622954> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cp8x324vromo>

¹⁴⁶³ <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/gaza-hunger-israel-restricts-aid> (see the testimony about Jabaliya); for an exceptional distribution of aid, see:

<https://x.com/Stevesosebee/status/1857817939698659796> (the partner, Anera, is one of the organizations that signed on the mid-November scorecard referred to below:

<https://x.com/AneraOrg/status/1856374235335123234>); little of the aid was in the North:

<https://x.com/AneraOrg/status/1858986152197583225>

¹⁴⁶⁴ <https://x.com/tamerqdh/status/1856423763010584856>

¹⁴⁶⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip>

¹⁴⁶⁶ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-humanitarian-aid-military-funding-ubdf4ffd22e0f4c68b2b7boe24bda77>

¹⁴⁶⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip> (this refers to movements from the southern part of the Strip; it seems that eight of these missions evacuated patients to hospitals outside northern Gaza).

reducing its size from 14 trucks to only three.¹⁴⁶⁸ One aid truck reached a school in Beit Hanoun, which was raided soon after, reportedly killing over 20 civilians.¹⁴⁶⁹ The tight siege continued in mid-November, with humanitarian assistance to northern Gaza largely denied.¹⁴⁷⁰ None of the attempts to reach these besieged areas with aid in November were fully facilitated. Only 5 of 53 missions in November were initially approved but were “severely impeded” on the ground, limiting their impact.¹⁴⁷¹ Winter weather in late November exacerbated the poor conditions displaced people experienced.¹⁴⁷²

Following earlier precedents during the war, it was widely assumed that any changes in the distribution of aid would require US approval. Already in mid-October, a few weeks before the US elections, the US secretaries of state and defense issued a letter that delineated 19 measures that required Israel’s compliance. The most notable of these measures was allowing far more humanitarian aid into Gaza, with the letter stating that 350 trucks should enter Gaza every day. The US threatened to stop supplying Israel with weapons if it would not comply with these measures within 30 days. However, Israel did not comply,¹⁴⁷³ despite a Famine Review Committee report from Nov. 8 that stated that there was a strong likelihood that famine is imminent in areas in the northern Gaza Strip.¹⁴⁷⁴

At the US letter’s deadline a month later, a group of eight aid organizations noted that there was “non-compliance, significant delays, or backtracking” on 15 of the 19 measures outlined in the letter, and concluded that the situation in Northern Gaza was “in an even more dire state today than a month ago”.¹⁴⁷⁵ The aid entering Gaza – the item that drew the most public attention on the list – was less than one-third of the required amount (see above for more

¹⁴⁶⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-237-gaza-strip> ; <https://www.unocha.org/news/todays-top-news-occupied-palestinian-territory-lebanon-haiti-philippines-ukraine>

¹⁴⁶⁹ <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1856798704939761937> ; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israeli-army-torches-school-gazas-north-after-entry-aid-trucks> ; <https://x.com/ajplus/status/1857192669543268699> ; <https://www.unocha.org/news/todays-top-news-occupied-palestinian-territory-lebanon-haiti-philippines-ukraine>

¹⁴⁷⁰ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-239-gaza-strip> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-243-gaza-strip>

¹⁴⁷¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-241-gaza-strip> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-243-gaza-strip>

¹⁴⁷² For example: <https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1860991599427100897> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-11-25/ty-article/.premium/00000193-5f68-d68e-a1db-ff6c45430000> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/23/world/middleeast/gaza-displaced-winter-tents.html> . Across Gaza, as of late November, about half the population required winterization support, and about a quarter resided in flood-prone areas, see: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-26-november-2024> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-241-gaza-strip>

¹⁴⁷³ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1848819280730853559>; note that some Israeli reports stated that the prime minister ordered the IDF to allow more aid in, but that the IDF was unable to do so:

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-11-05/ty-article/.highlight/00000192-fd09-de0c-a7db-ff4d78930000> . Israel conducted some token moves, see for example:

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-16/ty-article/.premium/00000192-94ff-d8fa-a9df-fdfff7c60000>

¹⁴⁷⁴ https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_FRC_Alert_Gaza_Nov2024.pdf

¹⁴⁷⁵ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/11/12/politics/israel-gaza-humanitarian-situation-report> ;

<https://x.com/JeremyKonyndyk/status/1856324289886130192> ;

<https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/scorecard-israel-fails-to-comply-with-u-s-humanitarian-access-demands-in-gaza/>

details).¹⁴⁷⁶ Already before the deadline, the US signaled that it would not follow through on its threats.¹⁴⁷⁷ The top US official involved in the humanitarian situation in Gaza had told aid groups that the US would not consider suspending military aid if Israel blocked food and medicine from entering Gaza since Israel is too close an ally.¹⁴⁷⁸ Following these early indications, when the deadline did arrive, the US refrained from action.¹⁴⁷⁹ By late November, very few supplies remained in North Gaza. The Oxfam staff member responsible for aid distribution in the area said he was able to have one daily meal consisting of one item.¹⁴⁸⁰

The military operation

Israel's military operation into northern Gaza began on October 5, with airstrikes killing dozens of Gazans as Israeli tanks moved in.¹⁴⁸¹ Israel continued by planting and detonating explosive barrels in residential areas, which destroyed dozens of homes, many uninhabited.¹⁴⁸² After a few days of siege, Israel began to call upon the local civilian population to evacuate.¹⁴⁸³ In parallel, orders were issued to evacuate the three remaining hospitals in northern Gaza.¹⁴⁸⁴ While some Gazans moved south,¹⁴⁸⁵ many of them chose to stay.¹⁴⁸⁶ At the same time,

¹⁴⁷⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-11-12/ty-article/.premium/00000193-1f8e-d76d-a7db-5fcf88ea0000>

¹⁴⁷⁷ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1854626313105438140>

¹⁴⁷⁸ <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/10/16/biden-israel-arms-aid-00184028>

¹⁴⁷⁹ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/11/12/politics/israel-gaza-humanitarian-situation-report> ;

<https://x.com/BarakRavid/status/1856402306628989103> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1856729271470813497> ; see details of the evasions here:

<https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1856421706505900405> ;

<https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1856409244016509192>

¹⁴⁸⁰ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/no-aid-or-access-israel-intensifies-its-ethnic-cleansing-north-gaza-governorate-says>

¹⁴⁸¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/several-killed-israeli-air-strike-gaza-mosque-2024-10-05/>

¹⁴⁸² <https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1846483876014703073>

¹⁴⁸³ https://x.com/MSF_canada/status/1844751751624413541

¹⁴⁸⁴ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/10/inside-israels-ongoing-invasion-of-jabalia-in-northern-gaza/>

¹⁴⁸⁵ E.g. <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/nakba-survivor-forced-to-flee-jabaliya> ;

<https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/live-814626/liveid-814719/> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-22/ty-article/.premium/00000192-bo47-dae6-a9fb-fedfab970000>; according to the IDF, more than 5,000 Palestinians were evacuated by Oct. 20. According

to the UN, the number of displaced people was 50 thousand by Oct. 15

(<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-229-gaza-strip>); 60 thousand by

Oct. 22 (<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-231-gaza-strip>); 71 thousand

by Oct. 29 (<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-233-gaza-strip>); 100

thousand by Nov. 4 (<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip>);

and 100-130 thousand by Nov. 9 (<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-237-gaza-strip>).

