

Bearing Witness – Gaza

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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 of 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 support 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 Hanoch 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](#) and [Google Scholar](#) 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 Hanoch 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%2C0.5&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%2C0.5&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-cZWtE?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/skdoktlr> . 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/0902ebd180920f26.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/1847322016975552784>

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-6dfdee0d0000>

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-62907898cead13dbcf603592263904c>

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/_/1128

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](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.10%20International%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/hyvnkorgn>; <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: July 5, 2025⁹⁹

This section examines the massacre of Palestinians through kinetic military means such as airstrikes, bombardments and gunshots. The deaths of civilian populations through the parallel dismantling of the health system, absence of food, water and exposure are discussed in the Causing the Deaths of Civilian Populations section of this document. The discourse, statements and public sentiment that enabled these practices is discussed in the Dehumanization section.

Numbers and ratios

Key numbers

As of July 2, 2025, Israel has killed at least 57,012 Gazans – about 2.5 percent of the total population of Gaza.¹⁰⁰ The death toll passed 50,000 in late March 2025, a year and a half after the beginning of the war.¹⁰¹ The number of dead Gazans is conservative as it will almost certainly increase (see discussion below).¹⁰² It does not include anyone whose death was not reported to Gaza's overwhelmed health ministry.¹⁰³ The death toll is accepted by Israeli officials (within a small margin)¹⁰⁴ and media,¹⁰⁵ despite sporadic attempts to cast doubt on them which have not been accepted (see detailed discussion in the Media section below). As

⁹⁹ I thank Sonja Brentjes, an anonymous reader, Hanoach Sheinman, C. W. and two more anonymous readers for reviewing interim versions that led to the July 2025 version of this section. The anonymous reader also checked all footnotes in an early version of this section.

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-2-july-2025>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2025-03-25/ty-article-static/00000194-ea5a-db48-a395-ea7ea9470000>

¹⁰² <https://www.mekomit.co.il/מספרי-ההרוגים-בעזה-כנראה-גבוהים-פי-שלו/>; see also, for example: <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2024/05/23/how-many-people-have-died-in-gaza>

¹⁰³ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694>; for an example: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/gaza-palestinian-down-syndrome-left-die-israeli-soldiers-after-combat-dog-attack>

¹⁰⁴ <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, compared to approximately 31,000 then according to Palestinian Ministry of Health: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-135-enarhe>); <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/us/politics/netanyahu-schumer-israel.html> (28,000 Palestinians in late March, compared to about 30,000 or 32,000 then according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-144-enarhe>); <https://www.mekomit.co.il/הצבא-בדק-ומצא-שדיווחי-ההרוגים-במשרד-הב/> (January 2024); 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>

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/world/Article-1095370>; <https://www.srugim.co.il/1028923--מספר-40000-ההרוגים-בעזה-חצה-את-ה-40000>; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-08-14/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000191-418b-df16-a1d1-4bafd9020000>; <https://news.walla.co.il/break/3700311>

of mid June 2025, 17,121 identified children have been killed.¹⁰⁶ Notably, during the two months of the second ceasefire in early 2025 more than 155 Palestinians were killed.¹⁰⁷

According to the Gazan Ministry of Health, a year into the war Israel had killed all members of 1,206 families in Gaza, with 2,271 additional families having only a single survivor.¹⁰⁸ In June 2024, at least 60 families lost 25 or more members; one extended family lost 270 members.¹⁰⁹ Polls among Palestinians in southern Gaza over 2024 found that approximately 60% of respondents had lost a member of their family during the war.¹¹⁰ Testimonies from Gazans who lost their family members attest to the shock and horror they felt.¹¹¹

An academic study published in the prestigious Lancet journal in February 2025 estimated that deaths were substantially undercounted. The study compared three lists of Palestinian deaths to argue that mortality as reported from October 7 to the end of June 2024 was under-reported by 41 percent, putting the estimated death toll from traumatic injury at that point at 64,260.¹¹² The Economist extrapolated the same ratio to the known death toll in early May 2025 and suggested that the actual death toll is between 77,000 and 109,000.¹¹³ A different study at the Lancet estimated that the life expectancy in Gaza decreased by about 35 years in the first year of the war.¹¹⁴ A June 2025 preprint academic article by war casualty expert Michael Spagat and others surveyed a sample of 2,000 Gazans household and estimated that by early January 2025 some 75,200 people died violent deaths and another 8,540 people died excess (i.e. not natural deaths) nonviolent deaths. Similar to the Lancet study above, the authors found that the Gazan Ministry of Health undercounted violent mortality by 39

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-2-july-2025>

¹⁰⁷ <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1882800964043714793> ; <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/death-and-destruction-returning-to-rafah> ; <https://pchrgaza.org/israel-persists-in-genocide-by-escalating-killings-bombings-and-starvation-in-gaza-2/> . The killings occurred during both the 42 days of the official ceasefire and the subsequent lull that lasted until mid March 2025.

¹⁰⁸ https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1856636690888032684 ; see also <https://x.com/AJEnglish/status/1841574836226740269> . The Director General of the Gaza Ministry of Health asserted in November 2024 that 1,367 families lost all their members: https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1855905476795306453 . For an example, see: <https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1876608230035743185>

¹⁰⁹ <https://apnews.com/article/gaza-palestinians-families-israel-war-deaths-a9f8bcfe402c17f1f78903eae67b7a7d>

¹¹⁰ 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> ; 57% in September: <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/991>

¹¹¹ <https://www.regthink.org/gaza-fb-testimonies/> ; also <https://www.ajiunit.com/article/testimonies-from-gaza/>

¹¹² [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)02678-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02678-3/fulltext). For coverage: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/gaza-war-toll-likely-significantly-undercounts-deaths-says-study-2025-01-09/>; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkpzpnrujg>

¹¹³ <https://www.economist.com/interactive/middle-east-and-africa/2025/05/08/how-many-people-have-died-in-gaza>

¹¹⁴ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)02810-1/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02810-1/abstract)

percent.¹¹⁵ By June 2025, the total number of excess deaths in Gaza (violent and non-violent) was probably around 100,000.¹¹⁶

At least 134,592 people (almost 6 percent of Gaza's population) have been injured.¹¹⁷ The large number of civilian injuries often receives far less attention than civilian deaths. Nonetheless, as periodic coverage demonstrates, for many of the injured these injuries change their lives, often in debilitating ways – such as the loss of eyes, limbs and movement.¹¹⁸ At least a quarter of those injured are estimated to have life-changing injuries that require years of rehabilitation services.¹¹⁹ The situation is exacerbated since in many cases the injured civilians must also cope with the loss of family members. Only a few of them can be evacuated from the Gaza Strip for further treatment, in which case they leave the rest of their families behind.¹²⁰ The employees of one hospital in central Gaza stated that the second ceasefire in January 2025 was the first time in which they did not receive an injury in about 10 hours.¹²¹ Notably, for some Gazans even light injuries could end with their death because of the poor condition of Gazan hospitals.¹²²

The official numbers of deaths and injured do not include an unknown number of missing people, many of whom were buried under the rubble of destroyed buildings.¹²³ The specific number of these missing people is unclear. Before the second ceasefire estimates put it at over ten thousand.¹²⁴ The spokesperson of Gaza's Civil Defense claimed at the same time that 2,840 corpses of Gazans were incinerated by the use of weapons that produce very high temperatures.¹²⁵ During the ceasefire hundreds of corpses were retrieved (845 until mid March 2025),¹²⁶ and the estimate was removed from UN OCHA's weekly summary (but

¹¹⁵ <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2025.06.19.25329797v3> ; https://x.com/Michael_Spagat/status/1937516288860991768

¹¹⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2025-06-25/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/00000197-a74e-dd94-addf-a75f76ff0000>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-2-july-2025>

¹¹⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/card/2024/11/19/world/middleeast/palestinians-qatar-israel-hamas-war> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/12/18/magazine/israel-gaza-war-medical-treatment-who.html> ; <https://explosiveweaponsmonitor.org/fragments/vol/2/issue/4/article/voices-from-gaza/> ; https://x.com/Dr_Muneer/status/1911891755441463353 ; <https://www.msf.org/no-relief-and-no-chance-recovery-gaza-burn-patients>

¹¹⁹ <https://www.who.int/news/item/12-09-2024-who-analysis-highlights-vast-unmet-rehabilitation-needs-in-gaza/> ; for example: <https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1878833911469580391>

¹²⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/12/18/magazine/israel-gaza-war-medical-treatment-who.html> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ji8PaJNyGV4>

¹²¹ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1880867457877041341>

¹²² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-07-01/ty-article/.premium/00000197-c26a-d2f9-a3f7-c2ff3a120000>

¹²³ <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://www.dropsitenews.com/p/israel-intensifies-mass-killing-gaza-starvation>

¹²⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-31-december-2024>

¹²⁵ <https://x.com/sahatenglish/status/1907346090862551438> ; <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20250120-gaza-civil-defence-2800-bodies-incinerated-and-we-are-searching-for-the-bodies-of-10000-others/> . This claim seems generic and the estimate is based on unclear methodology.

¹²⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-271-gaza-strip>

maintained).¹²⁷ Some sources within the Gaza Strip continued to make estimates that reached over 14,222 (sometimes including people who detained in Israel).¹²⁸ The methodology for these estimates and their reliability are unclear but considering the destruction and the known casualties they do not seem unreasonably high.

Israeli estimates of Hamas fighters killed

The IDF provided very little aggregated information about Palestinian mortality since the beginning of the war, occasionally highlighting the number of militants killed. The general term used in Hebrew is terrorist (מחבל). These estimates are inconsistent, are not updated regularly, and are not based on any clear methodology beyond general unverifiable statements.¹²⁹ Notably, several of Israel's assessments have been proven wrong. Israel claimed to have killed at least three senior Hamas commanders who were discovered to be alive about a year later.¹³⁰ Field commanders noted the low accuracy of many of the reports about killing militants in specific events or brief time periods since those reports included both more vague estimates of enemy kills as well as unarmed individuals who were shot at without checking who they were or whether they were actually killed (and not injured).¹³¹ Reporters have called attention to some of these cases where ten of 200 and potentially one of 90 killed Palestinians were armed yet the IDF spokesperson described all dead as militants.¹³²

American sources estimated Hamas militants before the war at between 20 and 25 thousand.¹³³ Israeli sources put the pre-war number at 20 thousand to 40 thousand.¹³⁴ The number of Palestinians killed in the October 7 attacks inside Israel – probably including both militants and looters – was found to be 1,609.¹³⁵ These are often counted separately from the militants killed during the war.

¹²⁷ Removal: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-11-march-2025> ; maintaining the number: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-271-gaza-strip>

¹²⁸ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/3/gaza-death-toll-rises-close-to-62000-as-missing-added> ; <https://english.palinfo.com/news/2025/02/26/334700/>

¹²⁹ Some of this material has been collected by other Israeli sources, see for example: <https://idanlandau.com/2025/01/26/ה-את-ה-מוחלטלשבור-א-ת-ה-26-01-2025/> ; <https://www.zman.co.il/554867/> ; <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/1057860-2/> . Few others have challenged the numbers, see for example:

<https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/15587747>

¹³⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14247984> ; https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2025_q1/Article-5a31c05ab70c491026.htm

¹³¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14247984>

¹³² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-12-18/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000193-d01a-dcf9-afbb-deff388f0000> ; <https://x.com/haimhz/status/1924934076705734681>

¹³³ https://www.dni.gov/nctc/terrorist_groups/hamas.html

¹³⁴ <https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/6361323dde5a810/Article-c24e032a916ab81026.htm> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r18x5ysxix> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2019-05-05/ty-article/.premium/0000017f-f869-d318-afff-fb6b4c340000> ; <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1070223> ; <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-783243>

¹³⁵ https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2024_q1/Article-bb644614196ed81026.htm

Early in the war, some Israeli estimates described all dead – using numbers provided by the Ministry of Health in Gaza – as militants (for example “over 4,600” in late October 2023).¹³⁶ Senior officials stated even higher numbers than the Ministry of Health, such as about 20,000 dead, mostly militants, only a week later.¹³⁷ The IDF spokesperson stated in late October 2023 that the IDF was not dealing with the number of dead or wounded in Gaza and pointed journalists to the Gazan Ministry of Health for those numbers.¹³⁸

An early estimate of killed militants appeared in late November 2023 in an offhand statement that 1,000-2,000 militants were killed.¹³⁹ At the same time, about 15,000 Palestinians had been killed.¹⁴⁰ Three days later, Israeli sources began reporting much larger numbers of 5,000-6,000 militants killed.¹⁴¹ The significant jump suggests that this was an attempt at narrative control – specifically lowering the percentage of non-combatants killed – rather than an actual change (see also Media and Propaganda section). Israeli estimates of killed militants reached 7,000-9,000 in December (out of some 21,000 Palestinians); a named general stated the more specific 7,860.¹⁴² In late January, the IDF claimed it had killed 9,000 militants and neutralized almost 20,000 militants in total (including wounded and arrested militants) which were 48-60 percent of Hamas’ total fighting force.¹⁴³

By late February, Israeli estimates increased to 10,000-12,000 (out of some 30,000 Palestinians killed),¹⁴⁴ although the IDF spokesperson stated an even higher number of “more than 13,000”.¹⁴⁵ The IDF estimates reached more than 12,000-13,000 in early April (out of some 33,000 Palestinians).¹⁴⁶ Yet these numbers – that were provided by the IDF to the top Knesset security committee – seemed doctored to some of the politicians on the committee. When

¹³⁶ https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2025_q1/Article-5a31c05ab70c491026.htm

¹³⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ritobe47t>

¹³⁸ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/501586>

¹³⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/26/idf-messaging-suggests-gaza-truce-unlikely-to-last-much-beyond-tuesday>. The statement was later corrected to note that the number includes only militants killed in Gaza rather than also those attacking on Oct. 7. An estimate of some 3,000 killed militants was presented earlier, in mid November, but without a clear source:

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-11-14/ty-article/.highlight/0000018b-ca7f-dd30-a5ff-effff7640000>

¹⁴⁰ This and subsequent statements in this section use the Palestinian Ministry of Health data, periodically released and accessible through OCHA updates such as this:

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-31-december-2024>

¹⁴¹ https://x.com/Nadav_Eyal/status/1729751699475013921; <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-officials-2-civilian-deaths-for-every-1-hamas-fighter-killed-in-gaza/>;

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

¹⁴² https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/12/14/a-war-of-images-in-gaza_6341566_4.html; <https://www.skynews.com.au/world-news/global-affairs/around-8000-hamas-fighters-killed-in-gaza-war-says-idf-spokesman/video/1bc009foe12ida67ff8671cebe72cieo>;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sioaw3bwp>; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bypef84vt>

¹⁴³ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-783243>

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-says-12000-hamas-fighters-killed-in-gaza-war-double-the-terror-groups-claim/>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68387864>;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/blogs/118daysofwar/article/sksjxiy9a>

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/defense/article/15347981>

¹⁴⁶ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/six-months-of-war-idf-data-shows-604-soldiers-killed-more-than-9000-rockets-fired-by-hamas/; <https://jewishinsider.com/2024/04/israel-hamas-gaza-terrorists-war-six-months-oct-7-iran>; <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/734508/>

some of them physically visited the IDF units responsible for collecting intelligence data, they found out that the actual IDF estimates were “smaller. Much smaller” with a gap “in the thousands”.¹⁴⁷ By mid July, the IDF estimated it had killed 14,000 militants.¹⁴⁸

In mid August, the IDF stated that it had killed more than 17,000 militants (out of some 40,000 Palestinians).¹⁴⁹ At the same time, an Israeli journalist claimed the confirmed kills “that IDF forces saw their corpses with their own eyes and counted them one by one” was about 15,000.¹⁵⁰ This statement is extremely unlikely, as it appears that most people were killed from afar by air attacks (bombing or drones). Both the IDF and the State of Israel repeated the 17,000 number on October 7, 2024, but the IDF’s messaging moderated the number to 14,000 killed “with high confidence” and another 3,000 killed “with medium-low confidence”.¹⁵¹ In late November, Netanyahu stated that the number of militants killed was “close to 20,000”.¹⁵² In late January 2025 the IDF Chief of Staff made the same estimate.¹⁵³ As of writing, since late January there have been no new estimates. To date, no independent evidence supports these estimates.

In January 2025 US intelligence estimated that Hamas has recruited between 10 and 15 thousand members since the beginning of the war.¹⁵⁴ According to IDF data presented at a Knesset committee Hamas recruited new militants faster than the IDF was killing them (US messaging was more moderate).¹⁵⁵ Israeli estimates put the number of active militants in January at 20 to 23 thousand.¹⁵⁶ By April 2025 Israeli estimates of active militants grew to 40 thousand.¹⁵⁷

Noncombatant ratio

Another ratio that drew much public attention was the ratio between combatants and non combatants killed, which is high according to all estimates. According to publicly available

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/15587747> . An anonymous IDF source relayed that the actual number was less than 10,000 in May 2024, <https://mida.org.il/2024/05/23/-שקרים-לכם-על-היום-שאחר-שמספרים-לכם-על-היום-שאחר>

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rkwwzleoor>

¹⁴⁹ <https://apnews.com/article/gaza-death-toll-hamas-war-israel-40000-32a79e03c8eb62669412dab23d03219e> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skerdsscc>

¹⁵⁰ https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1824087988843770122

¹⁵¹ <https://www.gov.il/he/pages/oneyeartothe massacre071024> ; <https://www.idf.il/-אתרי-יחידות-שנה-למלחמת-חרבות-ברזל-דוח-השקיפות-שנה-למלחמה/חיסול-מחבלים-שנה-למלחמה>

¹⁵² <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/pm-netanyahu-on-the-ceasefire-in-lebanon-26-november-2024>

¹⁵³ <https://www.idf.il/-אתרי-יחידות/יומן-המלחמה/כל-הכתבות/הפצות-הרמטכ-ל-בנושא-פרישתו> . A couple of days earlier he stated that 3,000 militants were killed since early October 2024, see <https://www.idf.il/-אתרי-יחידות/יומן-המלחמה/כל-הכתבות/הפצות-לא-היינו-מגיעים-להסכם-בתנאים-האלה-אם-חמאס-לא-הייתה-במצב-כל-כך-קשה>

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hamas-has-added-up-15000-fighters-since-start-war-us-figures-show-2025-01-24/>

¹⁵⁵ https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2025_q1/Article-f9f5a381ce22491027.htm ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhXkpYFDIvk>

¹⁵⁶ https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2025_q1/Article-f9f5a381ce22491027.htm

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/2025-04-10/ty-article/.premium/israeli-defense-officials-estimate-hamas-will-avoid-tunnel-warfare-focus-on-explosives/00000196-1eca-d78d-aide-redba2600000>

data some 55% of identified deaths in Gaza are women, children, and the elderly.¹⁵⁸ Israeli spokespersons themselves – who have a vested interest in reducing the ratio – have estimated that two civilians have died for each Hamas militant, and stated that it is a justified ratio.¹⁵⁹ In reality, the ratio is likely higher and civilian deaths could reach 75% and even more of the total death count.¹⁶⁰ Other observers have reached similar percentages.¹⁶¹ A November 2024 UN Report independently verified the deaths of over 8,000 Gazans in the first six months of the war, using three independent sources for each death case. The report found that 70% of the deaths were of women and children and that the age group with the most deaths was 5-9 year old children.¹⁶² Other observers reached higher numbers of noncombatants, but did not base that on a clear methodology.¹⁶³ An analysis by Action on Armed Violence estimated that 74% of casualties (but potentially as many as 91%) were of civilians.¹⁶⁴ A Hamas member in Qatar claimed Hamas lost some 6,000 militants in February 2024 (meaning some 80% of deaths were of civilians), although another Hamas member later rejected that claim.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-2-july-2025>. The ratio of women and children deaths has decreased over time: <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-hamas-war-casualties-toll-65e18f3362674245356c539e4bc0b67a>

¹⁵⁹ <https://cnn.com/2023/12/05/middleeast/israel-hamas-military-civilian-ratio-killed-intl-hnk/index.html> ; on other occasions, Israel has claimed a 1:1 ratio, for example: <https://www.jns.org/israel-releases-new-gaza-death-toll-claims-historically-low-civilian-deaths/> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVjVDPl6a4&t=540s> ; https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-ratio-of-hamas-combatants-to-gazan-civilians-killed-in-ongoing-war-is-about-1/

¹⁶⁰ 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 lower: <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.

¹⁶¹ See for example this twitter thread: <https://x.com/themusht/status/1835160041424314577>

¹⁶² The authors examined deaths in residential buildings (7,607 of 8,119 verified deaths) – the subsequent age groups with the most mortality were 10-14 followed by 0-4. The pattern of mortality distribution over age is sharply different from previous rounds of hostilities in Gaza in 2021 and 2014. See: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/opt/20241106-Gaza-Update-Report-OPT.pdf> (p. 6-9). For coverage: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-11-10/ty-article/.premium/00000193-12b0-de12-adbb-93f787460000> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn5welupgdo>

¹⁶³ One NGO had estimated in January 2024 that some 92% of casualties were of civilians, and repeated this estimate by October 2024. <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6093/On-100th-day-of-Gaza-genocide-100,000-Palestinians-killed,-missing-or-wounded> ; <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6494> (p. 68) ; see also this update from late December 2024 (“more than 90% of the dead are civilians”; note also here the smaller number of people buried under the rubble compared to most estimates at the time, 10,000): <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1871926114555437270>

¹⁶⁴ <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/casualties-in-gaza-israels-claims-of-50-combatant-deaths-dont-add-up-at-least-74-of-the-dead-are-civilians/> . This was based on the Gazan Ministry of Health information as well as historical data to calculate likely ratios of combatant vs. civilian deaths in potential combatant demographics (e.g. military-age males).

¹⁶⁵ <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>

According to the key investigative reports on the subject, Israel is aware of the high number of civilians that will be hit by its attacks and especially at the beginning of the war, has proceeded to bomb buildings with little oversight, often through employing an artificial intelligence system (“The Gospel”). The Gospel is a machine-learning software built on hundreds of predictive algorithms that allow soldiers to query a vast database (“the pool”).¹⁶⁶ The number of acceptable civilians harmed by strikes against military targets (“collateral damage”) increased from dozens to hundreds of civilians already on Oct. 7 (see below).¹⁶⁷ In some cases Israel assassinated Hamas commanders by bombing a densely populated area, killing over a hundred civilians and wounding hundreds more.¹⁶⁸ As of late April 2024, the IDF had announced the names of only 75 targeted Palestinians despite over 34,000 reported fatalities.¹⁶⁹

After the breakdown of the second ceasefire in March 2025 it appears that the ratio of killed civilians increased. After two months of fighting, the IDF claimed to have killed some 500 militants out of 2,780 reported Palestinian deaths (so 82% of deaths were of uninvolved civilians).¹⁷⁰ In late May the IDF estimated that the ratio of non-combatants to combatants killed was 3:1 (so 75% of deaths were of uninvolved civilians).¹⁷¹ Some Israeli experts also noted the high ratio of civilian deaths, including on Israeli TV.¹⁷²

Accepting the IDF overall number of militant kills at face value can serve as a minimum to the ratio of uninvolved civilians killed at the time of writing: 67 percent.¹⁷³ This is very likely an underestimate. The ratio does not take into consideration the thousands of Palestinians still buried under the rubble, while the aforementioned anecdotal evidence that many killed Palestinians that were defined as “terrorists” were unarmed and had no known connection to militant organizations suggests that the ratio of killed uninvolved civilians is significantly higher.