¹⁴⁸⁶ <https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1852689928695492648> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-af8a-fidd75c60000> ; <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1854585378122133633> ; for an example of

the conditions of those who stayed, see: <https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1854253562190090316> . On Nov. 16, the UN estimated that 65-75 thousand Palestinians remained in North Gaza:

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/population-and-internal-displacement-7-october-2023-gaza-strip> ;

Oxfam estimated 50-75 thousand Palestinians in North Gaza on Nov. 27:

<https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/no-aid-or-access-israel-intensifies-its-ethnic-cleansing-north-gaza-governorate-says>

multiple testimonies revealed that people who tried to evacuate were bombed or shot at – including large families carrying white flags.¹⁴⁸⁷ On some occasions, the IDF detained people seeking to evacuate.¹⁴⁸⁸ The IDF used some detained Palestinians as human shields, forcing them to knock on people’s doors and tell other Palestinians to evacuate.¹⁴⁸⁹ By mid-October, the UN condemned the “large number of civilian casualties” in Israel’s operation.¹⁴⁹⁰

As part of its attack, Israel attempted to shut down various means of support to the Gazan population. Already on Oct. 9, the last warehouse for flour in North Gaza was burned in an Israeli attack.¹⁴⁹¹ The last two bakeries in the north closed in mid-late October.¹⁴⁹² The local Civil Defense units – groups of people whose role was to dig people out of the rubble and evacuate them to hospitals – were ordered to stop working. Israel subsequently detained some members of these units and killed others. By October 23 the local units declared that they had “completely stopped” their operations and that civilians were left “without humanitarian services”.¹⁴⁹³ As a result, in many subsequent attacks, the local population was without support to clear rubble after bombings or to evacuate the injured to hospitals, or even to remove the dead.¹⁴⁹⁴ For several days, Israel prevented the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), from accessing collapsed buildings, until eventually pointing out that there was no point in providing access anymore because the people under the rubble would have died.¹⁴⁹⁵ In mid-October Israel also barred six medical NGOs that had operated in Gaza from entering the Strip entirely, providing no explanation.¹⁴⁹⁶ By late November, local Civil Defense noted that all their fire, rescue and ambulance vehicles in Gaza governorate stopped working as well because of the lack of fuel.¹⁴⁹⁷

Israel also limited or removed other means of support to North Gaza. This included attempts to shut down the water supply by not allowing fuel for the local pumping stations and desalination plant.¹⁴⁹⁸ Evidence from mid-November indicated that the IDF took over the local desalination plant and was using it as a makeshift base.¹⁴⁹⁹ The humanitarian campaign led by

¹⁴⁸⁷ https://x.com/MSF_canada/status/1844751751624413541 ; <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/10/inside-israels-ongoing-invasion-of-jabalia-in-northern-gaza/> ; <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/northern-gaza-kamal-adwan-hospital-director-defies-israeli-order> ; <https://x.com/MintPressNews/status/1844015334908703014> ; <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1848333440761872705> ; <https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1848449955871994319>

¹⁴⁸⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/24/israel-northern-gaza-humanitarian-collapse/>

¹⁴⁸⁹ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/10/inside-israels-ongoing-invasion-of-jabalia-in-northern-gaza/>

¹⁴⁹⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5y5zyivvml0>

¹⁴⁹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkhYMBN17tU&t=2s>

¹⁴⁹² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-afda-fidd75c60000>

¹⁴⁹³ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1849182435994427434>;

¹⁴⁹⁴ For example: <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1858558987513344059> ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1863059618705916244>

¹⁴⁹⁵ <https://x.com/ochaopt/status/1848098727669682447> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-afda-fidd75c60000>

¹⁴⁹⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/18/israel-gaza-war-aid-hospitals-doctors/>

¹⁴⁹⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-241-gaza-strip>

¹⁴⁹⁸ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1849476686674280529>

¹⁴⁹⁹ <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/gaza-water-desalination-plant-israeli-base> ; <https://x.com/tamerqdh/status/1859543941068038214>

the WHO to vaccinate some 120,000 children against polio was temporarily stopped.¹⁵⁰⁰ Israel also attempted to reduce the amount of information emerging from North Gaza, killing some of the remaining journalists and declaring that others were affiliated with Hamas, a move widely understood as rendering them targets.¹⁵⁰¹ At the same time, the area experienced “severe disruptions of communications, including internet”.¹⁵⁰²

The daily bombings of northern Gaza continued throughout the operation, killing at least hundreds of civilians. Already by late October there were daily mass casualty events – with attacks hitting dozens to hundreds of civilians at a time – which continued at least until early December.¹⁵⁰³ On dozens of occasions, the IDF did not claim that people hit during the attacks

¹⁵⁰⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/24/israel-gaza-strikes-jabalia-polio-vaccine-campaign-postponed> ; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/11/1156466>

¹⁵⁰¹ <https://x.com/IDF/status/1849088691450339461> ; one of these journalists was later injured in an airstrike: <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1859286304854327323> ; <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1859050248632471990> ; <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1859034111714750788>

¹⁵⁰² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip>

¹⁵⁰³ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1851832529411588266> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-af-fidd75c60000> ; <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/11/07/middleeast/jabalya-gaza-israel-strike-intl/index.html> (with some specific details). For specific footage and reporting from this period, see the following very partial list: airstrikes against several family houses on Oct. 20

(<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1847767278894608653>); Jabalia Preparatory School on Oct. 21 (<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1848351885901611428>; <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/150633>); results of an attack on the Halawa family house on Oct. 23 (<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1848843265883128050>); attacks on five homes in Beit Lahiya on Oct. 26 (<https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1850243630575030506>; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1850256376112594991>; <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1850268042082877891>; <https://x.com/mustafabarghoul/status/1850265469481087145?s=46>); airstrikes on houses in Jabalia and a school sheltering displaced families on Oct. 27 (<https://x.com/idanlandau/status/1850589992994718195>); an airstrike west of Gaza City on Oct. 29 (<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1851738959149187466>); a four-story building with many displaced families inside on Nov. 1 (<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1852238516471648480>); airstrikes on residential buildings on Nov. 2 (<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1852547862036455896>; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1852677911553450486>; <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1853160426877722843>); an attack near a water sanitation station on Nov. 3 (<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1853087728398725338>); airstrikes on residential buildings in Beit Lahiya on Nov. 4 (<https://x.com/DmodusCutter/status/1853435319384727784>; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1853550375673930088>); more attacks on houses in Beit Lahiya on Nov. 5 (<https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1853752172485218305>; <https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1853847622236418257>); an attack on a family home near a mosque on Nov. 6 (<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1854100119735431538>); bombing of a school shelter and a residence on Nov. 7 (<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1854531145062642158>; <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1854547876300361769> ; <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/11/07/middleeast/jabalya-gaza-israel-strike-intl/index.html>); airstrike on a residential house in Gaza City on Nov. 20 (<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1859352121579274713>); attacks on residential housing in Beit Lahiya on Nov. 27-29 (<https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1862005651968254040>; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1862527959640277095>; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1862512152793194918>; <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1862517626246779011>) ; an attack on a Beit Lahiya house on Dec. 1 (<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-243-gaza-strip>)

were affiliated with Hamas.¹⁵⁰⁴ The consequences of many attacks were filmed. However, due to the conditions of the healthcare system, the limitations on cellular internet service, and the absence of external journalists, the international media is dependent on the numbers published by the Palestinian Ministry of Health and local journalists. Estimates of the number of dead in northern Gaza have varied, yet almost all have exceeded 1,000 in the first month.¹⁵⁰⁵ By early December, Palestinian Civil Defense estimated that over 2,700 people were killed in North Gaza, half of whom were not retrieved, and more than 10,000 were injured.¹⁵⁰⁶ The personal tragic stories of several Palestinians demonstrate the impacts of the attacks on the local population.¹⁵⁰⁷ Video evidence reveals improvised graveyards in the middle of urban areas such as the Beit Lahiya market.¹⁵⁰⁸

¹⁵⁰⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-af7d-fidd75c60000>

¹⁵⁰⁵ More than 1,200 on Oct. 31: (<https://archive.md/bt9pa>); over 1,500 on Nov. 8 (<https://www.yenisafak.com/en/news/over-1500-palestinians-killed-in-israeli-onslaught-in-northern-gaza-health-ministry-3694089>). The IDF numbers were not far: “900 terror operatives” on Nov. 2 (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/two-soldiers-killed-in-north-gaza-idf-says-900-terror-operatives-dead-in-jabalia-op/>); “1,000 terrorists killed” on Nov. 5

(<https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/defense/article/16727495>); “1,300 terror operatives” as of Nov. 22 (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-says-it-killed-five-hamas-terrorists-who-led-mefalsim-area-massacres-on-oct-7/>). According to the OCHA, the death toll was in the hundreds, possibly over 1,000. About 1,300 deaths were estimated by the Palestinian Civil Defense by Nov. 5:

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip>. The Government Media Office claimed that more than 2,000 Gazans died by Nov. 12:

(<https://www.arab48.com/%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%BA%D8%B2%D8%A9->

[2023/2024/11/12/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D9%8A-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%D9%84-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%AA-%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A3%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%B4%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84-38-%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip))

¹⁵⁰⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-243-gaza-strip>

¹⁵⁰⁷ For the personal story of a poet whose family remained in Beit Lahiya, see for example:

<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1851015506716770323> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1847276685215101146> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1847484071938519257> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1847164574648201352> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1846914259986391468> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1850246439261147276> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1852677911553450486> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1854538625733800116> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1854566739939635375> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1854656474410369538> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1850891173298106456> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1851260276001148957> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1853105080708501626> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1855275734614327683> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1856751977767600605> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1858260298408534252> ;

One of the largest attacks was on Jabalia, where over 150 civilians were killed when the IDF bombed 11 residential apartments on the same street on Oct. 24.¹⁵⁰⁹ Details of the attack were lacking as the IDF did not allow health professionals and civil defense teams to reach the area.¹⁵¹⁰ Another large attack took place on October 29, when the IDF attacked a five-story building where over 200 Palestinians were sheltering. The IDF claimed the building was attacked because a Hamas lookout was identified on top of the building on the previous day.¹⁵¹¹ Eventually about 137 were identified as dead.¹⁵¹² According to a Gaza Civil Defense

<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1858299701562388914> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1862419644855812188> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1862901576207077844> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1862932392081608967> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1864314281384198597> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1864284704867856422> . For a journalist's personal tragedy:
<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1854595897042083944> ;
<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/185459834233944270> ;
<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1854550843686531440> ;
<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1854658153087914106> ;
<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1855751832796274885> ;
<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1856157430503145907> ;
<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1856506570705678625> ;
<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1859676703938970109> ;
<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1862168815045394848> . For the story of another journalist's family:
<https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1854403068655292467> . For more civilian casualties, see:
<https://x.com/AbuSalah9/status/1852144588053451216> . See also these anecdotal stories:
<https://x.com/OmarHamadD/status/1855705318598078864> ;
<https://x.com/AyaHassoun30/status/1857523402518434160> ;
<https://x.com/ezzingaza/status/1857909049532010610> ;
<https://x.com/OmarHamadD/status/1857858474152980830>
¹⁵⁰⁸ <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1858951043029106973>
¹⁵⁰⁹ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1849523823093109172> ;
<https://x.com/Timesofgaza/status/1849531836092842341> ;
<https://x.com/QudsNen/status/1849517984823304699> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1849769737686859852> ;
<https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1849732808333287510> ;
<https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/150807> ; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6522/Urgent-int%E2%80%99-intervention-needed-to-send-rescue-teams-to-residential-block-bombed-by-Israeli-army-in-Jabalia> ; <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-deadly-24-hours-underscores-urgent-need-global-intervention-yet-more-children-killed-save-children>
¹⁵¹⁰ <https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1849732808333287510>
¹⁵¹¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-30/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-degd-d7b5-af97-ff9d2d0d0000>
¹⁵¹² The numbers changed over time. They quickly reached 93 on Oct. 29, when most reporting took place: <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1851179601390670299> ;
<https://x.com/alonleegreen/status/1851183558653550958?s=46> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1851226593319875036> ;
<https://x.com/ShovrimShtika/status/1851935062545064116> ; <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-official-deadly-gaza-strike-targeted-spotter-wasnt-aimed-at-felling-structure/> ;
<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-30/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-degd-d7b5-af97-ff9d2d0d0000> . The number rose to 126 identified by Nov. 2 (113):
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1852479561709093263> ; 125:
<https://x.com/OnePathNetwork/status/1852676152361623595> ; 126:
<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1852519949987668134> . Another list from Nov. 1 included 137 people:
<https://x.com/lhabHassane/status/1852461589229642081>

spokesperson, 255 people died, many of whom remained under the rubble as there was no way to rescue them.¹⁵¹³ Anecdotal visual evidence from northern Gaza shows many individuals crushed under buildings,¹⁵¹⁴ as well as other explicit imagery.¹⁵¹⁵ Another attack on 17 November targeted a five-story building in Beit Lahiya, reportedly killing at least 50 or 72 Palestinians.¹⁵¹⁶ An attack near Kamal Adwan hospital on 20 November reportedly killed 66 Palestinians.¹⁵¹⁷ Some smaller attacks also drew public attention. One video shows a child injured in an attack – probably a rocket – lying on the street (“in pieces”, according to the person filming from afar). Several bystanders came to help him and were hit by a subsequent attack.¹⁵¹⁸ Other large attacks drew less public attention, such as an attack on a Beit Lahiya building that killed 87 Palestinians that took place during a communications blackout on 19 October.¹⁵¹⁹

Attacks on schools – as centers in which hundreds of displaced Palestinians were sheltering after their houses had been destroyed – were common.¹⁵²⁰ A UNICEF report in early November found that at least 64 of 226 attacks against schools since the beginning of the war had taken place in October 2024, and that most of these attacks took place in the North.¹⁵²¹ An NGO found dozens of attacks on schools in northern Gaza in October 2024.¹⁵²² A substantial amount

¹⁵¹³ <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1852805823157723314>

¹⁵¹⁴ https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1859704352124043709 ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1859440967381569931