A different indicator for the extent of civilian casualties in Gaza is the ratio between IDF fatalities and Gazan civilian fatalities. An Israeli scholar noted in November 2024 that this

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/12/29/ai-israel-war-gaza-idf/>

¹⁶⁷ <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>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html>; 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>

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/12/28/world/middleeast/jabaliya-gaza-strike-israel.html>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html>

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/opt/20241106-Gaza-Update-Report-OPT.pdf> (p. 10#17)

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/1058990-2/>; <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1922648338119197095>. See also the similar estimate of 400 here, a few weeks earlier: <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1191477>

¹⁷¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-05-25/ty-article/00000197-082c-d211-a5df-icedae000000>

¹⁷² <https://x.com/ntiyft/status/1910741278788379068>

¹⁷³ I arbitrarily chose to accept the Israeli “close to 20,000” as 19 thousand, in which case 33% of the killed are militants (19,000/57,012).

ratio was 1:68, more than double the ratio in the 2014 Israel-Gaza war (1:32) and significantly higher than the US' most aggressive battle in the Iraq War (the Second Battle of Fallujah).¹⁷⁴

Accuracy

The standard source of information for Palestinian deaths is the Gaza Ministry of Health. The Ministry releases daily updates about kinetic deaths, and periodically releases detailed lists of Gazan dead – ten to date – to the public.¹⁷⁵ The evidence I have seen indicates that the Gaza Ministry of Health's numbers are as accurate as can be expected given the circumstances.¹⁷⁶ They are accepted as accurate by UN agencies, many academics and international NGOs and international media outlets,¹⁷⁷ as well as some Israeli media outlets.¹⁷⁸ Especially early in the war, the media highlighted attempts to doubt these numbers as discussed in detail in the Media and Propaganda section of this report.¹⁷⁹

Closer analyses corroborate the Ministry of Health's numbers. A study by Airwars, a British NGO that assesses claims of civilian harm in conflict, found that the Ministry of Health's data in the first weeks of the conflict - in which it reported the deaths of 7,000 people – was credible.¹⁸⁰ Experts, such as Mike Spagat from the Action on Armed Violence NGO, who examined Ministry of Health reports (lists of identified Palestinian deaths) found the first report credible, noted that the quality of data of the subsequent two reports (from January and April) deteriorated,¹⁸¹ and acknowledged that the accuracy improved in the September report.¹⁸² The October 2024 report further improved in quality, increasing the percentage of identified dead from 85% to 97%.¹⁸³ The March 2025, the May 2025 and the June 2025 – the most recent one as of writing – reports identified well over 99% of the dead.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/the-edge/2024-11-20/ty-article/.highlight/00000193-4977-d824-afff-4fff88b20000> ; I was not able to confirm the 1:56 ratio claimed for the Second Battle of Fallujah – which appears to have been smaller.

¹⁷⁵ <https://archive.org/embed/moh-death-toll-lists-original>

¹⁷⁶ In contrast, the IDF “rarely tried to count how many civilians had been killed”. See: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html>

¹⁷⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/ISRAEL-PALESTINIANS/FATALITIES/byvrxlqeqve/>

¹⁷⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-08-14/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000191-418b-df16-aid1-4bafd9020000> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-08-15/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000191-4739-d2c6-a5dd-df39302f0000> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bygiqa6nux>

¹⁷⁹ See an analysis of such an attempt from December 2024 here: <https://www.mekomit.co.il/תוני-התמותה-של-משרד-הבריאות-בעזה-מהימ> , and another attempt from March 2025 here: https://x.com/History_Speaks/status/1935078326642819396 ; <https://aoav.org.uk/2025/the-vanishing-children-the-gaza-health-ministrys-quiet-retraction-of-thousands-of-deaths-fuelled-doubt-but-the-data-suggests-something-far-darker-than-deception/>

¹⁸⁰ <https://gaza-civilians.airwars.org/> ; other experts agree with this estimate: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/25/world/middleeast/gaza-death-toll-israel-war.html>

¹⁸¹ Israel has formally challenged some of the details of the list published in April: <https://embassies.gov.il/UnGeneva/NewsAndEvents/MediaStatements/Documents/Israel-Initial-Response-OHCHR-Background-Note-June2024-PUBLIC.pdf>

¹⁸² <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/tracking-gazas-war-death-toll-ministry-of-health-improves-accuracy-in-latest-casualty-report/> . For samples from the document see: <https://x.com/sharifkoudous/status/1835292186818056667>

¹⁸³ September: 34,344 names of 40,534 dead: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-28-august-2024>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot->

Many of the earlier issues derive from the fact that the Gaza health system was clearly under immense strain as some hospitals stopped reporting deaths entirely.¹⁸⁵ Due to the overwhelming number of deaths that continued to accumulate (up to 1,000 on some days, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health), the full identification and reporting of casualties has been slow and difficult.¹⁸⁶ Independent observers commended the Ministry of Health for its ongoing efforts to produce accurate data, with one observer pointing out that “nothing of comparable quality is available” for other wars.¹⁸⁷ In late September 2024, the Director of the Ministry of Health’s Information Center, Zaher al-Wahaidi, gave at least two separate interviews in which he explained the methodology and the challenges associated with the data, resolving many of the remaining open issues.¹⁸⁸ Over time, even people who had been openly skeptical of the Ministry of Health’s data early on came to acknowledge its reliability.¹⁸⁹

Non-kinetic (excess) mortality

Given the above, the actual number of deaths caused by the conflict – including indirect deaths, which are not included in the official tally above – is very likely much higher.¹⁹⁰

[gaza-strip-9-october-2024](#) ; October: 40,717 names of at least 42,010 dead:

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-231-gaza-strip>

¹⁸⁴ For the March 2025 report: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-25-march-2025>: 50,021 names out of 50,144 dead three days later. For May 2025 and others see <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/assessing-gaza-death-toll-after-eighteen-months-war> (p. 5). The June 2025 report includes 55,202 dead, while the mortality three days later was 55,637.

¹⁸⁵ <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/analysis-of-new-death-data-from-gazas-health-ministry-reveals-several-concerns/>

¹⁸⁶ <https://gaza-civilians.airwars.org/#ISPT0431> ; see also the note of up to 700 deaths in a single hospital in peaks of violence here: <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/how-gaza-health-ministry-counts-dead>

¹⁸⁷ <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/analysis-of-new-death-data-from-gazas-health-ministry-reveals-several-concerns/> ; <https://everycasualty.org/opening-the-black-box-fresh-insights-into-the-casualty-recording-system-of-the-gaza-ministry-of-health/> ; <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/inside-gazas-graveyard-uncovering-the-complexities-of-casualty-recording-amidst-conflict/> ; for a more critical perspective, see <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/untangling-uns-gaza-fatality-data> ; <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/heres-real-problem-uns-revised-gaza-death-toll> .

The open issues raised in these have been largely resolved by more recent data and evidence (see below).

¹⁸⁸ <https://everycasualty.org/opening-the-black-box-fresh-insights-into-the-casualty-recording-system-of-the-gaza-ministry-of-health/> ; <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/how-gaza-health-ministry-counts-dead> ; <https://everycasualty.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/MoH-methodology-explanations-from-AIWahaidi-August-2024.pdf> ; <https://news.sky.com/story/gaza-conflict-thousands-remain-unidentified-as-death-toll-reaches-40-000-13197287>

¹⁸⁹ <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/flawed-critique-how-andrew-foxs-report-for-the-henry-jackson-society-on-gaza-death-toll-lacks-evidence-for-key-claims/> . The first author on this analysis, Gabriel Epstein, had been quite openly critical and skeptical towards the ministry’s data, see: <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-hamas-manipulates-gaza-fatality-numbers-examining-male-undercount-and-other> ; <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/assessing-gaza-death-toll-after-eighteen-months-war>

¹⁹⁰ See this interview that notes that “ the Ministry of Health has a policy of recording only direct casualties of war, such as those caused by missile strikes or war-related injuries”: <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/how-gaza-health-ministry-counts-dead> . For a discussion of the potential excess mortality as of October 2024, see: https://dataactivists.org/estimating_death_toll_of_war_on_gaza/

Although there are certainly examples from similar events that demonstrate that such excess mortality is greater than mortality from kinetic means, and can continue long after the original event, it is also much harder to accurately measure. I split this discussion into its own subsection for these reasons.

Three main pathways to such indirect deaths include economic collapse and food insecurity, damage to public services and health infrastructure, and environmental contamination.¹⁹¹ Children – about half the population of the Gaza Strip – are more vulnerable to malnourishment and death from starvation. They can suffer from four different kinds of undernutrition, which can co-exist: wasting (low weight for one’s height because of intense hunger), stunting (low height for one’s age), underweight (low weight for one’s age), and micronutrient deficiencies (essential nutrients are missing from one’s diet). The effects of undernutrition can last for years and some might be irreversible.¹⁹²

A piece in the prestigious journal *The Lancet* noted that in recent conflicts indirect deaths range from three to 15 times the number of direct deaths. By applying a conservative estimate of four indirect deaths to one direct death, the authors estimated in July 2024 that up to 186,000 deaths could be attributed to the war in Gaza up to that point.¹⁹³ Some experts endorsed these results and even suggested that they are conservative.¹⁹⁴ Others have been more critical of them, but remained almost certain that the number of deaths exceeds the official death toll.¹⁹⁵ In early October 2024 a group of 99 healthcare workers signed a letter estimating that the death toll had likely already surpassed 118,908.¹⁹⁶ The chair of global health at the University of Edinburgh estimated in September 2024 up to 335,500 deaths in Gaza until the end of the year.¹⁹⁷ The Rector of the University of Glasgow, who is also a surgeon who volunteered in Gaza, estimated the death toll based on excess mortality to be “closer to 300,000” in late December 2024.¹⁹⁸ The Spagat paper listed above reached a much lower number of excess mortality – only 8,540 until January 2025.¹⁹⁹ Although it is an outlier, it is the only estimate I have seen that featured a robust methodology and therefore should be considered more seriously than the other estimates.

Several doctors acquainted with the Gaza Strip’s health system pointed out that the destruction of its medical infrastructure and especially human capital would have consequences for years. For example, by February 2025 only one of six vascular surgeons

¹⁹¹

https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2023/2024/Costs%20of%20War_Human%20Toll%20Since%20Oct%202027.pdf

¹⁹² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/millions-children-food-crises-heightened-risk-lifelong-damage-2025-01-31/>

¹⁹³ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)01169-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01169-3/fulltext)

¹⁹⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/sep/05/scientists-death-disease-gaza-polio-vaccinations-israel>

¹⁹⁵ <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/a-critical-analysis-of-the-lancets-letter-counting-the-dead-in-gaza-difficult-but-essential-professor-mike-spagat-reviews-the-claim-the-total-gaza-death-toll-may-reach-upwards-of-186000/> ; <https://aoav.org.uk/2024/tracking-gazas-war-death-toll-ministry-of-health-improves-accuracy-in-latest-casualty-report/>

¹⁹⁶ <https://www.gazahealthcareletters.org/usa-letter-oct-2-2024>

¹⁹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/sep/05/scientists-death-disease-gaza-polio-vaccinations-israel> (revising down her earlier estimate of half a million, made in December 2023).

¹⁹⁸ https://www.democracynow.org/2024/12/30/gaza_hospitals

¹⁹⁹ <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2025.06.19.25329797v3>

working in the north had remained, and there were no more cancer pathologists or nephrologists (who specialize in kidney care).²⁰⁰ This destruction would likely increase the excess mortality although its precise effect would be difficult to measure.

Comparisons with other conflicts

An independent non-profit that collects data on violent conflict worldwide concluded that Palestine was “the most dangerous place in the world in 2024”.²⁰¹ The number and rate of violent civilian deaths has been much higher in Gaza than other 21st century wars.²⁰² Airwars, for example, asserted in an early report that “the first weeks of the war in Gaza were among the deadliest for civilians in modern warfare”.²⁰³ In a subsequent report, they stated that “By almost every metric, the harm to civilians from the first month of the Israeli campaign in Gaza is incomparable with any 21st century air campaign. It is by far the most intense, destructive, and fatal conflict for civilians that Airwars has ever documented”.²⁰⁴ One of the notable measures was the number of cases in which more than a certain number of civilians were killed in a given conflict. As of February 2025, Airwars had already fully recorded more than five cases in which more than 100 civilians were killed, compared to a handful of cases in all other conflicts in the previous decade combined.²⁰⁵ One expert claimed Israel’s war on Gaza may have been the fastest case of killing 10% of the population in the 21st century, and suggested that the death of 2% of the population placed the Gaza conflict among the five most lethal conflicts in the 21st century.²⁰⁶ Oxfam stated that “more women and children have been killed in Gaza by the Israeli military over the past year than the equivalent period of any other conflict over the past two decades”.²⁰⁷

In Iraq, for example, the population in 2003 was 11 times larger than Gaza’s population in 2023 (27 million compared to 2.3 million).²⁰⁸ According to one analysis, Coalition forces (i.e. US and allies) killed 17,075 civilians over 15 years (2003-2017), of which 13,764 were killed in the first five years (2003-2007).²⁰⁹ A different analysis found that Coalition (i.e. US and allies) forces were responsible for killing 11,516 civilians over six years (2003-2008).²¹⁰ Although the total

²⁰⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/feb/22/gaza-wars-aftereffects-palestinian-death-toll-warn-uk-doctors-disease-malnutrition-healthcare>

²⁰¹ <https://acleddata.com/2024/08/05/palestine-mid-year-metrics-2024/> ;

<https://acleddata.com/2024/12/06/palestine-2024-conflict-index-infographic/>

²⁰² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-08-14/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000191-418b-dfi6-aid1-4bafd9020000>

²⁰³ <https://gaza-civilians.airwars.org/>

²⁰⁴ <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/> ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/146470/>

²⁰⁵ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/146470/>

²⁰⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-08-14/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000191-418b-dfi6-aid1-4bafd9020000>

²⁰⁷ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/more-women-and-children-killed-gaza-israeli-military-any-other-recent-conflict>

²⁰⁸ <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/iraq-population/>

²⁰⁹ <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>. Adding the Iraqi state forces to the Coalition as a perpetrator does not change things substantially (15,492 civilians killed between 2003-2007, and overall 24,825 civilians between 2003-2017).

²¹⁰ 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”.

amount of civilian deaths was much higher, the majority of civilians killed died in local sectarian warfare, for example through suicide bombings – rather than direct violence by Coalition forces. With regards to militant kills, during the first five years of the war in Iraq (2003-2007), the US forces killed 18,832 “suspected insurgents”.²¹¹

In the US war in Afghanistan (with a population of about 20 million in 2001),²¹² 46,319 civilians and 52,893 opposition fighters were killed over the course of 20 years (2001-2021).²¹³ Here too many of the civilians were killed by opposition forces rather than the US.²¹⁴

The battles of Mosul (2016-2017) and Raqqa (2017) against ISIS were considered “some of the fiercest urban fighting since the Second World War.”²¹⁵ In October 2023 alone, three times more civilians were killed in Gaza than were killed in Raqqa’s deadliest month and twice more compared to Raqqa’s entire length of four months.²¹⁶ The estimated daily average number of bombs dropped during the first week in Gaza, more than 850, was higher than the highest known number of bombs dropped in a single day on Raqqa.²¹⁷ The percentage of fatalities known to be children was far greater in Gaza in October 2023 (36%) than in Raqqa (25%) or Mosul (9%).²¹⁸ In Gaza far more women were killed in Oct. 2023 (1,213) compared to the entire battles of Raqqa (281) and Mosul (123).²¹⁹ In the first seven weeks of the war, Israel dropped or fired at least 30 times more munitions than the US-led coalition in its campaign against ISIS in its first seven weeks.²²⁰

In 13 years of war in Syria (2011-2024), a recent tally found that through the war 15,671 women and 25,857 children were killed. Although Syria’s population in 2011 was ten times more than Gaza’s (almost 23 million people), the death toll for women and children in Gaza in one year of fighting was roughly half of that of 13 years of war in Syria.²²¹

The aforementioned Michael Spagat collected information from various other conflicts on the percentage of women and children among violent fatalities based on the existing datasets he could find.²²² As a reminder, in the case of the Gaza war as of writing the ratio is about 51%.²²³

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>

²¹¹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20200727084052/https://www.stripes.com/news/insurgent-body-count-records-released-1.69423>

²¹² <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/afghanistan-population/>

²¹³ <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures/2021/human-and-budgetary-costs-date-us-war-afghanistan-2001-2022>

²¹⁴ <https://unama.unmissions.org/protection-of-civilians-reports> (various reports there); https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2020/Rising%20Civilian%20Death%20Toll%20in%20Afghanistan_Costs%20of%20War_Dec%207%202020.pdf

²¹⁵ <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/>

²¹⁶ <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/> (p. 6)

²¹⁷ <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/> (p. 8)

²¹⁸ <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/> (p. 13)

²¹⁹ <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/> (p. 15)

²²⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-strikes-takeaways.html>

²²¹ The total number of civilians killed in Syria over those 13 years is 164,223, see <https://www.syriahr.com/en/328044/>; for Gaza’s numbers after a year of fighting, see the 13,319 children and 7,216 women here: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-29-october-2024>

²²² https://x.com/Michael_Spagat/status/1929243229980897709

In the rest of this paragraph the number of fatalities does not refer to the total number of fatalities in a conflict but to those identified with demographics in the source Spagat used. The Saudi war in Yemen (2015-2022) resulted in a ratio of 25.2% (842 women, 1,424 children of 8,983 known fatalities). The Kosovo war (1998-2000) resulted in a ratio of 20.4% (1,523 women, 1,235 children of 13,548 known fatalities). The Tigray war (2020-2023) resulted in a ratio of 9.1% (221 women, 186 children of 4,490 known fatalities). The Syrian Civil War (covering 2011-2016) resulted in a ratio of 20.1% (11,112 women, 17,734 children of 143,624 known fatalities) or 20.2% (16,515 women, 30,293 children of 231,889 known fatalities) through a different data source covering 2011-2024. The war in Columbia (1985-2018) resulted in a ratio of 21.6% (33,426 women, 64,084 children of 450,666 known fatalities). The war in Northern Ireland (1961-2001) resulted in a ratio of 15.7% (269 women, 285 children of 3,525 known fatalities). Among civilians in the Iraq war (2003-2008) the ratio was 17% (1,981 women, 2,106 children of 24,251 known fatalities). In the war in Bosnia (1991-1995) the ratio was 5.3% (8,548 women, 3,372 children of 96,895 known fatalities). In the war in Guatemala (1962-1995) the ratio was 25.3% (972 women, 1,289 children of 8,926 known fatalities). In the war in Sudan (2023-2024) the ratio was 23.9% (273 women, 222 children of 2,073 known fatalities). Among civilians in the Ukraine war (2014-2025) the ratio was 42% (4,125 women, 685 children of 11,445 known fatalities; the number does not include 200-300 thousand combat fatalities).²²⁴ These data demonstrate again the lack of proportion between the ratio of women and children killed in Gaza and the other conflicts listed above.

International responses

The amount of civilian deaths as well as the fact that their dying could be watched in real time online shocked many people worldwide. Many international officials and institutions have repeatedly commented on it throughout the war; the survey below is partial with additional content appearing elsewhere in this report. Already in November 2023 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]”.²²⁵ The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reiterated that there is no safe space in Gaza.²²⁶ Although the International Court of Justice on January 26, 2024 called upon Israel to take “all measures in its power” to prevent the killing of Palestinians, as of writing, Israel has continued to kill an average of over 50 Palestinians a day.²²⁷ A panel of UN experts stated in February that arms exports to Israel were illegal and must stop immediately,²²⁸ while a Dutch court ruled to halt the export of F-35 jet

²²³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-2-july-2025>

²²⁴ https://x.com/Michael_Spagat/status/1929243229980897709

²²⁵ https://twitter.com/UN_News_Centre/status/1726609880986083685

²²⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-82>

²²⁷ On Jan. 26 (day 112) the death toll was 26,083. As of July 2, 2025 (day 634), the death toll was 57,012.

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-103>;

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-2-july-2025>

²²⁸ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/arms-exports-israel-must-stop-immediately-un-experts>

parts to Israel.²²⁹ Also in February, 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 1994.²³⁰ In March, Canada declared it would stop selling arms to Israel because of its conduct of war in Gaza, although some Canadian companies continued to do so in subsequent months.²³¹ The UK's Foreign Office received legal advice that Israel has broken international humanitarian law, yet the UK has refrained, so far, from making this information public to avoid acting upon it.²³² By April 2024, Airwars, the aforementioned NGO documenting cases of civilian harm using open-source information, had compiled preliminary information about over 3,000 incidents, more than it collected 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".²³³ Also 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,²³⁴ and backed a call for an arms embargo on Israel.²³⁵ Those countries that sold arms to Israel (especially the US, as well as Germany and the UK) faced pressure to stop sales as well.²³⁶ 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 or reliable". Among the potential violations noted in the assessment were the repeated striking of protected sites and civilian infrastructure and "unconscionably high levels of civilian harm to military advantage".²³⁷ 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.²³⁸ Israel refused, and in the following 48 hours, conducted more than 60 air raids on Rafah.²³⁹

²²⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/dutch-court-orders-halt-export-f-35-jet-parts-israel-2024-02-12/>

²³⁰ <https://twitter.com/OwenJones84/status/1760286175699272027> ; <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/14/gaza-war-israel-civilian-deaths-urban-warfare-hamas/>

²³¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-19/ty-article/0000018e-584f-d88e-a39e-7dfc4580000> ; <https://www.readthemapple.com/canada-sold-18-9-million-of-military-goods-to-israel-despite-pause/> . A similar case happened with Italy: <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/italy-arms-exports-to-israel-continued-despite-block.-minister-says/73736656>

²³² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/30/uk-government-lawyers-say-israel-is-breaking-international-law-claims-top-tory-in-leaked-recording> ; also <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-oxfam/gaza-israel-crisis-sign-petition-call-for-ceasefire-now/does-the-uk-sell-arms-to-israel/>

²³³ <https://airwars.org/conflict/israel-and-gaza-2023/> ; <https://twitter.com/ShaykhSulaiman/status/1776263272800354451>

²³⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/05/un-human-rights-council-israel-gaza-biden-netanyahu>

²³⁵ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148261>

²³⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/world/europe/israel-weapons-sales-genocide.html>

²³⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/some-us-officials-say-internal-memo-israel-may-be-violating-international-law-2024-04-27/>

²³⁸ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/24/middleeast/israel-icj-gaza-rafah-south-africa-ruling-intl/index.html>

²³⁹ <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>

In June 2024, the UN Secretary General included Israel on a blacklist of countries that harm children in conflict areas, alongside ISIS, Russia, Syria and Somalia.²⁴⁰ Doctors Without Borders stated that the massacres illustrated a “complete disregard for Palestinian lives”, while the head of the organization’s emergency unit asserted that “we can no longer accept the statement that Israel is taking ‘all precautions’ [to protect civilians] —this is just propaganda”.²⁴¹ In July, the EU’s top diplomat described one of the Israeli operations as a “massacre” and stated that “the bloodbath must end”.²⁴² In the same month, the ICJ ruled that Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories – Gaza was mentioned explicitly – is illegal. The Israeli Prime Minister responded that this was a “decision of lies”.²⁴³ The UN General Assembly voted to adopt a resolution demanding that Israel end its “unlawful presence” in the occupied Palestinian territories (124 for, 14 against, 43 abstentions).²⁴⁴ In September, the UN Secretary-General said that the death and destruction in Gaza were the worst he had seen during his tenure.²⁴⁵ In October, he expressed shock at the “harrowing levels of death, injury and destruction” in north Gaza.²⁴⁶ In November, Doctors Without Borders stated that it “witnessed an amount of suffering that is beyond imagination”, while its president stated that “Israeli forces had no intention to spare civilians and that... warnings [to civilians] are merely cosmetic”.²⁴⁷ In December, the organization stated that “people in Gaza are living in a death trap”.²⁴⁸ At the same time, the pope condemned the Israeli strikes on Gaza, stating “this is cruelty, this is not war”.²⁴⁹ Two media freedom organizations issued reports that accused Israel of carrying out a “massacre” of journalists in Gaza.²⁵⁰

In January 2025 the UN’s High Commissioner for Human Rights said that “a human rights catastrophe continues to unfold in Gaza before the eyes of the world”,²⁵¹ while the pope described the humanitarian condition as “very serious and shameful”.²⁵² International responses abated during the ceasefire that began later in January and March, but, when Israel attacked by surprise and brought an end to the ceasefire in March the executive director of UNICEF stated that the million children in Gaza “have been plunged back into a world of fear

²⁴⁰ <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/o95/o7/pdf/n2409507.pdf>

²⁴¹ <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/latest-massacres-gazas-middle-area-illustrate-complete-disregard-palestinian-lives>

²⁴² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jun/09/israel-gaza-hostages-rescue-eu-outrage>

²⁴³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjerjzxlpvdo>

²⁴⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/09/1154496>

²⁴⁵ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-chief-calls-death-and-destruction-in-gaza-the-worst-hes-seen-during-tenure/>

²⁴⁶ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/10/1156181>

²⁴⁷ <https://www.msf.org/in-gaza-all-components-society-have-been-destroyed> ; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1923120153052520479>

²⁴⁸ <https://www.msf.org/life-death-trap-gaza-palestine>

²⁴⁹ <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20241222-pope-again-condemns-cruelty-of-israeli-strikes-on-gaza>

²⁵⁰ <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20241212-israel-condemned-by-media-groups-over-gaza-journalist-massacre>

²⁵¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/01/israels-attacks-have-devastating-impact-gazas-hospitals-turk-tells>

²⁵² <https://www.timesofisrael.com/addressing-diplomats-pope-says-humanitarian-situation-in-gaza-is-shameful/>

and death”.²⁵³ In April 2025, MSF stated that Gaza “has become a ‘mass grave’ for Palestinians and those helping them” and that “Palestinian lives are once again being systematically destroyed”.²⁵⁴

Indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks

This section examines Israeli attacks. According to international humanitarian law, attacks must distinguish between military objectives and civilian persons or property. Therefore, for example, using a method or means of combat whose effects cannot be limited is prohibited.²⁵⁵ Attacks must be proportional in two aspects. First, any attack must be proportionate to the threat that is faced, and retaliation must be proportionate to the attack suffered. Second, incidental civilian casualties or damages must be proportionate to the direct and concrete military advantages expected. Attacks that do not meet the proportionality requirement are considered indiscriminate.²⁵⁶

To determine whether an attack was indiscriminate and/or disproportionate, the attacker estimates of its attacks, their impacts and collateral damage as well as estimates of civilian population are important. On several occasions during the war it has been revealed that the IDF’s estimates of these variables were poor. As late as January 2025 evidence demonstrated that the IDF was unable to correctly estimate the number of Palestinians in a certain area. Although the IDF estimated only 3,000 people were left in Beit Lahiya, some 14,000 people subsequently evacuated the area after it was attacked. These misassessments made the IDF more inclined to employ more firepower in areas, resulting in higher civilian casualties.²⁵⁷ Other evidence suggests that civilian casualties in attacking a building were estimated based on superficial calculations such as dividing the number of people currently in the entire district by the number of people estimated to live in that district. Estimates of people currently in the district were based on cellphone usage, but did not take account of cases in

²⁵³ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/statement-unicef-executive-director-catherine-russell-attacks-gaza>

²⁵⁴ <https://www.msf.org/gaza-has-become-mass-grave-palestinians-and-those-helping-them>

²⁵⁵ <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/attacks/> . This issue is covered in articles 51(4) and (5) of the Additional Protocol I of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions as well as in Customary International Humanitarian Law Rules 11 to 14. For the sources see https://storage-ddh-prod.s3.fr-par.scw.cloud/filer_public/2e/80/2e8091e5-7049-4b86-b445-d1d0f3850d76/005-additional_protocol_relating_to_the_protection_of_victims_of_international_armed_conflicts.pdf ; <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule12>

²⁵⁶ <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/attacks/> ; <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/proportionality/> . This issue is covered in articles 51(5)(b), 57(2)(a)(ii) and (b) of the Additional Protocol I of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions as well as in Customary International Humanitarian Law Rule 14. For the sources see https://storage-ddh-prod.s3.fr-par.scw.cloud/filer_public/2e/80/2e8091e5-7049-4b86-b445-d1d0f3850d76/005-additional_protocol_relating_to_the_protection_of_victims_of_international_armed_conflicts.pdf ; <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule14>

²⁵⁷ https://x.com/Doron_Kadosh/status/1874334279737503943 ; https://gisha.org/UserFiles/File/LegalDocuments/HCIJPetition2024/Petitioners_urgent_update_heb_1125.pdf ; https://gisha.org/UserFiles/File/LegalDocuments/HCIJPetition2024/State_request_to_update_he_161224.pdf

which cellphones were off or children who did not have cellphones.²⁵⁸ Moreover, Israel's evacuation orders to the civilian population in Gaza ahead of attacks contained many errors.²⁵⁹

Anecdotal evidence demonstrated the use of massive firepower within crowded urban areas, for example in the formation of "firebelts".²⁶⁰ Other videos suggest that large explosive weapons were used against "soft" targets such as tents.²⁶¹

Policy and the bombing campaign

Immediately at the beginning of the war, the Israeli Minister of Defense told soldiers that he had "released all restraints" in conducting the war,²⁶² while the IDF spokesperson stated that the IDF was "focused on what causes maximum damage" rather than accuracy.²⁶³ In a meeting at the Israeli cabinet very early in the war, when the Israeli Chief of Staff noted that the IDF attacked 1,500 targets, Netanyahu burst out and shouted "why not 5,000?!". The Chief of Staff responded that the IDF does not have 5,000 approved targets, to which Netanyahu answered "I don't care about targets... take buildings down, bomb with everything we have".²⁶⁴ The anecdote demonstrates the pressure to generate targets which was especially high early in the war (see below on numbers of targets).

Much later, it was revealed that a formal order given already on October 7 gave officers the authority to risk killing up to 20 civilians in each strike against a bank of thousands of militants and military sites.²⁶⁵ On October 8, a formal order permitted strikes on military targets in Gaza to endanger up to 500 civilians a day before removing the limit only two days later.²⁶⁶ The mood within the IDF at the time, according to five senior officers, was "harbu darbu", i.e. attacking without restraint.²⁶⁷ The rules of engagement were later tightened up to an extent, although they remained far looser than they were before October 7 (see also below).²⁶⁸ As of writing, I know of no indications from within Israel that any of the individuals involved in the lenient use of force was held accountable (e.g. was indicted).²⁶⁹

²⁵⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/12/29/ai-israel-war-gaza-idf/>

²⁵⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68687749>

²⁶⁰ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1908032444327969005> ;
<https://x.com/Mistaclim/status/1908177575408484599> ; on this case see also:
<https://x.com/talhagin/status/1908252178827063786>

²⁶¹ <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1903878976784732408> ;
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DIBZFANsjbo/?igsh=c2d5YTdsNXMxMDNi>

²⁶² <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>

²⁶³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/10/right-now-it-is-one-day-at-a-time-life-on-israels-frontline-with-gaza> ; the Guardian had changed its translation from an earlier version ("emphasis is on damage, not accuracy"), but a direct Hebrew quote appears in Ha'aretz ("הדגש הוא על נזק ולא על דיוק") , see <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-10-10/ty-article/.premium/0000018b-18aa-d465-abbb-1cbeg3a60000> ; <https://x.com/Haaretz/status/1711618357412475302>

²⁶⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra14303894>

²⁶⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html>

²⁶⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html>

²⁶⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html>

²⁶⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html> ; but also:
https://x.com/C14_news/status/1909995167303553391

²⁶⁹ But see <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/politics/security/idf-904549334/>

Already in late October 2023, US officials knew that Israel was regularly bombing buildings without solid intelligence that they were legitimate military targets.²⁷⁰ About 40-45% of the air-to-ground munitions Israel dropped on Gaza by December 2023 were unguided.²⁷¹ These bombs have a wide margin of error of about 100 feet around the intended target.²⁷² According to a former IDF officer, the IDF's form of combat in the first half year of the war was "unusually wasteful" as it attacked "innumerable targets, without asking whether it's worth attacking them".²⁷³ A similar situation occurred during June 2025, when Israeli air force planes tasked with responding to Iranian missiles and drones finished their daily missions by using any leftover munitions on targets in Gaza, resulting in hundreds of additional targets attacked in Gaza.²⁷⁴

When targeting junior militants marked by the IDF's AI system (discussed below), the army preferred to use such "dumb" bombs rather than precision bombs because of their lower cost, despite their significantly higher collateral damage. An 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 without even hitting the target.²⁷⁵

As discussed above, 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. These junior operatives were not tracked before the war. When targeting senior officials the killing of more than 100 and up to 300 civilians was authorized, "crossing an extraordinary threshold for a contemporary Western military".²⁷⁶ Experts in international humanitarian law expressed alarm at these ratios.²⁷⁷ For comparison, for the US the number of permissible civilians deaths to kill Saddam Hussein was 29.²⁷⁸ When the US assassinated Bin Laden the authorized number of

²⁷⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/18/biden-israel-gaza-rafah-palestinians/> ; the IDF's indiscriminate attacks were acknowledged in Israeli media as early as December 2023: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/the-edge/2023-12-06/ty-article/.highlight/0000018c-3f17-d8ec-a79c-ffff38800000>

²⁷¹ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/13/politics/intelligence-assessment-dumb-bombs-israel-gaza/index.html> ; also <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html>

²⁷² <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf>, paragraph 80.

²⁷³ <https://www.haaretz.com/magazine/2024-03-07/ty-article-magazine/.premium/its-a-war-of-cruel-rich-people-israels-form-of-combat-in-gaza-is-unusually-wasteful/0000018e-1aa8-d1cc-abfe-dfadbc010000>

²⁷⁴ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1210969> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1940477653058048181>

²⁷⁵ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/> ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-strikes-takeaways.html>

; also <https://twitter.com/WarWatchs/status/1783121782557352320> ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html>

²⁷⁶ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/> ;

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

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-strikes-takeaways.html>

; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/145768/> ; quote from

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html>

²⁷⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/03/israel-gaza-ai-database-hamas-airstrikes>

²⁷⁸ <https://www.businessinsider.com/saddam-husseins-life-was-deemed-worth-29-civilian-lives-as-the-us-invaded-iraq-2015-3>

permissible civilian deaths was 30 while the number was 0 for most low-level commanders in the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁷⁹ In at least three cases such major Israeli airstrikes did not kill their high-value targets.²⁸⁰ For context, a former legal adviser to the IDF stated that in 2014, the acceptable civilian casualty ratio was “one civilian for a high-level terrorist”, indicating the significant change in this policy over the past decade within Israel.²⁸¹ This mass-generation of low-value targets was stopped later partly due to American pressure,²⁸² but subsequent attacks continued to be authorized despite knowing that many uninvolved citizens would be harmed.²⁸³ In April 2025 a senior IDF officer admitted that they approve killing 70 other Palestinians to kill a Hamas platoon commander.²⁸⁴ Notably, Israel’s long-standing use of targeted assassinations, including against high-value targets, has not dismantled Palestinian resistance movements.²⁸⁵ In May 2025 Israel’s Finance Minister Betzalel Smotrich declared that the IDF was now conducting a campaign against the civilian rule of Hamas, including medical officials (see below).²⁸⁶

Since the beginning of the war, Israel used highly destructive weapons in the vicinity of hospitals. A study found that in the first 40 days of the war, Israel regularly used one ton bombs (Mk 84) near hospitals. Of the 36 hospitals in the Strip, nine had at least one bomb crater within their lethal range (360m) and 30 had such a crater within their damage range (800m). These results suggest indiscriminate bombing in dangerous proximities to hospital infrastructure.²⁸⁷ Moreover, if in October 2023 the IDF claimed it does “not target hospitals”, by mid 2025 attacks on hospitals were relatively common. In one week in May 2025, for example, ten hospitals and clinics were hit by IDF attacks.²⁸⁸

The extent and results of the bombing campaign

²⁷⁹ <https://www.defensedaily.com/pentagon-removed-non-combatant-casualty-cut-off-value-doctrine-2018/pentagon/> . This policy was removed from the US doctrine in 2018 as neither effective or useful.

²⁸⁰ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/145768/>

²⁸¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/12/29/ai-israel-war-gaza-idf/> . The ratio cited is an underestimate as far more uninvolved civilians were killed than “high-level terrorists” in 2014.

²⁸² <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

²⁸³ <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>

²⁸⁴ <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2025-04-26/ty-article-opinion/.premium/netanyahus-lust-for-revenge-against-gaza-taints-us-all/00000196-7331-dd54-a7d6-f335df420000>

²⁸⁵ <https://www.nybooks.com/online/2024/08/15/killing-their-way-to-peace-israeli-assassinations/> ; for former assassinations, see Bergman, Ronen. (2018). *Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations*.

²⁸⁶ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1925887119475532125>

²⁸⁷ <https://journals.plos.org/globalpublichealth/article?id=10.1371/journal.pgph.0003178>

²⁸⁸ <https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1922332306905116674> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-05-24/ty-article/.premium/00000196-f8bf-d6d3-ab9e-fbbf99ac0000> . See also: <https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1923063954965922193> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1922421186249818396> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1922326879068991623> ; <https://x.com/GazaMedicVoices/status/1922386763231731988> ; <https://x.com/orfialkov/status/1922395827143618643>

A large portion of the Gazan deaths result from Israel's bombing campaign.²⁸⁹ This campaign was particularly intense in first few months of the war and has been declared to be "one of the deadliest bombardments of the 21st century".²⁹⁰ During 25 days in October 2023 alone, at least 5,139 civilians were killed, at least 1,900 of those were children, and there were at least 65 incidents in which 20 or more civilians were killed.²⁹¹ According to Airwars, all of these measures were far worse than those in other conflicts Airwars has tracked since its establishment in 2014.²⁹²

On October 7 alone, the Israeli air force dropped 530 tons of bombs on Gaza, using more than 500 one-ton bombs.²⁹³ In the first two days of the war, the Israeli air force attacked 1,500 targets.²⁹⁴ Over the first five days of the war, Israel attacked 2,687 targets.²⁹⁵ In the first week of the war, Israel dropped 6,000 bombs on Gaza weighing 4,000 tons.²⁹⁶ As of December 2023, Israel had dropped 29,000 bombs, munitions and shells on Gaza.²⁹⁷ These numbers were much higher than those of previous recent Israeli military offensives.²⁹⁸ They were also higher than other recent conflicts. Experts estimated that in the first two weeks of the war Israel used at least 1,000 air to surface munitions daily, while in the most intense period of the coalition campaign against ISIS in Mosul (March 2017) some 5,500 munitions were dropped throughout the month.²⁹⁹ During the first six weeks of the war, Israel deployed 2,000-pound bombs in areas it designated safe for civilians on at least 208 occasions.³⁰⁰ Especially during the beginning of the war, Israel used irregular shipments of 155mm shells that included shells

²⁸⁹ See for example the breakdown of kills on a single random day:

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1874877329119285710> . The cited letter seems authentic:

<https://x.com/ntiyft/status/1911047022435500395>

²⁹⁰ For the quote: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html>

²⁹¹ <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/>

²⁹² <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/>. Compared to other conflicts in Airwars' database, the Gaza numbers represent four times more civilians killed in a month than any other conflict; almost seven times more children deaths in a month; and almost triple the number of high-fatality incidents.

²⁹³ <https://www.israelhayom.com/2025/01/31/how-the-israeli-air-force-caught-completely-off-guard-by-hamas/>

²⁹⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra14303894>

²⁹⁵ <https://www.maariv.co.il/breaking-news/Article-1044157>

²⁹⁶ <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/israel-hamas-war-gaza-strip/card/israeli-air-force-says-it-has-dropped-6-000-bombs-on-gaza-QKiaSnupiGqytMVO86PU> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/12/israel-says-6000-bombs-dropped-on-gaza-as-war-with-hamas-nears-a-week>

²⁹⁷ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542> ; a different estimate cited over 25,000 tons of explosives dropped by early November, see:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/11/9/israel-attacks-on-gaza-weapons-and-scale-of-destruction>. See also the estimate of 18,500 targets struck until the late November 2023 ceasefire:

<https://www.reuters.com/graphics/ISRAEL-PALESTINIANS/GAZA-ORDNANCE/byvrxbenwve/>.

²⁹⁸ <https://www.sgr.org.uk/resources/gaza-one-most-intense-bombardments-history>

²⁹⁹ <https://www.ft.com/content/7b407c2e-8149-4d83-be01-72dcae8aee7b>;

<https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/92961/pdf/>, Fig. 1. The average throughout the campaign was around 3,222 per month.

³⁰⁰ <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>

dating back to the 1950s, increasing the risk of missing the target and misfiring.³⁰¹ More broadly Israel has used lower quality ammunition, so that between 10 and 20 percent of bombs do not explode upon impact.³⁰²

By October 2024, Israel had carried about 40,300 airstrikes on the Gaza Strip.³⁰³ At least until November 2024, Israel did not release more information about the scale of weapons it used.³⁰⁴ In December 2024, the Israeli air force stated that it carried out more than 1,400 airstrikes in Gaza.³⁰⁵ In the first 200 days of the war, Israel is estimated to have dropped more than 70,000 tons of explosives on the Gaza Strip.³⁰⁶ Over the first year of the war, the number reportedly increased to 86,400 tons.³⁰⁷ For comparison, during the Iraq War the US and UK militaries dropped a total of 29,199 bombs on Iraq in 2003, with another 3,678 munitions dropped from 2004 to 2010. Iraq is over a thousand times larger than Gaza (437,000 km² vs. 365 km²).³⁰⁸ During the renewed bombing campaign after the ceasefire in early 2025, the IDF attacked about 2,900 targets over two months (March-May 2025).³⁰⁹

An in-depth investigation of the casualty events over October 2023 reveals the indiscriminate nature of Israel's attacks. Of 551 incidents of civilians being killed over October 2023, 63 percent involved the death of at least one child, while the average number of children killed in these incidents was five (in 47 incidents more than ten children were killed; the highest number of children deaths was 69, on Oct. 31).³¹⁰ Of 606 published incidents of civilian harm (including injuries) over Oct. 2023, at least 26 include public evidence of the death of at least one militant (including cases where militant status is ambiguous or contested). This corresponds to about four percent of the incidents that caused civilian harm. In these 26 incidents, at least 522 civilians were killed compared to a total of 32-60 militants (an average of 20 civilians killed in each of these events).³¹¹ Even if one acknowledges that additional militants were not identified or registered, the ratio is very low.

³⁰¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-20/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-5677-dc6f-adff-df77a73d0000>

³⁰² <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/ISRAEL-PALESTINIANS/GAZA-ORDNANCE/byvrxbenwve/> . These cause later deaths of civilians – by April 2025 at least 23 people have been killed and 162 were injured.

³⁰³ <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/ISRAEL-PALESTINIANS/GAZA-ORDNANCE/byvrxbenwve/>

³⁰⁴ <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/> (p. 8); it appears that between February to May 2024 Israel used on average less than 2,500 munitions per month:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html>

³⁰⁵ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/air-force-says-it-carried-out-more-than-1400-airstrikes-in-gaza-in-december/

³⁰⁶ <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> ; for comparisons, see also: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/amount-of-israeli-bombs-dropped-on-gaza-surpasses-that-of-world-war-ii/3239665> .

³⁰⁷ <https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/185531116567466156> ; according to Gaza's Government Media Office.

³⁰⁸ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542> ; <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/usa1203/4.htm>.

³⁰⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-05-25/ty-article/00000197-082c-d211-a5df-1cedaee00000>

³¹⁰ <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/> (pp. 13-14)

³¹¹ <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/> (pp. 18-19).

Interviews with IDF officials reveal that Israel bombed “just for ‘deterrence’ – [for example] highrises that are evacuated and toppled just to cause destruction”.³¹² Israel also bombed public buildings such as universities, banks and government offices, defining them as “power targets” (“*matarot otzem*”).³¹³ In the first five days of fighting, half the targets bombed (1,329 of 2,687) were such power targets.³¹⁴ Other sources explained that by attacking these power targets that are mainly intended to harm Palestinian civil society the purpose was to “create a shock” and put pressure on Hamas. One intelligence source said that “for the most part, when it comes to power targets, it is clear that the target doesn’t have military value that justifies an attack that would bring down the entire empty building in the middle of a city, with the help of six planes and bombs weighing several tons”.³¹⁵ Despite IDF protocols allowing for the attack of power targets only when buildings were empty of residents, testimonies and videos from Gaza suggest that since October 7 such targets were attacked without prior notice.³¹⁶

By early-mid 2025, some voices within the IDF claimed to be more aware of harming civilians and concerned about the high numbers of civilian casualties, leading also to a letter on which a thousand present and past air force personnel signed (the letter called for stopping the political war and bringing back the hostages but mentioned innocent civilians in Gaza).³¹⁷ Reports from within different units indicated that after March 2025 the quality of targets, considerations about the harm to Gazan civilians, and the quality of internal investigations all decreased without leading to better operational gains.³¹⁸ A series of interviews with air force personnel revealed that many of them presented dilemmas about continuing their service and highlighted that that responsibility for these attacks was decentralized.³¹⁹ Some pointed out that harming civilians was normalized in Gaza and confessed that they did not know whether AI mass-supplied their targets. One service person admitted that “the amount of [uninvolved] people killed is astronomical and this is a stain on the Israeli Air Force and on Israel”.³²⁰ Ultimately, however, the vast majority of personnel continued their service and these sentiments did not translate to a publicly observable change in the bombing campaign.