¹⁵¹⁵ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1862908453913555096> ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1864382818396057979>

¹⁵¹⁶ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/at-least-96-palestinians-killed-in-israeli-airstrikes-on-northern-central-gaza/3395886> ; <https://x.com/KhalilAsslan/status/1858035093589152245> ;

<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1858041776675668015>

<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1858082971430818072> ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1858042251806416971> ;

<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1858038134434345306> ;

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-239-gaza-strip>

¹⁵¹⁷ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/66-killed-attack-near-kamal-adwan-hospital> ; <https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/mena/2024/11/21/beit-lahia-gaza/> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1859663484700508233> ;

<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1859513065697374658> ;

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-241-gaza-strip>

¹⁵¹⁸ <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1847352625974399346> ;

https://x.com/Nadav_Eyal/status/1849135512373592563 . Coverage at:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/21/gaza-israel-strike-jabalya-video/> ;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rknemalejg> . For another incident, see:

<https://x.com/YousefHammash/status/1848685041833885972>

¹⁵¹⁹ <https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-10/19/0042-73-palestinians-martyred-following-israeli-massacre-in%C2%A0beit-lahia-in-northern-gaza-strip> ;

<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1858819672201691574> ;

<https://x.com/PalinfoAr/status/1847955843234373719>

¹⁵²⁰ For examples: <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1857812218475163850> ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1857822501830598710> ;

<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1857799491266449519> ;

¹⁵²¹ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/regular-attacks-put-gaza-schools-turned-shelters-frontlines-war>

¹⁵²² <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/less-month-israeli-army-attacks-shelter-centres-39-times-displace-palestinians-and-empty-gaza-enar>

of evidence from November indicates that the pattern continued.¹⁵²³ One local journalist noted that he witnessed a new school bombing almost every day.¹⁵²⁴ These attacks were also covered in Israeli media.¹⁵²⁵

In parallel to the above, field executions of Palestinians were reported,¹⁵²⁶ including of Palestinians who were detained.¹⁵²⁷ Some civilians were killed after lining up to get water.¹⁵²⁸ Others died of exposure or exhaustion as they were evacuating.¹⁵²⁹ Survivors expressed their despair towards their reality, amidst airstrikes, destruction and lack of supplies.¹⁵³⁰ According to a UN humanitarian coordinator who visited a school in northern Gaza, the conditions of the families that sought shelter there were “unbearable”. He reported that sewage was running everywhere and that waste was ubiquitous, asserting, “This is not a place for humans to survive. This is beyond imagination”.¹⁵³¹

Already in mid-October, many IDF soldiers uploaded photos showing their burning of various buildings in Jabalia.¹⁵³² At least twice over two days in mid-November, soldiers set afire UN schools that housed displaced Palestinians.¹⁵³³ Other IDF soldiers spoke about establishing Jewish settlements.¹⁵³⁴ Anecdotal evidence starting from late October – for example of soldiers placing a *mezuzah* on a door in a building they resided in¹⁵³⁵ or printing a Jewish philosophical

¹⁵²³ See for example these cases, all from mid November:

<https://x.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1857468010480427383>;
<https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2024/11/12/dozens-killed-others-displaced-as-israel-continues-attacks-on-gaza> ; <https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1856250030912344560> ;
<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2024/11/16/health-ministry-in-gaza-says-war-death-toll-at-43-799-> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/11/14/live-israel-bombs-gaza-camps-6-israeli-soldiers-killed-in-south-lebanon?update=3324274> ; <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/middle-east/israeli-strike-on-ngaza-kills-14-as-aid-remains-distant-lifeline> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1857046066815779196> ; <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/massacre-in-shati-israel-bombs-school-sheltering-displaced-palestinians/> . For later attacks see for example:

<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1861431831444226331>;

<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1861686736474050797>

¹⁵²⁴ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1857838004619919468>

¹⁵²⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-24/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000193-4db6-d68e-a1db-edb69fb0000>

¹⁵²⁶ <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1849373431801753885> ;

<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1847600787901337728> ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1854229496401932557> ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1856287070907502972>.

¹⁵²⁷ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1853882898744553879> ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1854229496401932557>

¹⁵²⁸ <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1853760310743531716>

¹⁵²⁹ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1853876427902640403>

¹⁵³⁰ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1857096991961985095>

¹⁵³¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip>

¹⁵³² <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1847980759262384246>

¹⁵³³ <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1856798704939761937>;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1857046066815779196>; see also another school that was burning after a strike: <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1857078038858531087> . For earlier examples:

<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1848119454980288647> ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1848442788620234971>

¹⁵³⁴ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1854641685961326597>

¹⁵³⁵ <https://x.com/adinitay/status/1852721404082360614>

book¹⁵³⁶ – suggests that some were planning to stay in northern Gaza. Satellite imagery from mid-November indicated that Israel was destroying buildings to create another East-West route, this time cutting North Gaza (Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahya and Jabaliya) from Gaza City.¹⁵³⁷ By late November, satellite imagery revealed Jabaliya was “almost completely destroyed”.¹⁵³⁸

Most Israeli media paid little attention to the events on the ground.¹⁵³⁹ One exception is an Israeli journalist, embedded with the IDF in Gaza, who interviewed displaced Gazans. He asked them who was responsible for their condition and expressed approval when they blamed Hamas.¹⁵⁴⁰ The responses could be expected, as they were surrounded by IDF soldiers. On other occasions, Israeli media focused attention on negligible stories, such as a group of soldiers who discovered a pelican in petrol and saved its life.¹⁵⁴¹

The combination of attacks, the dismantling of what remained of civil society and the use of forced displacement led many Palestinians to leave northern Gaza. Images of Palestinians leaving northern Gaza en masse circulated in the media and social media. In one, over 200 Palestinians were ordered by the IDF to strip, and were then held for hours outdoors in the cold while being subjected to verbal abuse.¹⁵⁴² Locations where Palestinian refugees were sheltering, such as schools, were burned, while the refugees sheltering in them were displaced again.¹⁵⁴³ Anecdotal evidence shows the destitution of the refugees.¹⁵⁴⁴ By mid November, the UN estimated that about 100,000-131,000 people were displaced from northern Gaza to Gaza City, and some 65-75 thousand people remained.¹⁵⁴⁵ The number of Palestinians who left to the southern part of the Strip, beyond the Netzarim Corridor, has been negligible as of writing.

By late November, eyewitness accounts referred to corpses on the ground everywhere, as well as wounded people “drowning in their own blood with no one to help them”.¹⁵⁴⁶ In early December, both Israeli and Palestinian sources reported that Gazan civilians were displaced

¹⁵³⁶ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1859318914620010722> . This was the Tanya, a book written by the founder of the Chabad movement. The movement aspires to print the Tanya “in every place which has a Jewish population”, see: https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article_cdo/aid/2515469/jewish/The-Printing-of-Tanya.htm

¹⁵³⁷ <https://x.com/BenTzionMacales/status/1857875008602636546> ; for an example of destruction, see: <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1859332541913637040>

¹⁵³⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-11-24/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000193-3eab-d5cd-a3bf-7eff92fooooo>

¹⁵³⁹ See for example: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/6FuOTRIFTyIP5EwoYJqf86>

¹⁵⁴⁰ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1857172750940447136>;

<https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1857208151507976566>

¹⁵⁴¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/environment-science/article/r1s9fuqfkl>

¹⁵⁴² <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/10/29/middleeast/gaza-jabalya-palestinians-strip-photo-intl/index.html>

¹⁵⁴³ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1856413482129748306> ;

<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1856405376079421656> ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1856287070907502972> ;

<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1856324650180968737>

¹⁵⁴⁴ <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1856280401074888779>

¹⁵⁴⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-239-gaza-strip> also:

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-237-gaza-strip>;

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip> . The UN continued to estimate the same amount of Palestinians remained in North Gaza in early December (<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-243-gaza-strip>), but based on the evidence I have seen this was an overestimate.