Specific weapons

Some of the weapons Israel has used during the war have been controversial as well. Israel has commonly used drones in Gaza – including drones that launch grenades and bombs,³²¹ suicide

³¹² <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

³¹³ <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/>

³¹⁴ <https://www.maariv.co.il/breaking-news/Article-1044157>

³¹⁵ <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/>

³¹⁶ <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/>

³¹⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra14346415>

³¹⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra14346415>

³¹⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2025-04-17/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/00000196-425f-d513-adb7-4f5f218d0000>

³²⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2025-04-17/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/00000196-425f-d513-adb7-4f5f218d0000>

³²¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFMz8KYS5rg> ;
<https://x.com/yoavzitun/status/1792840386077171729> ;
<https://x.com/tamerqdh/status/1860044064957092285> ;
<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1880155771457138987> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1907791959206355078> ;
https://x.com/dn_osama_rabee/status/1907301949742924255 ;

commander of one fleet of drones claimed his unit was responsible for 6,000 kills.³²⁹ A late April 2025 investigation by Drop Site News found five cases in a week in which a specific type of suicide drones killed a total of at least 30 Palestinians (including 14 children) sheltering in tents.³³⁰

Israel has knowingly and purposefully used gas – carbon monoxide released from bunker-buster bombs – to attack Hamas’ tunnel system. Since the IDF encountered difficulties in acquiring intelligence about where exactly were the high value targets in the tunnels, it launched massive attacks that included “the erasure of entire residential areas”.³³¹ These attacks often killed the people in the tunnels, including several Israeli hostages (see the Hostages section in this document). Some vehicles fleeing the airstrikes were attacked as well without specific information about who was in them – even as that behavior would be typical for civilians.³³²

There are some indications that Israel has used thermobaric (i.e. aerosol) weapons, which have been internationally banned by several Conventions and international humanitarian law.³³³ Israel has also detonated remotely-controlled large armored vehicles packed with tons of explosives. These vehicles are indiscriminate weapons since they cause much damage (Israeli reports claimed their explosions were felt in Tel-Aviv, more than 60 kilometers away) and their effects are not limited to military targets.³³⁴ Several of these vehicles were found in Gaza after the ceasefire, presumably out of service.³³⁵ Israel has also used dogs – over a hundred of which have been supplied by a Dutch company during the first 17 months of the war – to attack Palestinians in their homes and during Palestinians’ presence in the Israeli incarceration system.³³⁶

Israel has used artificial intelligence (AI)-based programs for military purposes, founded on cooperations with large IT companies such as Google and Microsoft.³³⁷ The “Gospel” system

³²⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjfwfx5r>

³³⁰ <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/israel-gaza-skystriker-suicide-drone-elbit> ; <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1915784202408071601>

³³¹ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/145768/>

³³² <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/145768/>

³³³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/investigation-must-be-opened-israels-potential-use-banned-thermal-weapons-which-cause-victims-bodies-melt-or-evaporate-enar>

³³⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skbnk1e2byl> ; <https://www.mako.co.il/pzm-soldiers/Article-254f2dc89c8cf81027.htm> ; <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/booby-trapped-robots-loaded-explosives-israel-escalates-killing-and-destruction-northern-gaza-enar> ; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/israel-using-booby-trapped-robots-around-kamal-adwan-hospital> ; might be these cases: <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1907793531906732142> ; <https://x.com/orfialkov/status/1908740470894637350>

³³⁵ <https://x.com/orfialkov/status/1881750028794151146> ;

<https://x.com/orfialkov/status/1880967125378216373> ;

<https://x.com/orfialkov/status/1880954744765886903> ;

<https://x.com/warfareanalysis/status/1888474219547160906>

³³⁶ <https://www.somo.nl/unleashing-terror-dutch-dogs-in-israels-war-crimes/>

³³⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/23/israeli-military-gaza-war-microsoft>;

<https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/microsoft-azure-israel-top-customer-ai-cloud> ;

<https://www.972mag.com/microsoft-azure-openai-israeli-army-cloud/> ;

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-05-17/ty-article/microsoft-says-it-provided-ai-to-israel-for-gaza-war-but-denies-use-to-harm-palestinians/00000196-dbdo-d9a9-a99e-fbd5a6f80000> ;

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/apr/18/microsoft-ai-israel-gaza-war> ;

analyzed huge amounts of data to produce coordinates for potential targets.³³⁸ Such data has been used to generate far more targets than in the past. If in previous wars – three weeks in 2014 and ten days in 2021 – an attack rate of 100 to 200 targets per day led to a situation that the Israeli air force had no targets of military value left, in the current war it had bombed 15,000 targets in 35 days, and continued to bomb targets until the time of writing.³³⁹ According to a former Israeli chief of staff, the AI helped create 100 targets a day when in the past there were times when 50 targets were created in an entire year.³⁴⁰

Other AI systems 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.³⁴¹ 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 17.³⁴² 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%). In May 2024, a project that sounds like the Lavender system won the Israel Defense Prize.³⁴³ 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?”.³⁴⁴ As above, Israel often used a simplistic statistical model to assess the risk of civilian harm – estimating the number of civilians in a building based on estimates of cellphone usage in the surrounding neighborhood.³⁴⁵ Another AI system, “Genie”, is modelled after ChatGPT and allows commanders to type natural language queries and receive answers based on data from across the army’s operational systems. Genie is supposed to identify anomalies, summarize events and generate operational insights, therefore assisting commanders in selecting targets.³⁴⁶ Other systems provide services such as identifying the location of an individual based on audio cues, matching partly obscured or injured faces to real identities, or a chatbot that scans and analyzes text messages and social media posts in Arabic.³⁴⁷

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/apr/27/google-project-nimbus-israel> . Over 50 Google employees who protested were fired.

³³⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2025/01/21/google-ai-israel-war-hamas-attack-gaza/>

³³⁹ <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/>

³⁴⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/byatqxooh>

³⁴¹ 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/>

³⁴² <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

³⁴³ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/755144/>

³⁴⁴ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/03/israel-gaza-ai-database-hamas-airstrikes> ; https://x.com/History_Speaks/status/1940821175296577632

³⁴⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-strikes-takeaways.html>

³⁴⁶ <https://www.newarab.com/news/israel-uses-ai-chatbot-genie-identify-targets-gaza-war>

³⁴⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/25/technology/israel-gaza-ai.html>

Mortality and impacts on groups in Palestinian society (children, journalists, aid workers, etc.)

Children

Since the beginning of the war, Israel has killed dozens of children on average every day with kinetic means.³⁴⁸ As of writing, over 17,121 identified children were killed in Gaza.³⁴⁹ The number of children killed over the first four months of the war was reportedly greater than the number of children killed in conflict zones worldwide over 2019-2022 combined, and is far greater than the rate of children killed in other 21st century wars.³⁵⁰ In the first month of the war alone, the number of killed Gazan children was about 10 times higher than the number of children killed in the entire first year of the Russia-Ukraine war.³⁵¹ A year into the war, Oxfam found that even according to a conservative count, more children (and women) had been killed by the Israeli military in Gaza than in any other recent conflict in a single year.³⁵² Parents sometimes write their child's name on their limbs so they could be identified if they die, and some children have done the same themselves.³⁵³ Some young children have written their own wills.³⁵⁴ By mid June 2025, 180 newborns (up to a month old) had been killed in Gaza.³⁵⁵ Anecdotal evidence reveals several cases of fetuses killed during the war.³⁵⁶ Of identified children as of early October 2024, at least 3,100 children under five were killed, and about 710 of those were babies aged under 12 months.³⁵⁷ By June 2025, 5,454 identified children

³⁴⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024> ; for an example of the effect on a family: <https://politicallycorret.co.il/rashawuahmed/>

³⁴⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-2-july-2025> ; <https://sehatty.ps/public/>

³⁵⁰ <https://www.msnbc.com/top-stories/latest/death-toll-children-gaza-israel-rcna143269>; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/03/13/children-killed-gaza-united-nations-wars-worldwide/>; <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/gaza-3195-children-killed-three-weeks-surpasses-annual-number-children-killed-conflict-zones>. In 2022, for example, 2,985 children were killed worldwide, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2023_363.pdf (section 4).

³⁵¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/11/9/israel-attacks-on-gaza-weapons-and-scale-of-destruction>. Over 4,300 children were killed in Gaza compared to a total of 477 children killed in Ukraine in 2022: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/06/136-children-killed-in-russia-ukraine-war-in-2022-un/>

³⁵² <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/more-women-and-children-killed-gaza-israeli-military-any-other-recent-conflict> ; the dataset they used began in 2004, see <https://zenodo.org/records/8215006>.

³⁵³ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/10/23/middleeast/gaza-hospitals-doctors-disaster-intl-hnk/index.html> ; <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/-whats-in-a-name-a-lot-say-children-in-gaza-who-mark-body-parts-for-identification/3030125> ; <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1856245186042462378>

³⁵⁴ <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1905649044212322651>

³⁵⁵ <https://archive.org/details/moh-death-toll-lists-original/MOH%20Death%20Toll%20List%20-%20June%202025/page/n3/mode/2up?view=theater>

³⁵⁶ <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1924928298460840393> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1912792654145859919> ; <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1926644474647605356> ; <https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1912821506595250599> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1912781523058573704> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5r9tFEn2Pg>

³⁵⁷ <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/gaza-least-3100-children-aged-under-five-killed-others-risk-famine-looms>

aged 5 and under were killed, and 937 of them were less than one year old.³⁵⁸ By late May 2025, over 50,000 children were killed or injured.³⁵⁹

As UNICEF's Executive Director put it, Gaza is "the most dangerous place in the world to be a child".³⁶⁰ The UN Secretary General's annual report for children and armed conflict zones for 2023 already concluded that the conflict presented "an unprecedented scale and intensity of grave violations against children".³⁶¹ Testimonies from Gaza provide additional evidence for these details.³⁶² Several international doctors volunteering in Gaza noted the large number of children they operated on. One, for example, said that 70-75% of the people he operated on were elementary school age or younger.³⁶³ An Al-Jazeera documentary spoke with 20 American doctors who volunteered in Gaza and reported treating children with gunshots.³⁶⁴ Additional testimonies by doctors are in the corresponding subsection below.

UNICEF estimated in early February 2024 that at least 17,000 children are unaccompanied or separated from their parents.³⁶⁵ An international NGO estimated this number was "likely much higher" in subsequent months.³⁶⁶ One British charity found that 40% of Gazan households were taking care of a child that was not their own.³⁶⁷ By late January 2025, over 38,000 children in Gaza lost one or both parents.³⁶⁸ Individual cases demonstrate the effects of these losses on children.³⁶⁹ Written testimonies from Gaza provide more specific evidence for these broader statistics.³⁷⁰

Violent children deaths are prominent in videos from Gaza, often filmed by their own families.³⁷¹ There are many stories about the loss of one's children. For example, one father

³⁵⁸ <https://archive.org/details/moh-death-toll-lists-original/MOH%20Death%20Toll%20List%20-%20June%202025/page/122/mode/2up?view=theater>

³⁵⁹ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unimaginable-horrors-more-50000-children-reportedly-killed-or-injured-gaza-strip>

³⁶⁰ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/statement-unicef-executive-director-catherine-russell-resumption-fighting-gaza>

³⁶¹ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/document/secretary-general-annual-report-on-children-and-armed-conflict-3/> ; <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2024/384> sec. 8

³⁶² <https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Generation-Wiped-Out.pdf> (pp. 4-7).

³⁶³ https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/11/surgeons_in_gaza

³⁶⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-ozrQZWwDE>

³⁶⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/stories-loss-and-grief-least-17000-children-are-estimated-be-unaccompanied-or> ; see for example <https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1865079687346606207>

³⁶⁶ <https://www.savethechildren.net/gaza-missing-children>

³⁶⁷

https://theirworld.org/gaza/?tfa_next=%2Fresponses%2Ffast_success%3Fjsid%3DeyJoeXAiOiJKV1QiLCJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.LmJkNmE5YzU4YzkoZWrmMTliYzEzNmQ5N2E5ZmFjM2Y2lg.fYuMaaFnCROLnSO1QNjdL5CXO2GSHtGO17cwxARY8v4

³⁶⁸ Note the discrepancy between children who lost their fathers (32,151), those who lost their mothers (4,417) and those who lost both (1,918). <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/over-38-000-palestinian-children-orphaned-by-israeli-war-on-gaza-official/3460181>

³⁶⁹ <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/20000-palestinian-children-orphaned-by-gaza-war>

³⁷⁰ <https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Generation-Wiped-Out.pdf> (pp. 20-24)

³⁷¹ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1760724513581584472>;

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

<https://x.com/NourNaim88/status/1801772456895541519> ;

<https://x.com/NourNaim88/status/1828743553587060895> ;

<https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1879134950441746855> ;

<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1900303341055603038> ;

who went out to obtain birth certificates for his newborn twins discovered upon his return that they had both been killed together with their mother and grandmother.³⁷² Airstrikes tore children to pieces.³⁷³ Others were burned alive.³⁷⁴ In one case, a missile on the home of the Faraj family killed the family's father and all five daughters. The son, the seven year old Ali Faraj Faraj, survived although the blast threw Ali to the roof of a neighboring building where he was surrounded by the remains of his family members.³⁷⁵ There are many additional stories.³⁷⁶

Children are particularly susceptible to injuries and their aftereffects,³⁷⁷ and they are far more likely to die from blast injuries than adults.³⁷⁸ As of early October 2024, some 25,000 children have been injured.³⁷⁹ Six international doctors who worked in Gaza noted that they encountered extensive wounds on Gazan children caused by "fragmentation" weapons (according to one doctor, small metal cubes some 3mm wide).³⁸⁰ These fragmentation

<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1901943446463476000> ;
<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1903708204003098808> ;
<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1902933079154467322> ;
<https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1906347894174601710> ;
<https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1907766898311238064> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1929536902291451974> ;
<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1936868258969526778> ;
<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1938581017763180875>

³⁷² <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/08/13/middleeast/israel-strike-gaza-twins-intl-latam/index.html> ;
<https://news.sky.com/story/gaza-four-day-old-twins-killed-in-airstrike-as-father-went-to-get-birth-certificates-13196395>

³⁷³ <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1904954700505427968> ;
<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1904967154166099977> (same child) ;
<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1904822580076253630> ;
<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1907372770956095497> . See also:

<https://x.com/warfareanalysis/status/1909080959204327684> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1925919394653229214>

³⁷⁴ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1912854647921868991> ;
<https://x.com/IhabHassane/status/1912635138078388346> ;
<https://x.com/NemoAnno/status/1912810973372497995> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1912671978386837960> ;
<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1912672986005484020>

³⁷⁵ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-28/gaza-ali-faraj-faraj-survives-deadly-missile-blast/105221962> ;
<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1915403166885020042> ;
<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1915447846230516154>

³⁷⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-06-26/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/00000197-4ecd-d906-add7-deffe5470000>

³⁷⁷ For example: <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1874136519700570494> ;
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2025/mar/27/gaza-palestine-children-injuries> ;
<https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000010207629/gaza-israeli-strike-palestinian-girl-silhouette-fire.html>

³⁷⁸ The difference may be as much as seven times more likely, see:
<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/news/media-centre/press-releases/worlds-first-research-centre-child-blast-injuries>

³⁷⁹ <https://apnews.com/article/un-gaza-war-children-killed-malnutrition-israel-bef00a350a7f7be5a33dfb2c9883803ce> ; for example:

<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1903793352367071390> ;
<https://x.com/Mistaclim/status/1922976443417370775>

³⁸⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jul/11/israeli-weapons-shrapnel-children-gaza-injured> ; <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1874495389971120314>

weapons are designed to maximize casualties and have an inordinate effect on children's bodies.³⁸¹ Other international doctors stated that they commonly saw cases of children with head injuries.³⁸² Evidence from individual cases from the Strip – some without pain relief – confirms their statements.³⁸³

Because of the war's widespread death and destruction, children are exposed to difficult psychological experiences.³⁸⁴ In late February 2024, the head of Doctors Without Borders 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 endure fear, displacement, and witnessing the killing of their family members.³⁸⁵ By October 2024, 52 American doctors, nurses and paramedics who volunteered in Gaza observed nearly universal psychiatric distress in young children, including some who were suicidal or said they wished they had died.³⁸⁶ 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 he was 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.³⁸⁷

Already in January 2024, UNICEF estimated that 1,000 children in Gaza had lost their limbs, a number that reached between 3,105 and 4,050 by January 2025.³⁸⁸ The UN's OCHA called it the

³⁸¹ <https://www.instagram.com/pulseofpal/reel/C-uVlnhFJL/>. For one example: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3dvi18lo3n1o> ; <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1837497128408559866> ; <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1837432878843445248>; the fetus mentioned in the BBC article is visible here: <https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1837428276609888480>. Much similar graphic content is removed from social media.

³⁸² For examples of such children, see: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DBqXDYfuqOx/> ; <https://x.com/trklou/status/1940170018911920454> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1940268801959829908> ; ³⁸³ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/shattered-gaza-mother-spares-child-seeing-her-head-wounds-2024-08-16/> ; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1869561411531317608> ; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1869236701845135630> ; <https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1857251079907397792> ; https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1860602446554247543 ; <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1936554287066407334> ; this seems to be such a case: <https://x.com/AdameMedia/status/1857012597611966636> ;

https://www.instagram.com/p/DHJzogNT4_d/ . See also: https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1871650256984981857 ; <https://x.com/owenjonesjourn/status/1898442465771933705> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1907480656973561927> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1908233830336536588>

³⁸⁴ For example: <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1869781014933029241> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2025-01-02/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/00000194-227e-d973-a796-3b7faobc0000>

³⁸⁵ <https://www.msf.org/msf-briefing-gaza-un-security-council>

³⁸⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/09/opinion/gaza-doctor-interviews.html>

³⁸⁷ <https://twitter.com/AGvaryahu/status/1763102777423659018/photo/1>

³⁸⁸ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/the-children-who-lost-limbs-in-gaza>; <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/unicef-delivers-wheelchairs-gazas-children> ; a doctor who had volunteered in Gaza estimated that some 5,000 children lost their limbs: <https://www.philanthropyage.org/podcasts/the-impact-room/war-surgeon-ghassan-abu-sittah-on-working-in-gaza/> ; in June 2024 the estimate was over 3,000,

“largest cohort of child amputees in recorded history”. Despite bringing in an increased number of prosthetic limbs, wheelchairs, crutches and other devices during the ceasefire in January and February 2025, it only covered 20 percent of the total need.³⁸⁹ A documentary focusing on the individual case of a 13-year-old girl demonstrates the massive disruption in the lives of these children, as well as the long and uncertain recovery waiting for them in the future.³⁹⁰ Additional stories do the same.³⁹¹

Journalists

Between 171 and 291 journalists and media workers have been killed since the beginning of the war.³⁹² These attacks on journalists have drawn a significant amount of media attention.³⁹³ According to a Brown University research project, the number of media workers killed in Gaza

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYbvvcdbMHA>. Two experts with rehabilitation programs in Gaza estimated the number to be 3,000-4,000 in November 2024:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/03/25/mideast-wars-gaza-child-amputees/ec4ceof6-093f-11fo-8e5e-3a8d70fc4250_story.html. Note the substantially lower number (almost 800) in January 2025, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/4-500-amputations-reported-in-gaza-amid-israeli-war-health-official/3447324>

³⁸⁹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/03/25/mideast-wars-gaza-child-amputees/ec4ceof6-093f-11fo-8e5e-3a8d70fc4250_story.html

³⁹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J18PaJNyGV4>

³⁹¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/03/25/mideast-wars-gaza-child-amputees/ec4ceof6-093f-11fo-8e5e-3a8d70fc4250_story.html ; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/they-severed-my-gymnast-limbs-israeli-bombing-shatters-gaza-teens-dream>

³⁹² The different numbers derive from different methodologies: 171 from the International Federation of Journalists as of July 2025; 185 from the Committee to Protect Journalists as of July 2025; almost 200 from Reporters Without Borders as of May 2025; 227 according to the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate as of June 2025; 231 according to Al Jazeera as of late March 2025; 232 according to Brown’s Costs of War project as of April 2025; 291 according to an continuously updated list. See respectively:

<https://www.ifj.org/war-in-gaza> ; <https://cpj.org/2025/02/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/> ; <https://rsf.org/en/gaza-rsf-condemns-killing-freelance-journalist-yahya-sobeih-israeli-strike> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-2-july-2025> (based on the count here: <https://pjs.ps/ar/index.html>; <https://pjs.ps/ar/page-3355.html>) ;

<https://x.com/malonebarry/status/1932420982591169012> ;

<https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2025/journalists> ;

<https://stopmurderingjournalists.com/data>

³⁹³ See <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/jan/17/in-gaza-a-press-vest-makes-you-a-target-the-journalists-who-have-paid-a-price-for-reporting-on-the-war> ;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/mar/28/friday-briefing-how-gaza-is-becoming-the-deadliest-conflict-zone-for-journalists> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/9/how-deadly-is-the-israel-gaza-war-for-journalists> ; for an investigative report of the killing of two journalists, casting doubt on the IDF’s explanations see here: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/19/gaza-journalists-killed-israel-al-jazeera-footage/>.

Others have been injured and debilitated, for example: <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1844051760006271085>

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1844031016161419436> ;

<https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1844045121509281829> ;

<https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2024/10/9/video-al-jazeera-cameraman-in-critical-condition-after-israeli-attack> ; https://x.com/Abu_Salah9/status/1852315700729143802 ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1877752224035606556>

is unprecedented compared to past wars.³⁹⁴ The lower end of these figures represents over 10% of the total journalists and media workers in the Strip.³⁹⁵ A senior member of the Committee to Protect Journalists described the situation as “unprecedented” already in late October 2023, when 20 Palestinian journalists had been killed.³⁹⁶ In November 2024, the UN Secretary General stated that journalists were killed “at a level unseen in any conflict in modern times”.³⁹⁷ The Committee to Protect Journalists stated that there was a pattern of Israeli military behavior against journalists in Gaza: they first received threats, and their family members were subsequently killed.³⁹⁸ The journalist Anas Al-Sharif, 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.³⁹⁹ There were many similar cases.⁴⁰⁰ In December 2024, Reporters Without Borders described Israel’s killing of reporters in Gaza as an “unprecedented bloodbath” in its annual report.⁴⁰¹ By January 2025, it found that 41 of the killed journalists were working at the time of their deaths.⁴⁰² As of June 2025, the Committee to Protect Journalists found that at least 19 journalists and media workers were directly targeted.⁴⁰³

One al Jazeera journalist was detained, released, and targeted and killed a few months later.⁴⁰⁴ Over a 24-hour period in early July, Israel killed five journalists.⁴⁰⁵ An airstrike in late October 2024 killed four and injured others.⁴⁰⁶ Four journalists were killed in 48 hours in mid December 2024.⁴⁰⁷ Later that month the IDF shot up a vehicle with five journalists near a

³⁹⁴ <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2025/Journalists> ; https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2025/Turse_Costs%20of%20War_The%20Reporting%20Graveyard.pdf . The methodology underlying this statement seems questionable.

³⁹⁵ <https://www.ifj.org/war-in-gaza> ;

³⁹⁶ <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/25/1208019720/journalist-deaths-gaza-israel-hamas> (at the time, three additional journalists were Israeli and one was Lebanese).

³⁹⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip>

³⁹⁸ <https://cpj.org/special-reports/no-justice-for-journalists-targeted-by-israel-despite-strong-evidence-of-war-crime/>

³⁹⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/21/israel-idf-accused-targeting-journalists-gaza>

⁴⁰⁰ <https://cpj.org/2024/03/attacks-arrests-threats-censorship-the-high-risks-of-reporting-the-israel-hamas-war/> ; see also for more examples: <https://www.madacenter.org/en/article/1472/>

⁴⁰¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/dec/12/palestine-most-dangerous-country-for-journalists-reporters-without-borders-says> ; <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-s-2024-round-journalism-suffers-exorbitant-human-cost-due-conflicts-and-repressive-regimes>

⁴⁰² <https://rsf.org/en/gaza-ceasefire-rsf-calls-open-borders-journalists-and-end-impunity-israel-s-war-crimes>

⁴⁰³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2025-01-29/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000194-a6f9-d9e8-a5f4-eff9187b0000> ; <https://cpj.org/2025/02/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict>

⁴⁰⁴ For his detainment: <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/world-news/middle-east/article/15447588> ; for his killing: <https://x.com/IDF/status/1819072480746594496> ; <https://x.com/ajplus/status/1818695291127972039> . Note the absence of evidence for the claim that he was affiliated with Hamas.

⁴⁰⁵ <https://x.com/AmaraSophia/status/1809562389676748959> ;

<https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1809621339214660090>

⁴⁰⁶ <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/article/saed-radwan-hamza-abu-salmiya-haneen-mahmoud-baroud> ; <https://english.news.cn/20241028/882af579124143e8aafdac31d6296df/c.html> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2024/10/28/children-torn-apart-as-israel-strikes-gaza-school-sheltering-palestinians>

⁴⁰⁷ <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1868656470847520857>

hospital, killing them.⁴⁰⁸ It subsequently referred to those journalists as “combat propaganda” terrorists.⁴⁰⁹ When the IDF killed three journalists in mid March 2025 it described each of them as a “terrorist under the cover of a journalist”.⁴¹⁰ The journalist Hossam Shabat – who had drawn a lot of attention because of his reporting on the late 2024 operation in North Gaza (see Zoom In 3) – was killed a week later after receiving threats and being publicly targeted.⁴¹¹ According to an American journalist, Hamas conducted an internal audit that found that Shabat was not affiliated with Hamas.⁴¹²

Some journalists were killed with their families, while other journalists lost their family members (some on multiple occasions).⁴¹³ One was reportedly shot in the head by a drone in the courtyard of a hospital.⁴¹⁴ Other journalists were injured.⁴¹⁵ In one case that drew more attention, Fadi al-Wahidi, a journalist that was seriously injured and paralyzed did not receive

⁴⁰⁸ <https://x.com/arixegal/status/1872131888690901153> ; <https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1872186861420150813>

⁴⁰⁹ <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/1872260225803178399>

⁴¹⁰ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-oct-7-terrorist-and-others-operating-under-guise-of-journalists-killed-in-gaza/> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1900912303647740247> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/15/israel-kills-at-least-nine-palestinians-including-journalists-in-gaza> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1901600001047842940>

⁴¹¹ <https://x.com/hossamshabat/status/1904219854183313461> ; <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/hossam-shabat-journalist-killed-gaza-last-article> ; <https://x.com/SMohyeddin/status/1904159553878462936> ; <https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1904166523671105988> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1904152831193456865> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1904216731452571851> ; <https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1904185160775475558> ; . For threats and public targeting: <https://x.com/swilkinsonbc/status/1904288120943882559> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1904188138697986262> ; <https://x.com/sahatenglish/status/1904174899842760801> ; <https://x.com/jeremyscahill/status/1904467284921405605> ; <https://x.com/Archivepaletc/status/1904562190008431090> ; <https://x.com/IDF/status/1849088691450339461> ; <https://x.com/wissamshabat/status/1910476718529270128>.

Another journalist was also killed that day: <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1904140913481281966>

⁴¹² <https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1919910151676363195> . Contrary to the position of the IDF spokesperson: <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-israel-at-war/march-25-pr/information-regarding-the-affiliation-of-the-terrorist-hossam-basel-abdul-karim-shabat-to-the-hamas-terrorist-organization/>

⁴¹³ <https://x.com/jeremyscahill/status/1840732360582570191> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/31/wael-al-dahdouh-gaza-palestinian-journalist-tragedy> ; <https://x.com/osamabinjavaid/status/1732480309139046553> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1855246790011846947> ; <https://www.msn.com/en-xl/news/other/funeral-of-martyred-journalist-mohammed-khreis-and-his-wife-in-deir-al-balah/vi-AAitSsYT> ; <https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1857717346263093555> ; some were killed in their homes, e.g.: <https://x.com/OnlinePalEng/status/1844059508601126946> ;

<https://x.com/khalilasslan/status/1906992616987578520>

⁴¹⁴ <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/ifj-safety/article/mamdouh-quneita> ;

https://x.com/karam_najii/status/1863199533196247467 ;

<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1862885853271355842> ; see also the similar case at:

<https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/article/mohammed-saleh-al-sharif>

⁴¹⁵ https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1862139865074176393

permission to evacuate to a hospital outside the Strip from early October 2024 to early February 2025 despite requests by both UN experts and Reporters Without Borders.⁴¹⁶

In early April, an IDF missile hit a cluster of journalist tents near the Nasser hospital, killing two and injuring at least eight.⁴¹⁷ The target of the strike was Hassan Eslaih,⁴¹⁸ one of the main sources of videos coming out of Gaza with hundreds of thousands of followers on social media, who was injured in this incident.⁴¹⁹ A few weeks later, Israel assassinated Eslaih in Nasser hospital, where he was receiving treatment.⁴²⁰ Israel claimed that Eslaih was associated with Hamas,⁴²¹ a claim rejected by many voices from Gaza as well as Eslaih himself.⁴²² In an interview Eslaih acknowledged that Israel could attack him again and stated that he was not fighting but working as a journalist.⁴²³ In mid-April, Israel killed the photojournalist Fatma Hassouna alongside seven to ten family members. Hassouna's death received more attention than usual because she was the subject of a new documentary film that would be screened in the Cannes Film Festival in May that was announced the day before she was killed.⁴²⁴ In one

⁴¹⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/un-experts-call-urgent-medical-evacuation-critically-injured-journalist-gaza> ; https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1857536387014107158 ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1858200164223132103> ; <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1859282381431021971> ; <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1866811479628059029> ; <https://x.com/WearThePeaceCo/status/1875965627305013310> ; https://x.com/dn_osama_rabee/status/1887065238991692129 ; <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/jan/14/fadi-al-wahidi-israel-cameraman-gaza-attack>. He was eventually evacuated:

<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1888182860152033753> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OC6CUyHadho> ; ⁴¹⁷ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1909413409181122678> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1909640020505342319> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1909304661724782716> ; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1909309335265853455> ; <https://x.com/BilalKareem/status/1909159594540122449> ; <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1909032499600060517> ; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1911216557688054072> ;

⁴¹⁸ <https://x.com/IDF/status/1909215556508512680>

⁴¹⁹ <https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1909309418270847264> ; <https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1909186621003706734> ; <https://x.com/jeremyscahill/status/1909227466524078508> ; <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1922429909667868930> . For hundreds of his videos: <https://tiktokgenocide.com/researchers/hassan-eslayeh>

⁴²⁰ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1924249781783904554> ; <https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1922096686643700012> ; <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1923580274731823502>

⁴²¹ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1924249781783904554>

⁴²² <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1922249077766685139> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1922222854722011273> ; <https://x.com/AbubakerAbedW/status/1922103039273418792> ; https://x.com/Hind_Gaza/status/1922238532355006518 ; <https://mondoweiss.net/2025/04/israel-targeted-my-colleague-in-an-airstrike-claiming-that-he-was-a-hamas-fighter-israel-is-lying/> ;

⁴²³ <https://mondoweiss.net/2025/04/israel-targeted-my-colleague-in-an-airstrike-claiming-that-he-was-a-hamas-fighter-israel-is-lying/> ; also <https://x.com/ihcentoo/status/1922382527521583133>

⁴²⁴ <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/04/18/middleeast/fatima-hassouna-killed-israeli-airstrike-gaza-intl-latam/index.html> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/cinema/2025-04-17/ty-article/.premium/00000196-43fb-d587-abb7-ebfb85790000> ; <https://x.com/mattlieb/status/1913092580339753198> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1912571502190358541>

day in mid May 2025 Israel reportedly killed five journalists.⁴²⁵ Four others were killed in a strike in early June.⁴²⁶ In June 2025 another injured journalist who had lost an eye and leg was killed in his home.⁴²⁷

The IDF was accused of targeting journalists and their families from early on in the war, including by outlets such as the *Washington Post* and the *Guardian*.⁴²⁸ An IDF spokesperson went so far as to say that there was “no difference” between working for a media outlet affiliated with Hamas and belonging to Hamas’ armed wing – contradicting the standard interpretations of laws of war and eliciting criticism from media outlets who suggested that Israel was attempting to conceal the realities in Gaza.⁴²⁹ In August 2024, the killing of journalists during the current war has led over a hundred journalists (4 of which won a Pulitzer Prize), 20 news outlets and 7 press freedom organizations to write an open letter to Antony Blinken urging a stop to weapon transfers to Israel.⁴³⁰ 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.⁴³¹ A further investigation found a pattern of the IDF attacking Gazan journalists operating drones, even when there were no IDF forces or active fighting nearby.⁴³²

The killing of journalists and their family members,⁴³³ the threats they have received, and the detention of journalists (in December 2024 Israel was the country with the third highest number of detained journalists, 41)⁴³⁴ reduced the amount of information coming out of Gaza both directly and indirectly through a chilling effect that discourages other journalists from speaking up (on this, see also the Media and Propaganda section below). Other journalists left the Gaza Strip for medical reasons, further reducing the information coming out of the Strip.⁴³⁵

Healthcare workers

⁴²⁵ <https://x.com/IDFKillsPress/status/1924176098654593195>

⁴²⁶ <https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1930587857728815228> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2025-06-05/ty-article-live/00000197-3cc9-dc9f-afbf-bceb30300000?liveBlogItemId=1203953568#1203953568>

⁴²⁷ <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1937924878708937023>

⁴²⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/21/israel-idf-accused-targeting-journalists-gaza> ; <https://jewishinsider.com/2024/05/journalists-death-toll-gaza-war-israel-hamas-palestinian-islamic-jihad/> ; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/24/al-jazeera-idf-accuses-militant-hamas-journalists/> ; https://x.com/dn_osama_rabee/status/1871986459009278249

⁴²⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jun/25/grey-zone-how-hamas-linked-journalists-legitimate-targets> ; also: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jun/25/voices-buried-beneath-rubble-gaza-wars-deadly-toll-journalists>; <https://time.com/7098857/israel-labels-six-gaza-journalists-terrorists-international-press-groups/>

⁴³⁰ <https://www.rightsanddissent.org/news/letter-over-100-journalists-to-write-to-blinken-with-a-demand-to-stop-arming-israel/>

⁴³¹ https://cpj.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/CPJ-Special-Report-May-2023_Deadly-Pattern.pdf

⁴³² <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/148200/>

⁴³³ <https://stopmurderingjournalists.com/data> ; https://x.com/receipts_lol/status/191251129860919504

⁴³⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/dec/12/palestine-most-dangerous-country-for-journalists-reporters-without-borders-says>

⁴³⁵ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1922373083391992012> ; <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/abubaker-abed-journalist-leaving-gaza>

Over 1,580 health workers have been killed.⁴³⁶ By June 2024, 55 specialist doctors (4% of the total in Gaza) were killed,⁴³⁷ with more killed subsequently.⁴³⁸ More general physicians were killed.⁴³⁹ Many health workers lost their family members.⁴⁴⁰ In mid-late May 2025, at least 22 healthcare workers were killed over ten days, often with their entire families at home.⁴⁴¹ In one case that drew more attention in late May, Dr. Alaa al-Najjar left her ten children at home with her husband, also a doctor. An IDF airstrike on their house killed nine of her children, badly burning most, and injured her husband, who died later of his wounds.⁴⁴² Other doctors were reportedly deliberately targeted, including in their homes in what may have been part of a stated policy of “war against Hamas’ civilian government” in late May 2025.⁴⁴³ In October 2024, Doctors Without Borders issued a statement in which they expressed that they were “outraged by the repeated killings of our staff in Gaza”,⁴⁴⁴ indicating that this occurred on multiple occasions. Eleven of their staff members were killed as of writing.⁴⁴⁵

Israel’s attacks on hospitals have killed hundreds of Palestinians, many of whom were patients. By late June 2025, for example, Israel attacked the Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital complex at least 13 times, reportedly killing 22 Palestinians.⁴⁴⁶ More have died due to lack of supplies⁴⁴⁷ or forced evacuations, including four premature babies in intensive care after the IDF forced the nurse taking care of them to leave the hospital. The babies were left in their beds and later found during the ceasefire in late November in a state of decomposition as no one had been able to care for them.⁴⁴⁸

⁴³⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-2-july-2025> ; list with names (up to mid March 2024) at <https://twitter.com/HCWWatch/status/1767666330252009517> ; (names and images up to May 2025) https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1920469407781847408 .

⁴³⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/israel-palestinians-gaza-health/>

⁴³⁸ <https://x.com/BalouxFrancois/status/1832861049550147871> ; see <https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/israeli-forces-kill-doctor-attempting-save-wounded-north-gaza> (“medical doctor”, unclear if specialist) ; see also <https://x.com/NourNaim88/status/1865722988202459555> (likely a doctor as well)

⁴³⁹ <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1879108751665365485>

⁴⁴⁰ https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1858133986553278753 ; <https://www.972mag.com/kamal-adwan-hospital-hussam-abu-safia/> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1914301992748360019>

⁴⁴¹ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1926461400358039689>

⁴⁴² <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/05/24/middleeast/gaza-doctor-children-bodies-hospital-intl> ;

<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/192611829303996533> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1925970429665063206> ;

<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1928941985529749792> ;

<https://x.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1926096243370889278> ;

<https://x.com/PulaRJS/status/1926350733969969507>

⁴⁴³ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1931079703651348869> ;

<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1928753436834648396> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1925886350017823202> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1939714669213565281> ;

<https://x.com/ezzingaza/status/1940394571579502620> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-07-02/ty-article/.premium/00000197-cb27-dcbf-abd7-db3fcocao0000> ; also:

https://archive.org/details/gaza-doctors-under-attack_202507

⁴⁴⁴ https://x.com/MSF_canada/status/1850998473597891051

⁴⁴⁵ <https://www.msf.org/remembering-our-colleagues-killed-gaza>

⁴⁴⁶ <https://x.com/NemoAnno/status/1940518785481605187>

⁴⁴⁷ <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-80-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>

⁴⁴⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/03/gaza-premature-babies-dead-nasr/>

Other groups

As of July 2025, at least 479 aid workers have been killed.⁴⁴⁹ The number of humanitarian workers killed in the first three months of the war exceeded the deadliest year ever recorded for aid workers globally and almost three times the death toll recorded for any single conflict in a year.⁴⁵⁰ By early September 2024, over 75% (284 of 378) of aid workers killed worldwide since October 7, 2023 were killed in Gaza or the West Bank.⁴⁵¹ The death toll of humanitarian workers made 2024 the “deadliest on record” in this regard.⁴⁵²

By the end of June 2024, at least 195 UN staff members had been killed, alongside at least 172 of their dependents.⁴⁵³ The number of UN staff members increased to 326 by July 2025.⁴⁵⁴ On some occasions, the IDF attacked UN or NGO buildings.⁴⁵⁵ More than 100 university professors, including several leading Palestinian academics and three past or current university presidents, were also killed.⁴⁵⁶ As of May 2024, more than 243 athletes (of which 161 are footballers) have been killed in Gaza and the West Bank.⁴⁵⁷ By June 2025, 785 athletes and sports officials were killed, of which 438 were registered footballers.⁴⁵⁸

Rules of engagement, massacres and examples

Rules of engagement (ground forces)

For the IDF and the vast majority of Israeli officials, Palestinian lives are incredibly cheap. One reservist pointed out that Palestinian lives are worth less than the lives of the thousands of dogs roaming the Gaza Strip since soldiers cannot shoot dogs unless the dog is actively biting

⁴⁴⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-2-july-2025> ; also examples at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/05/14/gaza-israelis-attacking-known-aid-worker-locations> ; <https://www.alhaq.org/monitoring-documentation/26272.html>

⁴⁵⁰ <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/maps-and-graphics/2024/03/21/behind-numbers-gaza-unprecedented-aid-worker-death-toll> (161 in Gaza and the West Bank vs. 56 in Syria in 2018).

⁴⁵¹ <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/israel-hamas-war-gaza/>

⁴⁵² <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/11/1157371>

⁴⁵³ <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/leaked-un-report-israeli-war-has>

⁴⁵⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-2-july-2025>

⁴⁵⁵ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1915629462202318956> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-04-24/ty-article/00000196-683b-daf5-a99f-fd3baice0000>

⁴⁵⁶ <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>; list with names at

<https://twitter.com/sawporg/status/1755224105249333643> ; another list with names:

[https://mailchi.mp/mesana/mesa-statement-on-academic-freedom-and-protests-on-campus-](https://mailchi.mp/mesana/mesa-statement-on-academic-freedom-and-protests-on-campus-13444368?e=63ecoa23d6)

[13444368?e=63ecoa23d6](https://mailchi.mp/mesana/mesa-statement-on-academic-freedom-and-protests-on-campus-13444368?e=63ecoa23d6); <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760047560025317563> ; also

[https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza)

[gaza](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza) . For more details on individuals see <https://www.972mag.com/gaza-academia-destruction-universities/>

⁴⁵⁷ [https://www.theguardian.com/football/article/2024/may/07/sporting-tragedy-war-in-gaza-israel-](https://www.theguardian.com/football/article/2024/may/07/sporting-tragedy-war-in-gaza-israel-palestine)

[palestine](https://www.theguardian.com/football/article/2024/may/07/sporting-tragedy-war-in-gaza-israel-palestine) ; see also: <https://x.com/AbubakerAbedW/status/1904953563786203298>

⁴⁵⁸ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1939763182169727459>

the soldier while there are no real reservations against shooting Palestinians.⁴⁵⁹ Already before the current war, the rules of engagement around the Gaza Strip since 2018 – in the context of the Palestinian Marches of Return – were hidden from the public. An Israeli journalist later revealed that they permitted the use of lethal force even in cases of non-imminent danger or in cases where it is impossible to identify a person who can be identified as an imminent danger to IDF forces.⁴⁶⁰

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.⁴⁶¹ 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”.⁴⁶² By June 2025 one reservist noted that “Gaza doesn't interest anyone anymore... it has become a place with its own rules. The loss of human life is nothing, not even ‘an unfortunate incident’ as they [IDF] used to say”.⁴⁶³ This reality had parallels in the destruction the IDF wrought in the Gaza Strip. Soldiers reported wanton destruction of buildings without any clear purpose.⁴⁶⁴ Others reported wanton torching of Palestinian houses without any military value as well as commands to do so (for more on the destruction see the Ethnic Cleansing section).⁴⁶⁵

During the war, 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.⁴⁶⁶ Other reports found similar evidence.⁴⁶⁷ Palestinians who were killed in an area near IDF troops, “the combat zone”, were often de facto shot on sight even if unarmed.⁴⁶⁸ Soldier testimonies suggest the same.⁴⁶⁹ A considerable number of these people were likely

⁴⁵⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-12-04/ty-article-opinion/00000193-9144-dfe8-a5db-fb6da88c0000>

⁴⁶⁰ https://x.com/i24NEWS_HE/status/1856040353641447917

⁴⁶¹ <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>

⁴⁶² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-06-07/ty-article/.highlight/0000018f-ef13-de64-a98f-efb768400000>

⁴⁶³

⁴⁶⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-12-04/ty-article-opinion/00000193-9144-dfe8-a5db-fb6da88c0000>

⁴⁶⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-06-25/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000190-4ac5-da42-a1ba-7fef27c50000> ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/137173/> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2025-03-21/ty-article-opinion/.premium/00000195-b380-d7ff-afbd-bbf824250000>

⁴⁶⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-31/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-9035-d9a4-a7bf-dc7d839e0000> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-12-04/ty-article-opinion/00000193-9144-dfe8-a5db-fb6da88c0000>

⁴⁶⁷ <https://mida.org.il/2024/12/04/ל-בכלל-ל-תחקיר-חרבות-ברזל-בפיקוד-הבכיר-בכלל-ל/> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/07/israel-military-gaza-perimeter-land-testimony-report> ; https://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/inside/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Perimeter_English-2.pdf

⁴⁶⁸ See for example the testimony of the commander of a drone fleet here:

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjfwfx5r>

⁴⁶⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14292823>

looking for food and other supplies after months of fighting.⁴⁷⁰ Already in December 2023 Israeli journalists received indication from troops on the ground that “anyone walking on two legs [in Gaza] and is not a soldier – is [shot] dead”.⁴⁷¹ An officer stated on radio that any person walking in North Gaza is shot.⁴⁷² There is evidence of an officer ordering his troops to fire at people raising their hands while holding a white flag.⁴⁷³ The said officer was subsequently promoted.⁴⁷⁴ Other soldiers claimed they fired out of boredom, and described that they were authorized to fire at will, including at civilians (“it is permissible to shoot everyone, [including] a young girl, an old woman”).⁴⁷⁵ As a result of these lenient rules of engagement, during the ceasefire in January 2025 the IDF mistakenly shot and killed an Israeli civilian contractor who had been working for Israel.⁴⁷⁶

One division commander – i.e. a senior officer – told his subordinates that “there are no innocents in Gaza” – not as his personal opinion but as an operational perspective.⁴⁷⁷ A sniper stated in an interview that people of military age were shot upon sight within an invisible line they did not know of, even when unarmed and when trying to retrieve the corpses of other Palestinians who had been shot dead. Shooting women and children was “under discussion with command”.⁴⁷⁸ Visual evidence has corroborated his statements.⁴⁷⁹

These “broad and permissive” rules of engagement remained the norm even a year into the war.⁴⁸⁰ Therefore for example the commander of Golani’s reconnaissance unit was filmed telling his soldiers that “Everyone you meet is an enemy. You recognize a person, open fire, eliminate them and move on”.⁴⁸¹ In other cases, the rules of engagement were more limited, for example not shooting at people carrying white flags, women or children.⁴⁸² One soldier stated that the IDF fire was restricted in some areas, but “special permissions” to fire were granted easily through a simple formal process. He added that the current war differed from the past in that no rules of engagement were passed from the division command to the

⁴⁷⁰ <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>

⁴⁷¹ <https://x.com/Milifney/status/1866851088286244968>

⁴⁷² <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1872979346815893814>

⁴⁷³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-12-04/ty-article-opinion/00000193-9144-dfe8-a5db-fb6da88c0000>

⁴⁷⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-06-04/ty-article/.premium/00000197-35e0-dd58-add7-35f3153c0000>

⁴⁷⁵ <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-soldiers-gaza-firing-regulations/>

⁴⁷⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ry008080kx>

⁴⁷⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-12-31/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000194-18a3-d1fi-aibd-fabba28f0000>

⁴⁷⁸ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1842243035809403286> (e.g. 23:30). Also: <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1928279365562794120>

⁴⁷⁹ See the investigative report here: <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1842243035809403286> ; see one sniper from the unit here: <https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/sandton-man-22-identified-as-sniper-in-elite-israeli-unit-that-has-killed-unarmed-civilians-in-gaza-20241014>

⁴⁸⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-09-27/ty-article/.highlight/00000192-2fcf-ddff-a9fb-bffec8e0000>

⁴⁸¹ <https://x.com/BittonRosen/status/1908029094173753650>

⁴⁸² Men in the area who were not carrying white flags appear to have been shot upon sight, see: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-01-03/ty-article/.premium/00000194-28b8-ddaf-adb7-6bb89cfc0000>

brigade command (and from there further down to the troops on the ground).⁴⁸³ These findings were re-affirmed by the testimonies of several other anonymous soldiers, one of whom stated that there was no change to the rules of engagement after Israeli forces shot and killed 3 Israeli hostages who fled their captors. Others stated that the IDF shot civilians who were trying to collect food, or that soldiers shot a Palestinian family in the area.⁴⁸⁴ On a separate occasion, IDF soldiers described a holiday event in which the entire battalion shot together in a general direction but without a clear target in what was presented as a fun event.⁴⁸⁵

Some IDF soldiers expressed serious doubts regarding the number of Hamas “terrorists” killed by the IDF, and believed that the actual number of Palestinian deaths was higher than reported – as even in a small area one or two Palestinian civilians on average were being killed every day.⁴⁸⁶ In one case, an officer in one of the divisions in Gaza recounted how the IDF spokesperson claimed his division killed over 200 terrorists. The officer pointed out that according to procedure, every corpse is to be photographed and sent to military intelligence. Of the 200 people killed, only 10 were verified as Hamas members.⁴⁸⁷ In a different case, a battalion served in Gaza for three months in which 90 Palestinians were killed in the area. Only one was suspected to be armed but his corpse was never checked. The IDF spokesperson reportedly claimed that the battalion killed 90 “terrorists”.⁴⁸⁸ These low ratios are another indicator to the massive firepower directed at Palestinians.