¹⁵⁴⁶ <https://www.g72mag.com/beit-lahiya-gaza-rubble-corpSES/>

from the last school shelters in North Gaza, specifically Beit Lahia and Jabaliya.¹⁵⁴⁷ There were also indications of an Israeli private company operating bulldozers in Jabaliya, as well as reports of non-military individuals entering the area.¹⁵⁴⁸

The healthcare system

Three hospitals remained in northern Gaza at the beginning of this period: Kamal Adwan, Al-Awda, and the Indonesian Hospital. Their struggle to remain operational drew some public attention. Early on in the operation, local doctors had to perform surgeries in the street to save lives.¹⁵⁴⁹ In mid-late October, humanitarian attempts to bring in food, fuel, blood and medicine were denied.¹⁵⁵⁰ The IDF called upon doctors to evacuate hospitals because their lives were in danger, as the IDF was planning to blow up the hospitals.¹⁵⁵¹ Soon after the warnings, the IDF surrounded the hospitals,¹⁵⁵² and then raided them.¹⁵⁵³ The IDF detained 57 medical staff of Kamal Adwan Hospital, and later released 14, shooting and injuring some as they tried to reenter the hospital.¹⁵⁵⁴ At least one unidentified individual was buried just outside the hospital's walls (where they were supposed to be identified, presumably because it was too dangerous to bring the corpse in)¹⁵⁵⁵. The raid at this hospital also damaged the

¹⁵⁴⁷ <https://x.com/TomerPersico/status/1864346370406039591> ;
<https://x.com/DmodosCutter/status/1862988412803862631> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1863921104726712731> ;
<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1864317910711173368> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1864282791900229727> ;
<https://x.com/ezzingaza/status/1864290451139735677> .

¹⁵⁴⁸ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1863201179041218608>;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1864038176987201623>

¹⁵⁴⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/22/blinken-israel-netanyahu-gaza-aid/>

¹⁵⁵⁰ <https://x.com/UNOCHA/status/1849072683725525242> ;
<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-fi4c-dec7-ffa-fidd75c60000> ; for a testimony of the conditions see

<https://x.com/AMokhallalati/status/1849082736402632878>

¹⁵⁵¹ https://x.com/Ahmad_tibi/status/1848647941617057834

¹⁵⁵² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/biohgghxjg> ;
<https://x.com/SMohyeddin/status/1849491903034572923> (longer version at:
<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1849484027478044985>) ;

<https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1849567005633884650>

¹⁵⁵³ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1849682158387974236>

¹⁵⁵⁴ <https://x.com/DrTedros/status/1849903588732256534> ;
<https://www.commondreams.org/news/northern-gaza-risk-dying> ;

<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1849663271378297014> ;

<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1849803852201046070> ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1852472357635432745>; regarding the count of 57, see

<https://www.g72mag.com/kamal-adwan-hospital-hussam-abu-safia/>; for firing at those released:

<https://apnews.com/world-news/still-wrecked-from-past-israeli-raids-hospitals-in-northern-gaza-come-under-attack-again-00000192eebfd414a79ffbf88cc0000>. One of the detained doctors was involved

with Doctors Without Borders, see: <https://x.com/AMokhallalati/status/1849082736402632878> ;

<https://msf.lu/en/articles/msf-alarmee-par-la-detention-du-dr-obeid-par-les-forces-israeliennes>

¹⁵⁵⁵ <https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1853130631250669814>

oxygen station, causing the deaths of at least two infants.¹⁵⁵⁶ In this context, the WHO noted that accessing hospitals across Gaza “is getting unbelievably harder” and that it lost connection with Kamal Adwan.¹⁵⁵⁷ Subsequent videos show the destruction in the area of the hospital.¹⁵⁵⁸

The key voice narrating the deterioration of the healthcare system in northern Gaza was Kamal Adwan’s Director, Dr. Hossam Abu Safieh.¹⁵⁵⁹ Already in early October, Abu Safieh declared that he would not leave the hospital as long as there were patients in it,¹⁵⁶⁰ and in a later interview noted that another country offered to evacuate him and his family, but he refused out of commitment to his patients.¹⁵⁶¹ Abu Safieh reported on conditions within the hospital during its siege and invasion, and was shortly detained with other staff members during the raid in late October. Although he was soon released, his 15-year-old son was killed the same day.¹⁵⁶² Abu Safieh stated that he and another doctor were the only ones remaining in the hospital then, together with over 145 patients who needed surgery, some of whom were dying due to lack of treatment, and had no supplies with which to treat the patients.¹⁵⁶³

For much of October and November, Abu Safieh continued to relay daily updates about the conditions and the operating of his hospital. He implored the international community to provide humanitarian aid and supplies; and to send rescue teams to dig people out of the rubble, and doctors to help treat the many patients. Notably, Abu Safieh and the only other doctor remaining in the hospital after the raid were pediatricians, with no expertise in surgery.¹⁵⁶⁴ Abu Safieh asserted that “the healthcare system is now completely collapsed”, although the hospital continued to operate at a reduced level.¹⁵⁶⁵ Video evidence suggested

¹⁵⁵⁶ <https://x.com/EuroMedHR/status/1850132619066855815> ;
https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1849793452768125336 ; <https://www.972mag.com/kamal-adwan-hospital-hussam-abu-safia/>

¹⁵⁵⁷ <https://x.com/DrTedros/status/1849765533559746576>

¹⁵⁵⁸ <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1850159665188835814>

¹⁵⁵⁹ See this coverage of Abu Safieh: https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1856926494812987823 ;
<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-11-26/ty-article/.premium/00000193-64ec-d610-add3-7fecf8c50000> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/02/opinion/gaza-hospital-kamal-adwan.html>

¹⁵⁶⁰ <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/northern-gaza-kamal-adwan-hospital-director-defies-israeli-order>

¹⁵⁶¹ <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1862595635129528515>

¹⁵⁶² https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/185010968249930157 ;
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DBlfCUmN2H3/> ; <https://www.972mag.com/kamal-adwan-hospital-hussam-abu-safia/> ; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/son-director-besieged-north-gaza-hospital-killed-israeli-forces> . A family member of the other doctor who remained in the hospital was killed a few weeks later: https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1856405028816466139

¹⁵⁶³ https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1850561278948884816 ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1850891173298106456>

¹⁵⁶⁴ <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1851262527893622978> ;
<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1854506337528365403> ;
<https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1855212378335391870> ;
<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1856359137212240103> ; for a description of the survival of 11 of 13 patients, despite doctors working outside their fields of specialty:
https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1857523662435287545.

¹⁵⁶⁵ https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1851212348448784503 ; also
<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1851262527893622978> ;
https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1857523662435287545

that there were no rescue services or ambulances to remove people from the rubble or to evacuate injured people, or shrouds to cover the dead.¹⁵⁶⁶

By early November, only one surgeon remained among the three hospitals in northern Gaza.¹⁵⁶⁷ Again, on multiple occasions in early November, the IDF attacked Kamal Adwan, causing direct injuries to pediatric patients.¹⁵⁶⁸ One attack caused a fire that destroyed the hospital's water tanks, obliterating the water supply.¹⁵⁶⁹ The hospitals were partially evacuated in early November, as some severely injured patients were transferred to hospitals in southern Gaza.¹⁵⁷⁰ Patients requiring ventilators could not be evacuated because no ambulances with ventilators remained in the Strip. Those patients' lives were thus dependent on the remaining fuel in Kamal Adwan.¹⁵⁷¹ Other attempts to deliver supplies failed.¹⁵⁷²

Abu Safieh's subsequent updates referred to the deaths of injured patients due to the lack of supplies,¹⁵⁷³ the death of people trapped under the rubble as there was no way to dig them out without the Civil Defense units,¹⁵⁷⁴ and the deaths of more doctors in North Gaza.¹⁵⁷⁵ On several occasions he noted that those who could reach the hospital may survive, and those that could not were left to die.¹⁵⁷⁶ Abu Safieh also spoke about attacks on the hospital itself, which injured staff members, and recounted how quadcopters would drop "sound bombs" and

¹⁵⁶⁶ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/185126027600148957> ;
<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1851262527893622978> ;
https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1857523662435287545

¹⁵⁶⁷ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1852434690600235131>

¹⁵⁶⁸ <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/israel-tells-un-cutting-ties-093606959.html> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1852018347073818847 ;
<https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1853682654345875956> ; <https://www.972mag.com/kamal-adwan-hospital-hussam-abu-safia/> ; <https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1853465675659898905> ;
https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1853420267965468995 ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1853119264066351514> ;
<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1853830231259263091>

¹⁵⁶⁹ <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1854479721876074814> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1852018347073818847 ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1853830231259263091>

¹⁵⁷⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-afda-fidd75c60000> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-humanitarian-response-update-27-october-9-november-2024>

¹⁵⁷¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-afda-fidd75c60000>

¹⁵⁷² For example: <https://www.unocha.org/news/todays-top-news-occupied-palestinian-territory-lebanon-haiti-philippines-ukraine> ; https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1857850411601858948

¹⁵⁷³ <https://x.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1855611844456501489> ;

<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1856007165791580237>

¹⁵⁷⁴ <https://x.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1855611844456501489> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1855860121982615882 ;

<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1856359137212240103> ; see also:

https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1855905476795306453 (6:00) ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1857523662435287545

¹⁵⁷⁵ <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1856359137212240103>

¹⁵⁷⁶ https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1855860121982615882

other bombs on the hospital courtyards.¹⁵⁷⁷ Several attempts to bring specialist doctors to the hospital were denied.¹⁵⁷⁸

By mid-November, Abu Safieh began reporting on Gazans with malnutrition who arrived at the hospital.¹⁵⁷⁹ A few days later, in the course of 24 hours the hospital received 17 cases of malnutrition and dehydration among children while an elderly died of dehydration.¹⁵⁸⁰ During another raid on the hospital dozens of Palestinians, including patients, were stripped (during cold weather) and detained, and some were subsequently taken to unknown locations.¹⁵⁸¹ Very few resources remained, so that the hospital called local Gazans with access to any medications to bring them to the hospital.¹⁵⁸² Anecdotal evidence, reportedly from the hospital, affirms the absence of doctors and resources, as well as the suffering of patients.¹⁵⁸³ Doctors had to cope with the loss of their family members. Two of the doctors who worked in Kamal Adwan lost 17 and 19 family members on consecutive days in mid November.¹⁵⁸⁴ A humanitarian mission on 17 November delivered fuel and evacuated more patients and caregivers, but was not allowed to deliver food and was able to deliver only some of the planned medical supplies.¹⁵⁸⁵ The hospital continued to be attacked – including injured people right outside the gate or Abu Safieh’s office.¹⁵⁸⁶ Late November attacks injured several medical staff, disabled the hospital’s power and oxygen supply, and targeted its water supply.¹⁵⁸⁷ The

¹⁵⁷⁷ <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1856007165791580237>

¹⁵⁷⁸ https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1857850411601858948

¹⁵⁷⁹ https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1857523662435287545 ;
https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1857850411601858948 . See also:
https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1857825220653994421 ;
https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1858528590297706553 .

¹⁵⁸⁰ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1859179872297382300> ;

<https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1859190079702405379>

¹⁵⁸¹ https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1858944607624835210 ; geolocation:

<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1858843252469772678>

¹⁵⁸² <https://x.com/ezzingaza/status/1857175646641762675>

¹⁵⁸³ https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1857803828101361766 ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1857624250414182465 ;

<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1858995226855309622>

¹⁵⁸⁴ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1858905688652570662> ;

<https://x.com/AbubakerAbedW/status/1858502758946455815> ;

<https://x.com/ezzingaza/status/1858599026511540389> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1858548788476137917

¹⁵⁸⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-239-gaza-strip>

¹⁵⁸⁶ <https://x.com/ezzingaza/status/1857175646641762675> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1858905688652570662> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1858787051639820359 ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1858548788476137917

¹⁵⁸⁷ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1859716133093507365> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1859718365360656672> ;

<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1859730966820028489> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1859985594039849426 ;

<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1859845890212503727> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1860165191184384398 ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1860165388526346423 ;

<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1861495746391859469> ;

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-241-gaza-strip> ;

<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1862935483950551249>

Director of the hospital's Intensive Care Unit was killed in one of these attacks.¹⁵⁸⁸ Abu Safieh himself was seriously injured together with his two daughters in another.¹⁵⁸⁹ Abu Safieh and other staff members held a makeshift protest in one of the hospital rooms, stating that 20 staff members have been hit within the hospital.¹⁵⁹⁰ Attacks on the hospital, sometimes as often as five times a day, continued into early December.¹⁵⁹¹ An international Emergency Medical Team was deployed to the hospital for the first time in 60 days on Dec. 1.¹⁵⁹²

Information from the other two hospitals in northern Gaza was far less accessible, but evidence collected by an early November 2024 AP investigation that spent months gathering accounts of the raids on the three hospitals in northern Gaza suggests similar experiences.¹⁵⁹³ A humanitarian mission to al-Awda hospital in mid-November delivered fuel and medical supplies to the hospital, and evacuated patients, but was not allowed to deliver food and water. Due to the lack of supplies, the hospital operated for only 4 hours a day.¹⁵⁹⁴ The hospital was attacked again in late November.¹⁵⁹⁵ Hospitals in Gaza City experienced many shortages as well.¹⁵⁹⁶