Visual evidence and testimonials outside the IDF confirm the above. A video reveals how starving Gazans who rushed to collect airdropped aid were shot at by IDF soldiers, with at least one of them shot dead.⁴⁸⁹ One video shows an Israeli drone dropping a bomb on a wounded, apparently unarmed, Palestinian, while another shows a drone filming a wounded man from above as what appears to be a missile hits him.⁴⁹⁰ There are several filmed cases of Palestinians walking along the coast and getting shot.⁴⁹¹ 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.⁴⁹² A UN official that traveled inside Gaza filmed two people walking as fire was opened on them from behind, injuring at least one. The official reported that they witnessed a woman shot in the back of the head, and that a young man who tried to retrieve her was shot as well.⁴⁹³

A series of reports focused on the Netzarim Corridor bisecting the Gaza Strip that became a “kill zone”, in the words of the senior commander responsible for the area. Any person

⁴⁸³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-06-25/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000190-4ac5-da42-a1ba-7fef27c50000> ; also <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/137173/>

⁴⁸⁴ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/137173/> ; <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-soldiers-gaza-firing-regulations/>

⁴⁸⁵ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/137173/>

⁴⁸⁶ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/137173/>

⁴⁸⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-12-18/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000193-d0a-dcf9-afbb-deff388f0000>

⁴⁸⁸ <https://x.com/haimhz/status/1924934076705734681>

⁴⁸⁹ <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1775960365630624249>

⁴⁹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hL5zcHVJB1U&rc0=1> ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1904553781326491946>

⁴⁹¹ <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1800790290783248589>

⁴⁹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9nY-niPcDo>

⁴⁹³ <https://x.com/jwhittall/status/1906455423810490659>

entering the range of Israeli snipers was shot dead.⁴⁹⁴ In one case, a Gazan was identified in range, so for a minute or two IDF troops fired at him, and then at his corpse, dozens of bullets. The troops then approached the corpse and discovered it was an unarmed teenager, maybe 16 years old, who was soon found not to be affiliated with Hamas. The battalion commander defined him as a terrorist, and after one soldier protested, added that “anyone crossing the line is a terrorist. No exceptions, [there are] no civilians. Everyone is a terrorist”.⁴⁹⁵ In a different episode in the area, four unarmed Palestinians were shot at by tanks and machine guns (“hundreds of bullets”). Three were killed and a bulldozer soon buried them in the sand.⁴⁹⁶ In a different case, an adult and two children crossed the line and were identified by the IDF troops. Although they were clearly not a threat, one soldier recounted how an attack helicopter fired a missile at the Palestinians, killing them immediately.⁴⁹⁷ One reservist noted that when they identified and detained five Palestinian civilians who attempted to cross the Corridor, the IDF interrogator who questioned the Palestinians pointed out that the reservist was new to the area because he was still bringing detainees for interrogation (and not simply shooting them).⁴⁹⁸ Few of these events drew broader attention. In October 2024, for example, Palestinian civilians attempted to move from the southern Gaza Strip back to their homes in the north. Israeli soldiers shot and hit them, including firing at them a missile from a drone, until they turned back.⁴⁹⁹ At least 8 people, including children, were killed, with dozens injured.⁵⁰⁰ A long investigative piece in December 2024 described the reality on the ground from the perspective of IDF troops in that area.⁵⁰¹ There were difficulties moving between other areas of the Strip as well. A video shows civilians who tried to move south from northern Gaza to Gaza City that were shot.⁵⁰²

The high number of civilian fatalities is also the result of the IDF’s targeting practices: from early July to mid August 2024, for example, the IDF targeted at least 21 schools – locations where displaced Palestinian civilians took shelter.⁵⁰³ In at least some cases, the IDF did not warn civilians before the bombings.⁵⁰⁴ In one case that drew more attention in early July, a

⁴⁹⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-12-18/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000193-d0a-dcf9-afbb-deff388f0000> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-12-04/ty-article-opinion/00000193-9144-dfe8-a5db-fb6da88c0000>

⁴⁹⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-12-18/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000193-d0a-dcf9-afbb-deff388f0000>

⁴⁹⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-12-18/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000193-d0a-dcf9-afbb-deff388f0000>

⁴⁹⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-12-18/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000193-d0a-dcf9-afbb-deff388f0000>

⁴⁹⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-12-04/ty-article-opinion/00000193-9144-dfe8-a5db-fb6da88c0000>

⁴⁹⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skj2sayca>

⁵⁰⁰ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1841182012704768515>

⁵⁰¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-12-18/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000193-d0a-dcf9-afbb-deff388f0000>

⁵⁰² <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2024/10/9/palestinians-shot-at-while-fleeing-israeli-assault-in-north-gaza>

⁵⁰³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/11/this-has-to-stop-plea-survivor-israel-strike-gaza-tabeen> ; <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-08-10/around-100-palestinians-killed-in-israeli-air-strike-in-gaza/104209574> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-08-10/ty-article/00000191-3a90-d9b2-abb7-3ff5d68a0000> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/07/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-hamas-war.html>

⁵⁰⁴ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/במעמקי-התהום-המוסרית-שקט-הוא-אכן-רפוש/>

school in Khan Younis was attacked, killing at least 30 displaced people, including people who were playing soccer at the time.⁵⁰⁵ Attacks on schools continued, killing the displaced Palestinian families who had taken shelter in them.⁵⁰⁶ Between early October and early November 2024, the IDF attacked 64 schools and educational facilities (compared to 226 attacks for the first year of the war).⁵⁰⁷

In several cases, the IDF attacked areas where displaced people concentrated. Many of these attacks took place within Al-Mawasi, the small (some 14 square kilometers) so-called “humanitarian” or “safe” zone in the Gaza Strip.⁵⁰⁸ In early September 2024 Israel dropped 2,000 pound bombs in its attack within the humanitarian safe zone it had defined previously that targeted Muhammad Deif – the fifth attack on that area at that point.⁵⁰⁹ Over November 2024 the number of attacks in the area increased – at a time when estimates of the density in it reached some 30,000 people per square kilometer.⁵¹⁰ In response, the IDF noted that these were “safer” areas (i.e. not exactly safe) but acknowledged its attacks in them.⁵¹¹ Visual evidence provides further evidence for these attacks and their impact.⁵¹²

According to IDF soldiers and officers, during May and June 2025 the IDF regularly shot at people who headed towards aid distribution sites before they were opened or after they were

⁵⁰⁵ <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1810934872778654087> ;

<https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1810964616437981549>

⁵⁰⁶ See for examples these attacks in September (partial): <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-school-hospital-displaced-44f93845d6b6cfc9dccc4doba37bdd263> ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/07/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-hamas-war.html> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-09-21/ty-article-live/00000192-113f-d1bc-a1ff-377fao750000?liveBlogItemId=35133839#35133839>

⁵⁰⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-24/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000193-4db6-d68e-a1db-edb69fb0000>

⁵⁰⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/what-is-gazas-al-mawasi-region-struck-by-israels-military-2024-09-10/> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-12-16/ty-article/.premium/00000193-cc39-d8ae-abb7-fc3953a90000>

⁵⁰⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/10/world/middleeast/israel-strike-mawasi-bombs.html> ; <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/09/09/middleeast/gaza-khan-younis-israel-strike-intl-latam/index.html> ; <https://x.com/AJEnglish/status/1833442481909739599> ; see also the video at

<https://x.com/EyesOnSouth/status/183329164939702356> ; <https://www.972mag.com/al-mawasi-safe-zone-airstrike-gaza/> . For earlier attacks see for example: <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/07/testimonies-from-the-mawasi-massacre-90-people-buried-in-the-sand/> ; <https://jacobin.com/2024/07/gaza-mawasi-israel-genocide-children>

⁵¹⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-12-16/ty-article/.premium/00000193-cc39-d8ae-abb7-fc3953a90000> ; Israel attacked the area nine times between early November and early December.

⁵¹¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-12-16/ty-article/.premium/00000193-cc39-d8ae-abb7-fc3953a90000>

⁵¹² <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000009825987/israel-strike-gaza-mawasi.html> ; a UN official who came to the area described it as “[the atomic bomb on] Nagasaki”:

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-12-16/ty-article/.premium/00000193-cc39-d8ae-abb7-fc3953a90000> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2024/12/5/children-incinerated-in-israeli-attack-on-safe-zone-in-gaza> ; https://x.com/Dr_Muneer/status/1863218067343384730 ;

<https://x.com/arixegal/status/1864407681034867003> ;

<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1864371889180721230> ;

<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1864344148603543915> ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1864361403991138768> ;

<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1864365073864569251> ;

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/12/22/live-israeli-forces-kill-10-in-gaza-fire-tanks-drones-at-hospital>

closed for the day (discussed in detail in the Causing the Deaths of Civilian Populations chapter).⁵¹³ One soldier described they treated the Gazans seeking aid as an attacking enemy force, using heavy machine guns, grenade launchers and mortars resulting in “a killing field”. After a week or two the use of firing tank shells at the aid seekers became common. An officer recounted that the one division commander decided to shoot at Palestinians who were looting UN trucks for their personal needs (the UN accepted this form of looting as legitimate because of the circumstances).⁵¹⁴

Massacres and examples

There are many thousands of examples from Gaza that illustrate the harm to civilians that resulted from IDF policy. Many thousands of these, according to Airwars, are airstrikes and bombings.⁵¹⁵ These bombings caused not only most casualties but also particularly gruesome results.⁵¹⁶ On many occasions, identifying the victims was difficult.⁵¹⁷ Many Palestinians were trapped under the rubble.⁵¹⁸ In some cases, Palestinians who were injured were initially mistaken for dead.⁵¹⁹

One specific case that received more public attention was that of 19-year old Shaban al Dalu who was filmed burning alive in the remains of his tent after the IDF bombed the area near the hospital in October 2024. Al Dalu had been injured previously and appeared to have an IV line connected to his arm as he was burning.⁵²⁰ The area where he was sheltering was hit five times in the previous seven months.⁵²¹ Many other Palestinians – including children – burned to death as a result of airstrikes.⁵²² Whole families were buried under the rubble. The young adult Hosam Al-Khalidi, for example, filmed himself under the rubble experiencing the deaths

⁵¹³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-06-27/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000197-ac81-dd94-addf-afdiofcooooo>

⁵¹⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-06-27/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000197-ac81-dd94-addf-afdiofcooooo>

⁵¹⁵ <https://airwars.org/conflict/israel-and-gaza-2023/>

⁵¹⁶ <https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1824175341037875358> (the image, which I have seen, was taken off because of its explicit nature) ; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/190651122716361070> ; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1907538487575982343> (this was a video that was taken off because of its explicit nature, referred to here: <https://x.com/omarsuleiman/status/1907616452376465747>; <https://x.com/HeenaKhaled/status/1907549580822040619>) ; https://x.com/dn_osama_rabee/status/1907625520671375432

⁵¹⁷ For examples: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/israel-unidentified-bodies-war-gaza-palestinians-answers-rcna172645> ; <https://x.com/NourNaim88/status/1851214238846497280>

⁵¹⁸ <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1907927205318918252> ; <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1912717471817085128> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1916863660149874741> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1912388258853487020> . See also:

<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1908832531967082846> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1908929872086315032>

⁵¹⁹ <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1907851696606425125>

⁵²⁰ <https://news.sky.com/story/heartbreaking-story-behind-video-of-young-man-burnt-to-death-in-medical-compound-after-israeli-strike-13234035>

⁵²¹ <https://news.sky.com/story/heartbreaking-story-behind-video-of-young-man-burnt-to-death-in-medical-compound-after-israeli-strike-13234035>

⁵²² For example see the cases on pp. 4-5 here: <https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Generation-Wiped-Out.pdf>

of his family members in late October 2023. He lost a total of eight family members.⁵²³ In another case, Israel attacked an UNRWA medical clinic which was used as a shelter for displaced families, killing at least 22 Palestinians.⁵²⁴ In other cases uninvolved Palestinians were targeted from the air. In late May 2025, for example, Mohammad al-Farra, a man with special needs, was killed while being recorded despite visibly limping.⁵²⁵

In mid-March 2025 Israel attacked by surprise after midnight by a widespread bombing of the Gaza Strip, reportedly killing 409 people including 173 children and 88 women (the total number was accepted by Israeli media, who did not make further distinctions).⁵²⁶ One Palestinian who experienced the attacks described the many body pieces that he and his neighbors found in the street which were not picked up by ambulances at the scene as those were full of the wounded.⁵²⁷ An Australian medic present stated that it “was just mostly women and children burned head to toe, limbs missing, heads missing”.⁵²⁸ One international doctor performed 15 operations in that night, while another said she “cannot process or comprehend the scale of mass killing and massacre of families in their sleep” that she saw.⁵²⁹ Over the next few days many videos and stories from Gaza emerged to show the results of this attack and the ones that followed, often focusing on the deaths of children and their families.⁵³⁰ This attack heralded a stage of the war with “new and more aggressive tactics”.⁵³¹ A

⁵²³ <https://airwars.org/civilian-casualties/ispto734-october-24-2023/> ; https://www.instagram.com/hosam.gaza/?locale=en_GB ; <https://www.gofundme.com/f/muht2-helping-hosam-after-he-lost-his-family-and-everything>

⁵²⁴ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1907590663945744468> ; <https://x.com/jeremyscahill/status/1907409292614906058> ; <https://x.com/xIsraelExposed/status/1907458237835747511> ; <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1907354839975166176> ; <https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1907367901029707892>

⁵²⁵ <https://x.com/AbubakerAbedW/status/1934192637453512912> ; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1928463573921173736> ; <https://www.instagram.com/p/DKV19rps46M/?igsh=djJka2Y2MXl3dXE3> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-06-12/ty-article/00000197-626e-dfof-add7-fee0d020000>

⁵²⁶ <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1901976378943136012> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1901980913392668913> ; <https://www.barrons.com/news/unicf-says-deeply-worried-for-gaza-children-as-israel-resumes-strikes-3493c8f8> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1901934013306007837> ; <https://apnews.com/article/gaza-ceasefire-israel-hospital-children-f70b6205d99a14ffc4cfd14bfeed8944>. For Israeli media: <https://x.com/Mistaclim/status/1902034512856437220> ; <https://www.maariv.co.il/journalists/article-1181267> ; <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1181192>

⁵²⁷ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/147895/>

⁵²⁸ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1902022179690041731>

⁵²⁹ <https://apnews.com/article/gaza-ceasefire-israel-hospital-children-f70b6205d99a14ffc4cfd14bfeed8944>

⁵³⁰ <https://x.com/afalkhatib/status/190181154416009271> ; <https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1902268039892275474> ; <https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1902251753178816944> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1902054591744893156> ; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1902190942540480628> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1902293436025467265> ; <https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1902341491910910050> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1902364849276891514> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1902727457246953849> ; <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1902562684983238924> ; https://x.com/Abdullah_Om3r03/status/1902399315617648817 ;

large percentage of the fatalities in this attack and in subsequent weeks were of women and children.⁵³² This series of attacks included video evidence of attacks on soft targets such as tents⁵³³ and a flour distribution point.⁵³⁴ In a few weeks Israeli strikes had hit refugee tents in supposedly safe areas (Israel stopped designating safe zones on its maps in January 2025) at least 23 times, and in at least 36 documented strikes, all casualties were women and children.⁵³⁵ Some IDF attacks in the supposedly safe zone were not documented.⁵³⁶ Sources from within the IDF noted that it attacked targets without examining how many Palestinians are expected to be in the target building or how many civilians were killed in each airstrike.⁵³⁷ In one school that was attacked, for example, the number of dead civilians was three times higher than the number of people who were supposed to be in it according to the IDF's intelligence.⁵³⁸ In the months after the March 18 attack most targets were low ranking militants in Hamas or Islamic Jihad who did not even have a rank. Moreover, many attacks were approved despite the uncertainty that they would hit any military target.⁵³⁹ In others, collateral damage was unnecessarily high. In one attack in Gaza in early July 2025, a Hamas militant was targeted after he sat at a table at a café, killing at least 26 and up to 40 people including him.⁵⁴⁰ Notably, the number of Hamas attacks on the IDF was low at first – according to Israel Katz, Israel's Minister of Defense, IDF troops came under fire only once in the first three weeks after March 18.⁵⁴¹

Despite the large number of casualties in air-based attacks throughout the war, attention and reporting often focused on ground-level encounters. In one case that drew much international attention, a car with six civilians was attacked, killing four. A 15 year old girl called the

<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1903287761580220466> ;
<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1903287761580220466> ;
<https://www.bbc.com/news/videos/ckg23qpnlnxo> ;
<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1915708819071545444> . For geolocations:
<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1902183917463203912> ;
<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1902133380839567731> . For a later summary of the March 18 attack
<https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2025-03-27/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/00000195-d31b-d2e3-a1b7-d73f6a7f0000>

⁵³¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/03/23/israel-gaza-war-plans/>

⁵³² <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/briefing-note-gaza-spokesperson-un-high-commissioner-human-rights-ravina-shamdasani-enar> . Examples:

<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1920163364678086789> ;
<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1924007700666646911> ;
<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1915420072178291167> ;
<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/19/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-strikes-death-toll.html> ;
<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1924086680631251224>

⁵³³ https://x.com/dn_osama_rabee/status/1913599368478773639 ;
<https://x.com/arixegal/status/1922873995793224177>

⁵³⁴ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1911426140675207542>

⁵³⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-280-gaza-strip> ;
https://x.com/receipts_lol/status/1913615115322110187 ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-04-21/ty-article/.premium/00000196-5446-d9fc-adbf-5c6f56cf0000>

⁵³⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr7zplv35110>

⁵³⁷ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/שקר-הפינוי-הצבא-מפציץ-שכונות-בעזה-אף-שה/>

⁵³⁸ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/שקר-הפינוי-הצבא-מפציץ-שכונות-בעזה-אף-שה/> ; also:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/02/israel-strikes-gaza-schools-strategy>

⁵³⁹ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/שקר-הפינוי-הצבא-מפציץ-שכונות-בעזה-אף-שה/>

⁵⁴⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cgeqr73p8wyo>

⁵⁴¹ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1910045830309912584>

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 six year old girl, answered, terrified and surrounded by her dead family members, and stayed on the line for three 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 contact with Hind and the paramedics was lost. Twelve days later, the decomposing corpses of the girls and their family members were found in the car, while the paramedics had been killed nearby when an IDF tank destroyed their ambulance about 50 meters away from the car that were trying to reach.⁵⁴² Although the IDF claimed that its troops were not in the vicinity of the car, subsequent investigations found this claim did not correspond to the available evidence, some of which was supplied by the IDF itself.⁵⁴³ According to one forensic analysis, the tank that shot at the car was around 20 meters away from it.⁵⁴⁴ Hind's father was killed in an Israeli attack several months later.⁵⁴⁵

Reports have “documented dozens of cases of field executions carried out by the Israeli army”.⁵⁴⁶ There appears to be a concentration of these in December 2023, particularly in Jabalia. In one well-investigated case from December 2023, an Israeli sniper killed a boy from the Abu Saleh family who ventured outside a shelter to see what remained after the area was bulldozed. His family found his body and prepared him for burial. Upon their return to the school all six family members – who were holding a white flag – were shot by Israeli forces. Their corpses were bulldozed into a garbage pile where they were discovered later.⁵⁴⁷ Also in December, IDF troops entered a Gaza apartment building full of civilians and reportedly executed the men, killing at least 11 (or 19).⁵⁴⁸ A third case from December had Israeli troops opening fire at people within a house, killing five immediately, and apparently executing the injured later.⁵⁴⁹ In a fourth case from December, according to a testimony of a Palestinian

⁵⁴² <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/>

⁵⁴³ <https://news.sky.com/story/im-so-scared-please-come-heartbreaking-final-moments-of-girl-5-killed-in-gaza-13229813?dcmp=snt-sf-twitter>

⁵⁴⁴ <https://x.com/RyanRozbiani/status/1862884823284465907>

⁵⁴⁵ <https://x.com/jeremyscahill/status/1807868423092789298>

⁵⁴⁶ <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://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israeli-army-killed-elderly-palestinian-after-taking-propaganda-photo-report/3055535> ; examples at <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6494> (pp. 31-34). Some have been accepted by a UN report, see <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/opt/20241106-Gaza-Update-Report-OPT.pdf> (p. 13).

⁵⁴⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000009614868/israel-gaza-war-family-killed.html>

⁵⁴⁸ <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> ; <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/al-jazeera-gaza-film-israeli-massacre/>

⁵⁴⁹ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/gaza-war-israel-palestine-forces-executed-family-home>;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYkzj2ntb50>

doctor, the IDF raided a school and executed an injured man next to her and shot (and likely killed) a group of women who were attempting to evacuate.⁵⁵⁰ Also in Jabalia in December 2023, an IDF soldier raided an older Palestinian's couple home, killing their daughter and the husband's brother. The wife was shot twice, resulting in long-lasting injuries.⁵⁵¹ In yet another case from December 2023, IDF troops entered a family home in northern Khan Younis and killed the two parents in front of their children (aged 11, 9 and 5; the youngest, with cerebral palsy, lost his eye to a grenade the soldiers threw).⁵⁵²

There are many cases of IDF troops running over live and dead Gazans with heavy vehicles.⁵⁵³ 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!!!"⁵⁵⁴ In one case the AlJamal family were attacked at their home in Shujaiya with grenades and gunfire despite waving a white flag. The grandmother Safiya, who attempted to protect her family by standing in front of them, was seriously injured. Hours later, IDF troops allowed her son Muhanad to evacuate her, taking them in a tank blindfolded and handcuffed, while hurling abuse at them both. Muhanad recounted that in the middle of the way they stopped, used him as a human shield for a while, then took Safiya out of the tank as well and reversed over her about one meter away from him.⁵⁵⁵ In a different case, a man recounted witnessing an Israeli bulldozer running over his sister's head in front of him.⁵⁵⁶ A Palestinian doctor saw an Israeli bulldozer drive over three Palestinians.⁵⁵⁷ A doctor said he found the bodies of four former patients crushed by a bulldozer near his hospital.⁵⁵⁸ Rajaa Hamdouna described how a tank ran over her husband and two children apparently inside their tent. The three were killed, while she was run over but somehow survived and was able to crawl away with her remaining two children.⁵⁵⁹

There is evidence for these practices from the Israeli side as well. One IDF bulldozer operator who was deployed to Gaza later committed suicide; his co-driver said that they had driven

⁵⁵⁰ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1851217795893068006>

⁵⁵¹ <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHTlvyno6MI/>

⁵⁵² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RDXQapOtUg> ; <https://news.sky.com/story/israel-hamas-war-palestinian-siblings-see-parents-killed-in-idf-raid-13071072>

⁵⁵³ For a generic description: <https://www.972mag.com/beit-lahiya-gaza-rubble-corpses/>

⁵⁵⁴ <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> . Note that Twitter/X later removed the image, but the original tweet is preserved here: https://www.reddit.com/r/AskMiddleEast/comments/1b3soyg/palestinian_journalist_we_finally_got_an_answer/. For Twitter/X taking the image down:

<https://x.com/muhammdshehad2/status/1763641880934302087>. Image is also preserved here:

<https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1783453264798765401>

⁵⁵⁵ <https://x.com/AJlunit/status/1860300551105446297> ; <https://www.ajiunit.com/article/testimonies-from-gaza/>

⁵⁵⁶ <https://x.com/Kahlissee/status/1819646850833465478> . The man, who was close to the event, was unable to pull her away and stated she was clearly alive.