The aforementioned AP team interviewed many witnesses but “found that Israel presented little or even no evidence for a significant Hamas presence” in the northern hospitals.¹⁵⁹⁷ In al-Awda hospital, Israel never even claimed a Hamas presence. In the Indonesian Hospital, the IDF claimed to have identified a tunnel entrance in the yard using aerial photography, but after its raid showed no evidence for it and did not reply to a question about whether any tunnels were found in its raid. The IDF stated that Hamas used Kamal Adwan as a command center, but produced no evidence for this, and showed footage of a single pistol allegedly

¹⁵⁸⁸ https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1862459637301174377 ; <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1862458598909002041> . The hospital's chef was killed as well in an unclear location: <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1862838797961924646>

¹⁵⁸⁹ <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1860458131286790339> ; https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1860727752267063532 ; <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1861063612640420287> ; https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/186113833542332843 ; <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1860662455287885919> ; https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1860616353297690877 ; <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1860457388169363911> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1863944304466563475>

¹⁵⁹⁰ <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1861063612640420287> ; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1860719715242398140> ; https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1860773982770716878

¹⁵⁹¹ <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1864042273261977890>

¹⁵⁹² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-243-gaza-strip>

¹⁵⁹³ AP combined information from a round of attacks on these hospitals in late 2023, with findings of events as of early November 2024. For example, the accounts include a nurse who said he was so dehydrated that he began to hallucinate: <https://apnews.com/world-news/still-wrecked-from-past-israeli-raids-hospitals-in-northern-gaza-come-under-attack-again-00000192eebfd414a79ffbf88cc0000>

¹⁵⁹⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-239-gaza-strip> .

¹⁵⁹⁵ <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1859730966820028489>

¹⁵⁹⁶ https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1863059825745109229 ; this doctor appears to have been working in a hospital in Gaza City: <https://x.com/ezzingaza/status/1862231344329498677> ; <https://x.com/ezzingaza/status/1861854116114485655> ; <https://x.com/ezzingaza/status/1853541420017046013>

¹⁵⁹⁷ <https://apnews.com/world-news/still-wrecked-from-past-israeli-raids-hospitals-in-northern-gaza-come-under-attack-again-00000192eebfd414a79ffbf88cc0000>

found in the facility.¹⁵⁹⁸ From all the hospitals the IDF raided since the beginning of the war until the AP report, the IDF showed only a single tunnel shaft (the one on al-Shifa's grounds, see above).¹⁵⁹⁹

As I hope to have demonstrated through the evidence above, the situation in Gaza is a horrible catastrophe that continues to unfold daily in front of our eyes. The least I can do is to gather the evidence and speak up now.

Do not go gentle into that good night \ Dylan Thomas

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁵⁹⁸ See <https://apnews.com/world-news/still-wrecked-from-past-israeli-raids-hospitals-in-northern-gaza-come-under-attack-again-00000192eebfd414a79ffbf88cc0000>

¹⁵⁹⁹ According to AP: <https://apnews.com/world-news/still-wrecked-from-past-israeli-raids-hospitals-in-northern-gaza-come-under-attack-again-00000192eebfd414a79ffbf88cc0000>

Appendix 1 – The reasons underlying my definition of Israel’s actions in the war as genocide

Last updated: June 18, 2024

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 dehumanization 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 NGOs¹⁶⁰⁰ and now widely by international officials and lawyers¹⁶⁰¹ – 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 unwilling¹⁶⁰² (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.¹⁶⁰³ 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”.¹⁶⁰⁴ A sapper added “the only limit to the number of buildings we blew up was the time we had inside Gaza”.¹⁶⁰⁵ 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

¹⁶⁰⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/18/israel-starvation-used-weapon-war-gaza>

¹⁶⁰¹ See ICC’s expert panel report, paragraphs 28-33: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2024-05/240520-panel-report-eng.pdf>

¹⁶⁰² The general public support that the IDF must maintain plays a significant role – reining in commanders and soldiers would easily lose this support.

¹⁶⁰³ <https://twitter.com/justfp/status/177561311711465554>

¹⁶⁰⁴ <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>

¹⁶⁰⁵ <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2024/04/11/the-idf-is-accused-of-military-and-moral-failures-in-gaza>

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.¹⁶⁰⁶

¹⁶⁰⁶ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/250473/> ;
https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/s1xz6uvs ;
<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/election2022/article/s1ar9pebi>

Appendix 2 - Methodology

*Last updated:*¹⁶⁰⁷ November 29, 2024

Note: this is my attempt to clarify my methodology in evaluating the sources of information I have been using in this document while facing the uncertain reality in Gaza.

Overview

As discussed in depth in the Media section of this document, the war in Gaza features purposeful obfuscation, falsification and silencing of information by various actors involved in it. Since the veracity of most information available to the public is not absolute, attempts to make sense of the war such as this document must resolve a tension. An overly naive attitude to the evidence would result in the inclusion of much false content. On the other hand, an overly sceptical attitude to the evidence would result in knowing very little - which in turn serves the purpose of some of the actors in the war. The challenge is to minimize the false information while maximizing the true information. This often boils down to the contrast between what is desirable to what is realistic within the existing constraints. Key within this war is the absence of external reporting - Israel has kept international journalists out of the Gaza Strip for over a year as of writing, significantly reducing the amount of information coming out of Gaza. The clearest voices coming out of Gaza are those of Palestinian journalists, who have been killed - sometimes purposefully so - and intimidated by Israel (I cover both topics in length in the Massacres and Media sections of the document).

My personal approach has been to speak up to the best of my ability and share the truth as I understand it because of the urgency of the matter. I am aware that others may have purposefully or mistakenly misled me so that some of the content I have shared might be imprecise (if you know of any such content please inform me!). Nonetheless, I do not believe we have the privilege to wait for the fog of war to dissipate before taking action. As below, I assume very little and continuously and critically reflect on my sources, drawing on the skills I have been using in my professional work as a historian.

I measure the results of my efforts - this document - by the standard of other institutions who participate in the same discourse. These include official institutions such as the United Nations, as well as reputable NGOs such as Human Rights Watch or Amnesty International. Some of the products of these institutions include a section describing their methodology (such as this one), and some of their products do not contain footnotes that allow one to trace the evidence they used (and reconstruct, to some extent, their methodology). The standards of countries or the media tend to be far lower. While I believe everyone discussing the war (myself included) is biased to some extent, the more reputable sources at least make an effort towards mitigating some of these biases, while countries and the media are often quite obviously biased toward some political position.

¹⁶⁰⁷ I would like to thank an anonymous reader and Hanoach Sheinman who commented on the Nov. 2024 version of this section.

Within the current discourse, I believe this document is more robust than most other summaries, reports and analyses I have encountered. It is not perfect - its development can be traced through its earlier versions, which I keep available online – and it is not final. Nonetheless, the additional information that has surfaced over time has reinforced almost all of my earlier estimates. Furthermore, some of this new evidence has demonstrated that some of those earlier estimates have been too conservative.

Below, I lay out how I examine and assess the sources of information I have used in this document, which I divide into primary and secondary sources. I follow up with a few examples of types of evidence and how I evaluate them.

Primary sources

By primary sources I refer to several types of evidence:

1. Evidence recorded or transmitted directly by people who experienced some aspect of the war themselves. This category would include social media posts by Israeli soldiers or testimonies by Gaza civilians.

This is generally the most problematic type of primary source evidence for the purposes of this document as there is sometimes no way to verify the content and even identity of the people speaking. My tendency is to believe people who narrate their experiences in a detailed manner - whether a released Israeli hostage or a civilian in Gaza. The political opinion or affiliation of these sources may bias their accounts but it does not make them inherently unreliable. I consider these accounts more reliable if one of the following two conditions takes place.

- a. The person providing their testimony does it against or at least without concern to the broader interests of their side.
- b. The content shared corresponds to enough other testimonies, reports or stories that I have encountered, which I can cross-reference. The more *independent* sources say something in a detailed manner, the more I consider the information reliable.

It is always possible to cast doubt on such evidence and claim that it is part of a much broader influence operation meant to convince readers of some falsity. Based on my experience participating in this discourse for over a year, these attacks tend to be attempts to discredit voices of individuals or whole groups for political purposes rather than a pursuit of the truth per se. In those cases that have been exposed as influence operations (such as this¹⁶⁰⁸ or this¹⁶⁰⁹) - the content is often crude and lacks detail, making such cases easier to identify as false. While crude and undetailed information could be true, I prefer to wait until more information accumulates before incorporating it in my understanding of the war. In those very rare cases where I used it in earlier versions of this document because of the relative absence of evidence early in the war, I qualified my statements accordingly and actively searched for additional information, which I incorporate in more recent versions of the document.

I have been following the war carefully for over a year. Sources that continuously provide information that I can verify elsewhere become more reliable to me over time. If I discover

¹⁶⁰⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/technology/israel-campaign-gaza-social-media.html>

¹⁶⁰⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-covid-propaganda/>

that a source is purposefully lying or substantially wrong, I consider that source unreliable and refrain from using it. Sources that inadvertently make a mistake, discover it and admit they were wrong are exempt from this rule - I believe that such admissions make them more reliable (see point 1 above). I also do not include here minor mistakes such as using outdated material - these are ubiquitous and there is no point in dwelling on them now because they are less important in the present.

2. Facts reported by journalists in the war.

I generally trust fact-based reporting, but I read these critically and attempt to cross-reference them with other sources if possible. This kind of reporting can also be considered a secondary source (see #1 in that section below).

3. Statements, which I often cite because the people who make them hold some official position or have some social influence, or participate in the war in some function.

I use these statements as evidence for the intentions or goals of the individual or the government they represent. These statements are not necessarily true. Because of the temporary nature of much of this material, I often end up referring in my footnotes to a random twitter account that happened to record and upload this particular type of content, which would otherwise be inaccessible to me. In these cases I clarify here that I cite the original content shared rather than the twitter account of the person sharing it, with whom I might vehemently disagree.

I also accept as factual statements in media pieces about some official saying something using a direct quote. I will evaluate the statement of course, but I do not doubt that he or she said it if a journalist says so. Media reports using indirect quotes can be purposefully misleading, for example in the case of the Israeli media's treatment of the former hostage Noa Argamani (for example here¹⁶¹⁰).

4. Official documents by an institution referring to policy, procedure and the like.

These documents are also not necessarily true, but they are official and thus represent reality or what that institution wants others to believe is reality. I use such documents for their factual claims after carefully evaluating them, and can also use such documents for the purpose or intent of the issuing institution.

Secondary sources

1. Media reports.

¹⁶¹⁰ https://www.mako.co.il/press_and_marketing-news_press/Article-fc827fb13af7191027.htm

Traditional media includes a wide variety of sources of different quality. Much of this media is quite clearly biased toward one or the other side and I employ the rationale I discussed above (under Primary Sources - 1). Detailed investigations that include specific bits of verifiable/falsifiable information are often more reliable. No media outlet is perfect and even the most reputable traditional media can make major errors, as demonstrated in the case of the New York Times' *Screams Without Words* story or in its pro-US government / pro-Israel biased representation of the war (both cases are discussed in the Media section).

I also take into consideration the individual journalists responsible for a story or report in my evaluation. Journalists who "got things right" in the past, have access to valuable sources and whose accounts were not refuted become more reliable over time. Journalists who act as de facto mouthpieces of a state or institution (i.e. repeat their narratives while applying little to no criticism) are far less reliable even if they are sometimes used to leak information that I cite.

I refrain as much as possible from using analyses or opinion pieces that appear in the media as I believe that their value for understanding the present is limited and it is better for one to make up their own mind based on evaluating the evidence themselves.

2. NGO reports.

There is no hard rule here, but in general, I consider NGOs that allow access to the sources they used through their footnotes or by quoting them directly with identifiable details as more reliable than those that do not. Within this category one should try to balance this with what is realistic.

I consider NGOs that are more obviously focused on partisan politics on Israel/Palestine/Gaza as more biased and less reliable than others. My impression is that NGOs with wider interests (e.g. human rights in general) are often less biased and more reliable. I end up using NGOs that transmit more information from the ground in Gaza even when their methodology is unclear when this is the highest quality of information I can find. As above, I consider as untrustworthy NGOs that I have discovered purposefully falsify information or lie.

Examples

- The images and videos Israeli soldiers upload in which they present their experience in Gaza and in which they act immorally or enjoy such behavior.

This is a primary source. I consider this content generally authentic since the soldiers present information that is politically harmful for their own side. There have been a few cases in which such material was found to be inauthentic, but these are negligible compared to the quantity of information wilfully shared.

- ZAKA accounts of the horrors of Oct. 7.

This was a primary source that drew much attention early in the war. As an NGO, I believed the ZAKA accounts at first, but a few months after the beginning of the war investigative reports revealed that some of the worst atrocities they reported, which also drew the most attention, were fake. Furthermore, ZAKA did not admit that this information was fake. As a result, ZAKA lost its credibility in my eyes.

- Accounts of food prices within Gaza.

Some of the food prices are anecdotally mentioned by individuals in Gaza; other food prices are mentioned in media articles; and some food prices are mentioned in NGO reports. All three independent sources tend to point to similar fluctuations over time, and these fluctuations are correlated with the availability of food within the Gaza Strip (or specific parts of it) as measured by other indicators, such as the number of trucks getting into Gaza. Therefore, I consider these reliable in general.

- Accounts of massacres and deaths in Gaza.

Throughout the war there has been a very large number of videos and images that claim to show the survivors or victims of Israeli attacks. These are often bloodied and sometimes include gory details. They are shared by individuals from Gaza and outside of Gaza, some NGO members and some media outlets such as al-Jazeera. There have been only a few cases in which this kind of material has been claimed to be fake, false or misleading. The massacres and deaths corroborate written and statistical information about the results of Israeli attacks, for example in investigative reports and NGO publications. While one cannot be completely certain that all this material is reliable, there has been enough of it coming from independent sources for me to judge most of it as reliable.

The experience of trying to determine the truth in the process of writing this document has been illuminating for me, often revealing the wide gaps between existing evidence and the lack of reporting on that evidence, or between sometimes wild claims that are accepted as truth and the absence of evidence for those claims. I am aware that some would disagree with my methodology. I appreciate any non-partisan suggestions to make it more robust for the sake of all who would rather unravel the truth, even if that truth is deeply uncomfortable.