⁵⁵⁷ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1851217795893068006>

⁵⁵⁸ <https://apnews.com/world-news/still-wrecked-from-past-israeli-raids-hospitals-in-northern-gaza-come-under-attack-again-00000192eebfd414a79ffbf88cc0000>

⁵⁵⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=easTG4YyPoM>

over hundreds of “terrorists” both alive and dead.⁵⁶⁰ A friend of an IDF soldier who was killed in action eulogized him by recounting that the dead soldier had tried to count how many Palestinians he killed – but eventually stopped including the ones he drove over because “he was tired of cleaning arms and legs [i.e. of people he ran over] from the tank’s tracks”.⁵⁶¹ A human rights organization documented other occasions in which Israeli soldiers have deliberately driven over dozens of Palestinian civilians while they were alive.⁵⁶²

There are many other cases of the killing of helpless or surrendering Gazans. For example, one Gazan father recounted how he coordinated safe passage from his home and left with his family holding white flags. The IDF shot his son, and when his wife and three daughters ran to help him, they were shot and killed as well – some of the fire reportedly came from quadcopters. The IDF then called him, and did not allow ambulances to retrieve his family members.⁵⁶³ A different family carrying white flags were shot at, killing the father and a brother.⁵⁶⁴ Another video shows evidence of a sniper killing the son of a man carrying a white flag who was walking with him.⁵⁶⁵ A Gazan captured, used as a human shield and detained said he was shot at while waving a white flag.⁵⁶⁶ 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 in front of his mother.⁵⁶⁷ The IDF subsequently bombed the hospital.⁵⁶⁸ In another case, an IDF soldier shot and killed Najeeb Salem Sadeq, 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.⁵⁶⁹ Muhammed Bhar, a man with Down’s syndrome was attacked by an IDF dog and left to die. His decomposed corpse was found a week later.⁵⁷⁰ 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

⁵⁶⁰ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/10/21/middleeast/gaza-war-israeli-soldiers-ptsd-suicide-intl/index.html> ; <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3671390>. He also said that “there is no such thing as citizens [in Gaza]”, referring to the perceived absence of a civilian population.

⁵⁶¹ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1866801511424229747>

⁵⁶² <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://www.instagram.com/p/C5W4BUmNhao/?hl=en> (reportedly) ; and <https://x.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1807772423862759760> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1826691206920704432> ; see also: <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6494> (pp. 30-31)

⁵⁶³ <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1874447253001138669>

⁵⁶⁴ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/10/inside-israels-ongoing-invasion-of-jabalia-in-northern-gaza/>

⁵⁶⁵ <https://x.com/AdameMedia/status/1804542832109068567>

⁵⁶⁶ <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1876685731143323761>

⁵⁶⁷ <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> ; https://x.com/Hamza_a96/status/1842133059312714049

⁵⁶⁸ https://twitter.com/Ahmad_tibi/status/1758038092353503495

⁵⁶⁹ <https://www.itv.com/news/2024-03-01/he-didnt-understand-disabled-man-shot-dead-in-gaza-hospital-by-idf>

⁵⁷⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz9drj14eolo> ; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/gaza-palestinian-down-syndrome-left-die-israeli-soldiers-after-combat-dog-attack> . Other Palestinians with special needs have been killed during the war, often without understanding what was going on around them, see <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/140526/>

hands]’ and you took him down? Excellent”.⁵⁷¹ When the IDF evacuated a Gazan family from their building, they forced them to leave behind their 94-year-old grandmother Naifa Rizq al-Sawada, suffering from Alzheimer’s and unable to walk or speak. The building was burned and her charred remains were reportedly found on her bed.⁵⁷² Two Israeli mothers recounted that their soldier sons told them about shooting old Palestinian women: one was killed in her wheelchair while another was shot in her bed.⁵⁷³ In other cases, Gazans were killed while restrained with their hands zip-tied.⁵⁷⁴ In one case from early July 2024, several Gazan detainees were released, and three were reportedly killed by Israeli forces shortly afterwards, when their hands were still zip-tied.⁵⁷⁵ A similar case occurred in early November 2024 when four Gazan detainees were released, only to be used as human shields before three were reportedly shot dead.⁵⁷⁶

There is visual evidence of IDF soldiers purposefully killing civilians.⁵⁷⁷ In one 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.⁵⁷⁸ An Israeli soldier shared a video showing the killing of five other Palestinians walking in the rubble in North Gaza.⁵⁷⁹ A different video showed IDF soldiers shooting two unarmed Palestinian men before burying them under the rubble with a bulldozer.⁵⁸⁰ A different video shows an airstrike on a Palestinian walking amidst the rubble in broad daylight in an unthreatening manner.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷¹ <https://twitter.com/MatanGolanPhoto/status/1766586400558739508> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Dp95bN8iWw>

⁵⁷² <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-israeli-army-forces-family-leave-94-year-old-grandmother-behind> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2024/4/30/we-didnt-expect-to-find-bones-inside-one-gaza-familys-nightmare>

⁵⁷³ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/idf-disaster-routine/>

⁵⁷⁴ <https://www.instagram.com/msquarednews/reel/C9HpilzMKH4/> ; <https://www.madamasr.com/en/2024/07/07/news/politics/bodies-of-4-palestinians-retrieved-near-karam-abu-salem-following-arrest-by-israeli-forces/>

⁵⁷⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/three-gazans-found-dead-after-release-israeli-custody-relative-witness-say-2024-07-08/>

⁵⁷⁶ <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/151490> ; <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israel-kills-3-palestinians-shortly-after-their-release-in-northern-gaza/3389520>

⁵⁷⁷ <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> ;

<https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1761163980947558806> (likely; for a similar case in the West Bank: <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-afef-f9bdi71b0000>);

⁵⁷⁸ <https://twitter.com/GozukaraFurkan/status/1770919234278740269> ; see also this video of a different case, shared on Israeli media, which showed an attack from the air on Palestinians walking unarmed in the middle of a ruined street in Rafah in August(?) I was unable to find the original but Channel 14’s watermark is clearly visible):

<https://www.facebook.com/tmarkovitz/videos/445558885143512/?rdid=OCJC8cW5fYLSICA6>

⁵⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1770919159800402148> ; same video at:

<https://x.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1771054562658427147>

⁵⁸⁰ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/28/israeli-soldiers-shoot-dead-two-unarmed-palestinian-men-in-gaza-video> ; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-shooting-palestinians-beach-doffbbda3c0aa8873483b6685bb9ddd0>

⁵⁸¹ <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1925181402582008006>

Another video shows an airstrike on two Palestinians carrying something as they walk in broad daylight in an unthreatening manner.⁵⁸² More videos show similar situations.⁵⁸³

Other attacks appear to have specifically targeted the family members of prominent Palestinian figures. Thus, for example, many members of the family and extended family of professor Refaat al-Areer, a renowned poet whose work and activism drew much attention who was killed earlier in the war, were killed in attacks.⁵⁸⁴ Similarly, at least 19 close family members of Ismail Haniyeh, including small children, were killed in Israeli attacks (dozens of more distant relatives were killed as well).⁵⁸⁵

Investigated massacres

The high number of mass casualty events and the difficulty to obtain clear information out of Gaza have led to a low ratio of investigated cases to the overall number of massacres. The partial exception here is Airwars, which as of writing investigated 1,084 of over 11,650 cases they have been tracking over 21 months. Evidence suggests that on many occasions the IDF killed civilians with little oversight, accountability, or consequences. As of late December 2024, for example, only two IDF officers are known to have been fired for their role in the air campaign, after they oversaw a drone strike that killed several foreign aid workers back in April 2024.⁵⁸⁶ There have been a few attempts to examine cases in academic writing as well.⁵⁸⁷

Amnesty International investigated three massacres that killed a total of 44 civilians (of whom 32 were children) in April 2024. The organization collected photo and video evidence and interviewed locals. Their findings revealed no indication of military targets in or around the attacked areas. Instead, the strikes killed children playing outdoors and people sleeping in their homes.⁵⁸⁸ A different investigation, by Airwars, examined hundreds of video clips released by the IDF during the first month of the war in which the IDF stated it was targeting militant groups in Gaza. The videos show bombs hitting their targets, suggesting that the IDF used the videos to portray its bombing campaign as precise towards supposedly military

⁵⁸² <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1930295569471140248>

⁵⁸³ <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1941097819101700137> ;
<https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1939328648407851075>

⁵⁸⁴ His daughter and her family: <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/27/middleeast/shaima-refaat-alareer-death-intl/index.html> . The corpses of Alareer and five of his relatives were later exhumed and reburied, see: <https://x.com/AsemAlnabeh/status/1886813340938461452> ;

<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1887194827147596005> ;

<https://x.com/AsemAlnabeh/status/1891173713632018637>

⁵⁸⁵ <https://x.com/NimerSultany/status/1806730484006662419> ;

<https://x.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1806663572824498554>

⁵⁸⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/26/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-bombing.html>

⁵⁸⁷ An academic pre-print paper examined some of the results of the IDF's operation to free hostages in Nuseirat, analyzing 47 of about 200 casualties that were received in the Shuhada al-Aqsa Hospital.

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2024.11.14.24316980v1>

⁵⁸⁸ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/05/israel-opt-israeli-air-strikes-that-killed-44-civilians-further-evidence-of-war-crimes-new-investigation/>

targets. Airwars matched 17 of these strikes to specific locations and found that they killed 448 civilians (including 204 children and 123 women).⁵⁸⁹

In February 2024, Amnesty International closely investigated four attacks that killed at least 95 civilians. All took place in the southern governorate, which was supposed to be safe at the time. Amnesty found no indication that the buildings were legitimate military objectives or that occupants were military targets.⁵⁹⁰ In April, Human Rights Watch investigated an IDF airstrike that consisted of four aerial munitions that hit a residential building within 10 seconds, without warning. The attack 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. Israeli authorities provided no justification for the strike.⁵⁹¹

The German publication *Der Spiegel* conducted for several months an investigation into an attack on a residential building that killed at least 129 people, identifying 20 more than Airwars and 24 more than the UN. *Der Spiegel* was unable to find out why the building was targeted, but suggested that the attack might have been guided by artificial intelligence or alternatively, intended as a “power target” meant to increase the pressure on the civilian population.⁵⁹²

The NGO Euro-Med Monitor examined a two-day massacre from November 2023, which resulted in the deaths of around 70 civilians (61 were verified), the injury of about 100, and the displacement of about 900 individuals. There was also destruction of private property, while corpses of people from earlier strikes were repeatedly bulldozed. The investigation “found no evidence of any military targets in the targeted area at the time of the attack or before it”, and the NGO concluded that the attack constituted both a war crime and a crime against humanity.⁵⁹³ Euro-Med Monitor also investigated an attack on the Juha family home in early December 2023, which killed about 90 civilians including 71 women and children. The investigation found no justifiable military purpose in the building and Israel provided no visual evidence to justify its attack.⁵⁹⁴

NPR investigated one of the deadliest attacks of the war – the strike on the Abu Naser family building in Beit Lahia in October 2024 as part of the IDF operation in North Gaza (covered in the Zoom in 3 section below), which killed 132 members of the family as well as two others. More than 40 people were wounded. More than 40 percent of the dead were children.⁵⁹⁵ The attack was in response to the IDF claiming to see a spotter on the building’s roof (it did not share any footage). Gaza rescue services could not help because they were blocked by an IDF

⁵⁸⁹ <https://idf-tweets-gaza.airwars.org/>

⁵⁹⁰ <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/>

⁵⁹¹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/04/gaza-israeli-strike-killing-106-civilians-apparent-war-crime>

⁵⁹² <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/gaza-city-possible-war-crime-why-did-israel-bomb-this-residential-building-a-a7e9e4f9-9879-404a-bb87-4a17cef81f8c>

⁵⁹³ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6537/Shuheibar-family-massacre:-Euro-Med-Monitor-investigation-reveals-Israeli-army-killed-70-Palestinians-in-Gaza-street>

⁵⁹⁴ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6626/%E2%80%99My-uncle%E2%80%99s-family-was-incinerated-before-me%E2%80%99:-Investigation-into-Israeli-army%E2%80%99s-massacre-of-90-civilians-from-the-Juha-family-in-Gaza> ; the results of the attack are also described here: <https://www.972mag.com/gaza-missing-persons-children-wcnf/>

⁵⁹⁵ <https://apps.npr.org/gaza-building-israel-strike-casualties/> ; <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/1058832-2/>

siege.⁵⁹⁶ Airwars was able to identify at least 126 individuals killed in the strike, and estimated that between 129 and 254 civilians were killed in the strike based on a large amount of evidence.⁵⁹⁷

One of the most controversial events of the war has been the al-Ahli hospital explosion from mid-October 2023 which resulted in hundreds of casualties. Both sides appear to have used misinformation to blame the explosion on the other, both withheld important evidence and avoided providing clear evidence. While the public debates raged, early investigations by most observers tended to identify the source of the explosion as a Palestinian rocket or pointed out that the evidence was inconclusive.⁵⁹⁸ The only analyses that surfaced more than a couple of weeks after the attack – which did *not* examine it as a current event – did not find evidence supporting the conclusion that a Palestinian rocket caused the explosion and further debunked the IDF version.⁵⁹⁹

Israel has not cooperated with most external investigations. In July 2024, an Israeli MK proposed a bill aimed at shielding Israelis from ICC jurisdiction by prohibiting collaboration with the ICC and actively obstructing its actions. The bill is currently under discussion.⁶⁰⁰

Attacking aid workers and aid seekers

Cases in which the IDF kills civilians rarely make the news in Israel and the United States.⁶⁰¹ When such cases are reported, coverage is often limited to brief mentions of the number of dead, sometimes aggregated over a day. An exception occurred in early April 2024, when the IDF killed seven workers of the international NGO World Central Kitchen (all international

⁵⁹⁶ <https://apps.npr.org/gaza-building-israel-strike-casualties/>

⁵⁹⁷ <https://airwars.org/civilian-casualties/ispt291024b-october-28-2024/>

⁵⁹⁸ For earlier analyses: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/26/gaza-findings-october-17-al-ahli-hospital-explosion> (likely a misfired Palestinian rocket but more investigation needed);

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/03/briefing/gaza-hospital-explosion.html> (most likely a malfunctioning Palestinian rocket) ;

https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/11/03/explosion-at-al-ahli-hospital-in-gaza-new-findings-from-our-investigation_6224647_4.html (compatible with a Palestinian rocket) ;

<https://theconversation.com/what-exactly-caused-the-explosion-at-a-hospital-in-gaza-without-an-independent-credible-investigation-it-will-be-hard-for-everyone-to-agree-216242> (inconclusive) ;

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2023/10/24/1208211857/questions-still-swirl-around-al-ahli-arab-hospital-blast-in-gaza-heres-what-we-k> (inconclusive) ;

<https://edition.cnn.com/2023/11/02/middleeast/al-jazeera-video-gaza-hospital-blast-intl/index.html> ; (likely a malfunctioning rocket); <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-hamas-war-hospital-rocket-gaza-8bc239d2efe0cf3998b2154d9220a83> (likely a Palestinian rocket) ;

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67216929> (inconclusive); see also:

<https://x.com/alextoimo/status/1714670858914894046> ;

<https://x.com/alextoimo/status/1715425966091063593>

⁵⁹⁹ <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/israeli-disinformation-al-ahli-hospital> ;

<https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/when-it-stopped-being-a-war>

⁶⁰⁰ <https://x.com/PixieOfDeath/status/1809317160659099814> ;

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

⁶⁰¹ Al Jazeera is the exception, covering events that were not covered in most news outlets:

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

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

citizens) within their clearly marked vehicles operating in full coordination with the IDF.⁶⁰² An IDF source stated that a drone targeted the convoy of three vehicles under a belief that a Hamas member might be present. A later investigation suggested this was uncertain, as the person merely appeared armed.⁶⁰³ After the first vehicle was bombed, some NGO workers evacuated to a second vehicle, immediately notifying the IDF. Despite this, the second vehicle was also bombed. The survivors then evacuated it to a third vehicle that was also bombed, killing them all.⁶⁰⁴ The geolocation of the bombed vehicles revealed that the distance between the first and third bombing was 2.4 kilometers (1.5 miles), indicating that the event involved multiple targeting decisions over time.⁶⁰⁵

Israel attacked aid workers on other occasions as well. Later in April 2024, a UNICEF truck delivering 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.⁶⁰⁶ The first international UN worker was killed in May when an Israeli tank fired on his vehicle, which was marked as a UN vehicle.⁶⁰⁷ By mid May 2024, Human Rights Monitor found at least eight Israeli strikes on aid workers' convoys and premises in Gaza since the beginning of the war, killing or injuring at least 31 aid workers and those with them.⁶⁰⁸

An investigative report found that back in January 2024, five Palestinian technicians were on their way to fix a cellular operator unit in Khan Younis with prior coordination with the IDF. They were fired upon by an Israeli tank in the area, killing two in their vehicle. The report found that the IDF spokesperson's version of events was likely false.⁶⁰⁹ Aid workers continued to be killed in subsequent months. In November 2024, for example, one Save the Children worker was killed,⁶¹⁰ while another vehicle of the World Central Kitchen was attacked three times, killing three employees in it (compared to the April attack on the organization global outrage was lesser this time because the workers were Palestinians).⁶¹¹ Israel claimed that its target was a WCK employee who participated in the Oct. 7 attack, but did not provide evidence.⁶¹² In response to the World Central Kitchen attack the organization paused its Gaza work.⁶¹³ Several days later, the World Central Kitchen fired dozens of its Palestinian workers after Israel claimed that at least 62 were linked to militant groups. The World Central Kitchen fired those individuals without receiving proof or evidence, or even knowing the basis for

⁶⁰² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9e1e-d764-adff-gedf9cd00000>

⁶⁰³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-05/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-aca8-d906-a5cf-aebcb1000000>

⁶⁰⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9e1e-d764-adff-gedf9cd00000>

⁶⁰⁵ <https://twitter.com/marcowenjones/status/1775125251149500706>

⁶⁰⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sl3XydVerm8> ; <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/canadian-aid-truck-bombed-water-gaza-1.7179849>

⁶⁰⁷ <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-aicf-ff76832b0000>

⁶⁰⁸ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/05/14/gaza-israelis-attacking-known-aid-worker-locations>

⁶⁰⁹ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/134512/>

⁶¹⁰ https://x.com/Save_GlobalNews/status/1862952420520669522

⁶¹¹ <https://x.com/adinitay/status/1863109904245907802>

⁶¹² <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/30/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-world-central-kitchen.html>

⁶¹³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4g2g6w41090>

Israel's decision to flag them.⁶¹⁴ UN vehicles were attacked on other occasions as well even after coordinating their movements with the IDF.⁶¹⁵ In mid March 2025 one UN staffer was killed and five injured after an explosion at two UN guesthouses in Deir al Balah (Israel denied responsibility and reportedly launched an investigation in response).⁶¹⁶ Partially in response, the UN decided to reduce its footprint in the Gaza Strip, withdrawing about a third of its international workers in Gaza.⁶¹⁷ At about the same time, Israel also hit a Red Cross building in Gaza.⁶¹⁸ The major incident in which the IDF killed 15 paramedics and first responders near Rafah in late March 2025 is described in detail in the Zoom-In 4 section. In early June 2025 Israel attacked the family home of a UNDP (UN Development) worker, killing him together with seven of his family members and reportedly more than 36 members of his extended family.⁶¹⁹

Israel also attacked Palestinians seeking aid. In one particularly notable event in late February 2024, known as 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 delivering humanitarian aid.⁶²⁰ Palestinians claimed that the IDF shot at them,⁶²¹ while the IDF claimed that casualties resulted primarily from overcrowding and the general mayhem during which the lorries ran over the civilians.⁶²² In either case, the IDF, as an occupying power, is obligated under international humanitarian law to ensure the food and medical supplies of the population.⁶²³ UN experts and human rights organizations,⁶²⁴ as well as the media,⁶²⁵ largely confirmed the Palestinian account. The IDF failed to substantiate its version of the story, partially because it

⁶¹⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/world-central-kitchen-fires-dozens-workers-gaza-after-israel-accuses-them-2024-12-10/> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/30/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-world-central-kitchen.html>

⁶¹⁵ <https://x.com/nirhasson/status/1876547809987715541>

⁶¹⁶ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/03/1161261> ; <https://thedefensepost.com/2025/03/20/israel-un-gaza/>

⁶¹⁷ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2025-03-24/note-correspondents-gaza> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/24/world/middleeast/un-workers-gaza-israel.html>

⁶¹⁸ <https://www.icrc.org/en/news-release/israel-and-occupied-territories-icrc-office-gaza-damaged> ; <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1904204403906941316> ; <https://www.icrc.org/en/news-release/icrc-outraged-premises-damaged-explosive>

⁶¹⁹ <https://www.undp.org/speeches/statement-administrator-killing-undp-staff-member-and-his-family-gaza>

⁶²⁰ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/08/middleeast/gaza-flour-massacre-idf-report-intl/index.html>

⁶²¹ <https://twitter.com/NaksBilal/status/1763188564823576868> ; <https://twitter.com/idfonline/status/1763174751042695313> ; https://twitter.com/kaneez_e_zahrah/status/1763176424012230952 ;

⁶²² <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1763174751042695313> ; <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/08/middleeast/gaza-flour-massacre-idf-report-intl/index.html>

⁶²³ Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. See <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949/article-55> ; <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/ihl-occupying-power-responsibilities-occupied-palestinian-territories> ; <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/occupied-territory/>

⁶²⁴ <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/>

⁶²⁵ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6200> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/05/un-experts-condemn-israeli-massacre-of-palestinians-collecting-flour>

did not provide evidence to support its claims, presenting a video supposedly showing the event that was clearly edited several times and refusing to release the full video. Eyewitness testimonials from Gazans who survived the massacre further corroborated the claims of targeted gunfire. One IDF soldier claimed his friend laughed about this event and boasted about the number of “terrorists” he killed.⁶²⁶ The director of the al-Awda hospital reported that the vast majority of injuries treated after the event (142 out of 176) were gunshot wounds.⁶²⁷ A CNN investigation found inconsistencies with, and cast further doubts on the IDF’s version, and leaned towards accepting the Palestinian version.⁶²⁸ An investigation of a sample of 200 dead and injured victims found that they were hit by bullets of the diameter used by IDF troops.⁶²⁹ A subsequent report by the UN Committee of Human Rights concluded that the IDF was likely responsible for the deaths of civilians by firing at them.⁶³⁰ According to UN experts as well as online sources and videos, Palestinians seeking food were shot at on many occasions on the days before and after the “flour massacre”.⁶³¹ Israel’s National Security Minister nonetheless praised the IDF soldiers for their conduct during the event.⁶³² In the context of international law and Israel’s aforementioned obligations it is important to remember that Israel and the United States were the only two countries who had voted against declaring food as a human right in the United Nations in 2021.⁶³³

There are many other cases in which Israel attacked Palestinians waiting for aid.⁶³⁴ A report by Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor found that between mid-January and late March 2024, Israel killed a total of 563 Palestinians and injured 1,523, all of whom were either waiting for

⁶²⁶ <https://x.com/cusamak/status/1902468720611750251>

⁶²⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1763221018103996559> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68445973>

⁶²⁸ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/09/middleeast/gaza-food-aid-convoy-deaths-eyewitness-intl-investigation-cmd> ; <https://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2024/04/08/gaza-aid-truck-investigation-polglase-intl-ldn-vpx.cnn>

⁶²⁹ <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> (p. 17)

⁶³⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf>, paragraphs 240-249.

⁶³¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/03/un-experts-condemn-flour-massacre-urge-israel-end-campaign-starvation-gaza> ; https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/03/09/gaza-new-accounts-of-the-flour-massacre_6601904_4.html ;

<https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1763651267237216587> ;

<https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6259/New-Report:-Killing-starving-Palestinians,-targeting-aid-trucks-is-a-deliberate-Israeli-policy-to-reinforce-famine-in-the-Gaza-Strip> ; examples and investigation at <https://x.com/ForensicArchi/status/1790796901123559572>

⁶³² <https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1763196768458604583> . For the IDF’s own investigation, see: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bidmqvd6t> ; for a critique, see: <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/132587/>

⁶³³ <https://press.un.org/en/2021/gashc4336.doc.htm>

⁶³⁴ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-aid-seekers-killed-fire-israel> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/15/palestinians-killed-wounded-idf-israel-forces-aid-gaza> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2024/3/5/aid-seekers-targeted-at-gaza-city> ; <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/palestinians-seeking-food-killed-israeli-strikes-gaza-humanitarian-zone> ; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/gaza-palestinians-risk-death-desperate-rush-aid-2024-04-02/> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/9/israeli-strikes-on-gaza-flour-distribution-line-residential-area-kill-22#flips-#ixzz8u9H5VdRM>

aid, present in or around distribution centers, or were responsible for organizing, protecting and distributing aid.⁶³⁵

Attacks on people who were queuing to receive aid continued in subsequent months.⁶³⁶ When the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) began operating in the Gaza Strip in May and June 2025 (described in the chapter on Causing the Deaths of Civilian Populations) the number of aid seekers who were shot increased substantially and they were targeted with heavy weapons such as mortars and tank shells.⁶³⁷ In a month, 549 Palestinians were killed and 4,066 were injured near aid distribution sites.⁶³⁸

Testimonies by international health workers volunteering in Gaza

Trigger warning: this section includes more graphic descriptions than the rest of this document.

Beginning a few months after the onset of the war, international medical staff – often doctors and nurses – provided an important series of testimonies from the Gaza Strip in lieu of international journalists (see media section). These health workers tended to focus on their own experiences.

The healthcare workers often framed their experience in Gaza in strong words, sometimes comparing it to their earlier experiences in warzones and disasters. Two American surgeons, Mark Perlmutter and Feroze Sidhwa, wrote that “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.”⁶³⁹ They described what they saw as “unspeakable” and “horrors [that] defy description”, comparing it to what the first weeks of a zombie apocalypse would look and smell like. Among others, they mentioned a series of children, mostly preteens, who were shot in the head, allegedly by Israeli forces. They also met many healthcare staff who were detained and abused by Israeli forces.⁶⁴⁰ On a different occasion Perlmutter said “All of the disasters I’ve seen, combined, combined – 40 mission trips, 30 years, Ground Zero, earthquakes... all of that combined doesn’t equal the level of carnage that I saw against civilians in just my first week in Gaza”.⁶⁴¹

Many others said similar things. British surgeon Nick Maynard who was in Gaza in January 2024 said that the situation at the Al-Aqsa hospital was “beyond any doubt the worst thing” he

⁶³⁵ <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>

⁶³⁶ For example: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4g2g6w41090> (November 2024)

⁶³⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-06-27/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000197-ac81-dd94-addf-afdiofcooooo>

⁶³⁸ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1938509271857303764> ;
<https://x.com/SharonNadeem/status/1934766863504036074>

⁶³⁹ <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/surgeons-cruelty-israel-gaza> ;
<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2025-04-11/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000196-1e9d-d710-a1bf-beff60070000>

⁶⁴⁰ <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2024/07/19/gaza-hospitals-surgeons-00167697> ;
<https://www.instagram.com/yipeng.ge/reel/C--ZkqdRkVB/>; also:

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1882330387936145499>

⁶⁴¹ <https://x.com/adinitay/status/1815604394815103325>

has seen in his career.⁶⁴² Abdullah Ghali, an orthopedic surgery doctor who was in the southern Gaza Strip in April 2024, described his time there as “the most difficult experience I’ve ever had”, and recounted that he “spent around 48 hours working constantly without a break or sleep” because of the non-stop work.⁶⁴³ James Smith, a British doctor who was in Gaza between April and June 2024, said that he had never worked anywhere as violent, frightening and unstable as Gaza.⁶⁴⁴ Ana Jeelani, a British surgeon who was in Gaza twice (March and September 2024) pointed out that “the day after [the war] looks like a population that has no infrastructure, whose healthcare has been purposefully taken out, there’s no way of recovery from that”. Her room in one of the hospitals overlooked the morgue and she pointed out that every day for 30 days she “saw at least 10 to 15 funerals”.⁶⁴⁵ She also recounted how her security person “was in an airstrike, he woke up 48 hours later with a rat trying to eat his ankle because they thought it was dead, and his two friends were being eaten by dogs”.⁶⁴⁶ British doctor Javid Abdelmoneim spent two months in Gaza (June-August 2024) and discussed “mass casualty after mass casualty after mass casualty” among people living in a so-called safe zone, many of whom were healthcare workers and noted they ran out even of supplies such as basic painkillers.⁶⁴⁷ Amer Shoaib, a British military veteran and surgeon, noted “indiscriminate” violence against people of all demographics and believed he was deliberately targeted in an Israeli bomb.⁶⁴⁸ Adam Hamawy, a plastic surgeon from New Jersey with 20 years of experience in humanitarian relief, including in Iraq, recounted his experience in Gaza in May 2024: “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”.⁶⁴⁹ He also noted the discrepancy between media reports of aid getting in and Israel taking care of civilians, and witnessing a completely different story on the ground, while American surgeon Zena Saleh noted that “we didn’t even have hand sanitizer or alcohol or soap most of the time”.⁶⁵⁰ Nizam Memode, a British surgeon who was in Gaza in August 2024, spoke about Israeli targeting of UN convoys and stated that “my biggest fear while I was there was being killed by the Israelis”.⁶⁵¹ Samer Attar, another American surgeon who volunteered in northern Gaza, said in October 2024 that “most people died... some days the most you could do was just hold people’s hand and look them in the eye as you watched them die either because they were

⁶⁴² <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/01/09/middleeast/gaza-orphan-british-doctor-jordan-king-intl-hnk/index.html>

⁶⁴³ <https://www.newsweek.com/i-gaza-saw-child-bone-without-anesthetic-1898930>

⁶⁴⁴ <https://x.com/NourNaim88/status/1827071101538623794> ; https://www.democracynow.org/2024/6/11/dr_james_smith_gaza_healthcare_system ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXbnghe5W9g>

⁶⁴⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwMXoRLYtCE> (23:50, 40:25)

⁶⁴⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwMXoRLYtCE> (42:00)

⁶⁴⁷ <https://x.com/amanpour/status/1823053876183867816>

⁶⁴⁸ <https://bylinetimes.com/2024/06/04/british-doctor-bombed-in-gaza-by-uk-made-weaponry-speaks-out-for-first-time/> ; he seems to be the first speaker in this video:

<https://x.com/abierkhatib/status/1807631823331041619>

⁶⁴⁹ <https://twitter.com/ShaykhSulaiman/status/1790403949230784974> ;

<https://jacobin.com/2024/08/hamawy-gaza-israel-devestation-medical>

⁶⁵⁰ <https://x.com/adinitay/status/1815604394815103325>; for Saleh see:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/medical-trip-to-gaza>; for Hamawy see: <https://www.drhamawy.com/>

⁶⁵¹ <https://x.com/GarySpedding/status/1856345070070272386> ; full video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-E2Jn-4NmKQ>

malnourished, they were starving, we had no blood to give them, every day felt like that. Every day in the North [Strip] felt like that.”⁶⁵² Mohammed Mostafa, a British-Australian emergency medicine doctor who was in Gaza in March 2025 recounted to CNN that in the chaos during a mass casualty attack he was operating on a patient when he felt someone grab his ankle. Looking down, he saw a woman who was missing half her leg that begged him to help her. Since he was in the middle of the operation and had not assessed the woman yet he finished the operation and discovered the woman had bled out.⁶⁵³ Razan al-Nahhas, an American emergency physician, said that there was only one CT scanner left in northern Gaza, and because of the long wait times to receive imaging, some patients died while waiting for their images.⁶⁵⁴

Some healthcare workers described what they saw in Gaza as a genocide. In October 2024, American pediatrician Tanya Haj-Hassan asserted on live TV on CNN that “This is not a humanitarian crisis, Kate, and I’m going to say it very clearly for your viewers to hear: This is genocide” and that “Countries will have to reckon, media agencies will have to reckon with their major role in the genocide of an entire population and in the destruction of humanitarian law and rule of order”.⁶⁵⁵ In an UN event she added “spend just five minutes there and it will become painfully clear that Palestinians are being intentionally massacred, starved, and stripped of everything needed to sustain human life”.⁶⁵⁶ Another British doctor, Mohammad Tahir, stated in August 2024 that what he “witnessed was nothing short of an outright genocide”, and added in early 2025 that “Gaza is destroyed”.⁶⁵⁷ Heba al-Nashef, a Canadian midwife who was in al Awda hospital over June and July 2024, described what she experienced as a genocide.⁶⁵⁸ A group of 19 Canadian health workers who returned from Gaza described the war as a genocide as well in November 2024.⁶⁵⁹ British surgeon Victoria Rose described “systematically bombing a population indiscriminately” and “a systematic starving of the population and strangling the healthcare system” upon returning from Gaza in June 2025.⁶⁶⁰ British emergency physician James Smith described the situation as “beyond dystopian... this is the most horrific thing that most of us have ever witnessed or followed in our lifetimes... this is a live streamed genocide, there is no limit to the atrocities that Israel is committing against the Palestinian people”.⁶⁶¹ British surgeon Tom Potokar said that “if Cambodia was the killing fields then Gaza is the slaughter house”.⁶⁶²

⁶⁵² <https://x.com/democracynow/status/184580651311371802>

⁶⁵³ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1905468993114095997> ;

<https://x.com/sahatenglish/status/1903401280090882498>

⁶⁵⁴ <https://x.com/sahatenglish/status/1903401280090882498>

⁶⁵⁵ <https://x.com/OmarBaddar/status/1844759868512637359> ; also

<https://x.com/PulaRJS/status/1926350733969969507> ; <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/middle-east/2025/07/the-horror-of-gazas-childrens-hospitals>

⁶⁵⁶ <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/kih/kihdr3foig>

⁶⁵⁷ <https://x.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1825437601727438900> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1886217628202447293>

⁶⁵⁸ <https://x.com/yipengGe/status/1830626014881362239> ;

<https://www.providencehealthcare.org/en/team-member/heba-al-nashef>

⁶⁵⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/live/sXddaetjBig>

⁶⁶⁰ <https://x.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1930260790612820193>

⁶⁶¹ <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1935216106236424312>

⁶⁶² <https://x.com/DoubleDownNews/status/1924220669903966350> ;

<https://x.com/swilkinsonbc/status/1925204663365738862> ;

A common theme in the healthcare workers' testimonies was the impact of the war on children.⁶⁶³ Many reported that the IDF has shot at children, causing "single bullet wounds to the head or chest" that killed some of them.⁶⁶⁴ American emergency medicine physician Mimi Syed noted that during August 2024 she treated at least 18 children who were all shot with bullets in the head or chest,⁶⁶⁵ and that over the winter she saw eight children who died of hypothermia.⁶⁶⁶ The British surgeon Victoria Rose said that some 80% of those she treated in August 2024 were children under 16, and that all the injuries were related to explosions or burns. She had never seen anything like this.⁶⁶⁷ The bulk of her work, she stated, was to remove bits of shrapnel.⁶⁶⁸ In October 2024 she described the frustration felt by Palestinian doctors as the world was doing nothing to help them.⁶⁶⁹ In May 2025 she reiterated that 75% of those she operated on were children "tiny, underweight, malnourished".⁶⁷⁰ Feroze Sidhwa also recounted that more than half the patients he took care of after the end of the ceasefire in March 2025 were children.⁶⁷¹ The Greek surgeon Christos Georgalas who was in Gaza in April-May 2025 stated that this was "a war mainly against children".⁶⁷² In late June 2025 American Dr. Mark Brauner described treating "children, adolescents, teenagers" with "isolated gunshot wounds to the head, neck and center of the chest" which seemed like "execution-style... targeted types of injuries".⁶⁷³

Many others discussed the children they saw and treated. American pediatrician Ahmad Yousaf pointed out in July 2024 that the hospitals were overwhelmed and called attention also to the mental and psychiatric state of the many children he had to take care of based on the horrors they experienced, the effects of which would linger for generations. He, too, said that "there is nothing like this [Gaza]... this is a killing box", mentioned "children who would be carried in pieces by their loved ones", and referred to the lack of supplies as "the hospital is

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-05-20/ty-article/.premium/00000196-e9b6-dfe6-a5f6-eff6f77d0000> ; <https://x.com/AlexCrawfordSky/status/1926681144595993070>

⁶⁶³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-ozrQZWwDE> ;

<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1906503887030522146>

⁶⁶⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/02/gaza-palestinian-children-killed-idf-israel-war> ; <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2024-02-16/rafah-gaza-hospitals-surgery-israel-bombing-ground-offensive-children> ; <https://www.rsn.org/001/not-a-normal-war-doctors-say-children-have-been-targeted-by-israeli-snipers-in-gaza.html> ;

https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/11/surgeons_in_gaza ; <https://www.itv.com/news/2024-04-24/i-operated-without-anaesthetic-british-surgeons-harrowing-gaza-account> ;

<https://www.gazahealthcareletters.org/usa-letter-oct-2-2024> ;

https://www.instagram.com/p/DHJzogNT4_d/

⁶⁶⁵ <https://x.com/arixegal/status/1927574184500047990>

⁶⁶⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2025-05-29/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/00000197-18f2-d57f-a7d7-3ef227b20000>

⁶⁶⁷ <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1831719802563432812> ;

<https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1882309013674787114> ; see also:

<https://x.com/abierkhatib/status/1880699513675108848>

⁶⁶⁸ <https://x.com/AJEnglish/status/1861745537613205660>

⁶⁶⁹ <https://x.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1844912972671615223>

⁶⁷⁰ <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1924465487783563438> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-06-12/ty-article/.premium/00000197-5fa8-dfof-add7-ffaade6d0000> . Also: https://x.com/Basement_Films/status/1924824927099551772

⁶⁷¹ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1926093098402136114>

⁶⁷² https://www.efsyn.gr/politiki/synenteyxeis/473570_theloy-naxegrapsayn-mellon-tis-gazas#goog_rewarded

⁶⁷³ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1937910424336216254>

empty of the supplies you need”.⁶⁷⁴ Asma Taha, an American pediatric nurse, stated that she saw babies starve to death every day.⁶⁷⁵ Thaer Ahmad, an emergency medicine physician, pointed out that “700 infants never saw their first birthday in Gaza over the last year”.⁶⁷⁶ British surgeon Nizam Memode described that after bombs went off “the drones would come down and pick off civilians’ children... it was a persistent targeting of civilians, day after day”.⁶⁷⁷ Tanya Haj-Hassan recounted story after story of children deaths and injuries in Gaza.⁶⁷⁸ Mimi Syed, who visited Gaza for the second time in December 2024, mentioned the severe malnourishment in children she observed, adding that “almost every child has necrotic or rotten teeth” and reported on widespread diarrhea and babies dying from hypothermia.⁶⁷⁹ She also stated that she saw 18 cases of gunshot wounds in children on her last trip to Gaza.⁶⁸⁰ The aforementioned Adam Hamawy who volunteered in Gaza in February 2025 pointed out that “you could see the malnutrition [among children] everywhere you look”.⁶⁸¹ The British-Iraqi surgeon Mohamed Taher recounted a story in which he comforted a lonely child as he died on the hospital floor.⁶⁸² US surgeon Samer Attar described how children died for lack of simple supplies such as blood transfusions.⁶⁸³ In May 2025 Feroze Sidhwa spoke at the UN Security Council, pointing out that children died not because their injuries were unsurvivable but because the healthcare system lacked blood, antibiotics and basic supplies, and added that he treated 13 cases of children shot in the head or chest in two weeks in Gaza.⁶⁸⁴

Another recurring theme was the impact of the war on their Gazan colleagues. Tanya Haj-Hassan described in August 2024 the “massacre after massacre” she experienced in Gaza and said she did not know a single healthcare worker in Gaza who did not lose several family members.⁶⁸⁵ Ben Thomson, a Canadian doctor who was in Gaza in March 2024 recounted the story of a Gazan doctor who was forced to strip naked and stand for two days, urinating and defecating where he stood. Only then was he allowed to treat his child patients while naked.⁶⁸⁶ The aforementioned Mark Perlmutter recounted the story of Tamir, an orthopedic nurse who was shot in the knee by an IDF soldier after refusing to stop operating on a wounded patient.

⁶⁷⁴ <https://x.com/Villgecrazy lady/status/1810014347172925620> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000009577656/gaza-doctor-hospitals.html> ; <https://x.com/democracynow/status/1826365021988814899>

⁶⁷⁵ <https://x.com/FerozeSidhwa/status/1816488896005648589>

⁶⁷⁶ <https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1844793940358361520>

⁶⁷⁷ https://x.com/Charles_Lister/status/1856370874644893838

⁶⁷⁸ <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/kih/kihdr3foiq>

⁶⁷⁹ <https://x.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1870090150849523769>;

<https://x.com/democracynow/status/1874095877234499618> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1873072731790462993 ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1873091517625098648>

⁶⁸⁰ <https://x.com/SMohyeddin/status/1873753025551962436> ; also:

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1872935382729318784> ; <https://youtu.be/t-ozrQZWwDE?si=HQRuJr8000HXwm4R&t=430>

⁶⁸¹ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1897467795425910842>

⁶⁸² <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1924522942936846693> ;

<https://www.watanserb.com/en/2025/01/23/dr-mohammed-taher-the-miracle-surgeon-of-gaza/>

⁶⁸³ <https://x.com/AGvaryahu/status/1909668053987872793> ;

<https://edition.cnn.com/2025/05/01/Tv/video/amanpour-gaza-hospitalamerican-surgeon-doctor-samer-attar>

⁶⁸⁴ <https://x.com/AdHaqueno/status/1927788672230862892>

⁶⁸⁵ <https://x.com/democracynow/status/1825875090229309615>

⁶⁸⁶ <https://x.com/Lowkeyonline/status/1824014560858149051>

He was then taken into custody and received no wound care for 45 days. After it was determined he was not involved with Hamas, he was released in Gaza after an IDF soldier hit his face with a rifle butt, destroying his eye. Tamir had to crawl for 3 kilometers until picked up by a passerby.⁶⁸⁷ Victoria Rose spoke about how her anesthetist was evacuated from his home so had to walk 22 kilometers to pitch a tent for his family then return to complete his 24 hour shift.⁶⁸⁸

The testimonies of several healthcare workers combined many of these themes. American doctor Tammy Abughnaim recounted how Palestinian doctors and nurses told her they were specifically targeted by Israel as they were pulled out of a line at a checkpoint, then detained and tortured by Israel for months before their release. She also noted that there were patients at the ICU that had to have maggots cleaned out of their mouths every day because of the lack of soap (that Israel was not allowing into Gaza). She estimated that 60-70% of the patients who made it to the hospitals were children, and asserted she saw wounds that indicated the deliberate targeting of children.⁶⁸⁹ Mohammed Tahir, a British surgeon stuck in southern Gaza during Israel's offensive there, noted in May 2024 that he worked on 150 cases in 10 days and that they were receiving "People literally, their limbs and their bodies torn to shreds. Children with mutilated faces, kids whose limbs we've had to amputate because of the complexity of the injuries."⁶⁹⁰ In October 2024, he noted that the hospital he was in was bombed, adding that "people are traumatized... they feel that there is no hope, no one is coming to help them, no one is coming to save them".⁶⁹¹ Monica Johnson, a Portland wound and care nurse who spent three weeks at the European hospital in Rafah in May 2024 recounted that she "helped a young boy in the OR who was apparently opening a can of tuna, this was reported to me, and he lost one hand, part of another, and his legs needed to be amputated". The number of severe cases she saw in Gaza every day was comparable to what she saw over a year of work back home. Because of the lack of medical supplies, she added, "you just can't keep these people alive". As she was unable to leave for a while she recounted that she felt "tremendously guilty and tremendously afraid".⁶⁹² Khaled Dawas, a British-Palestinian surgeon who was in Gaza in April 2024, met a person who was detained while handcuffed and blindfolded for 50 days during which he was beaten by metal bars and suffered from multiple rib fractures on both sides as a result. He also noted the filthy conditions, "Everything is infected – every wound, every surface, every patient".⁶⁹³ The midwife Heba Al-Nashef recounted that her first day in the Strip in early June 2024 coincided with the IDF's operation in Nusseirat that freed four hostages and killed 274 Palestinians. That night, a woman who came to give birth recounted that during the operation her husband and five children were killed in front of her eyes. Australian surgeon Sanjay Adusumilli recounted "we would be doing these horrific surgeries where you've amputated legs and explore people's abdomen and open their chests, yet they

⁶⁸⁷ <https://x.com/tparsi/status/1905640088454803804>

⁶⁸⁸ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1930486077548068974>

⁶⁸⁹ <https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1837828451664847271> ; <https://www.instagram.com/yipeng.ge/reel/C--ZkqdRkVB/>

⁶⁹⁰ <https://news.sky.com/story/ex-nhs-doctor-stuck-in-gaza-during-hospital-placement-says-family-are-terrified-but-he-has-to-keep-going-13133251>

⁶⁹¹ <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1845772144879280534>

⁶⁹² <https://x.com/tparsi/status/1796984162169086156> ; <https://x.com/ryangrim/status/1790111634930737387> ; <https://katu.com/news/local/portland-nurse-among-20-american-aid-workers-stuck-in-gaza-abc-news-monica-johnson-israel-rafah-egypt>

⁶⁹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEBcDUYtMts> ; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/terror-and-security/my-diary-10-days-gazan-hospital-conditions-filthy-infected/>

won't have adequate analgesia to be able to cope with afterwards and they would be on simple Panadol. So it was heartbreaking to see them in agony". He also pointed out that children's deaths were very common.⁶⁹⁴

Some international healthcare workers were in hospitals or other locations that were attacked. In late March 2025, for example, the aforementioned Feroze Sidhwa was in al-Nasser hospital when Israel attacked a Hamas official who was receiving treatment in it – together with a 16 year old boy that Sidhwa had treated and three other patients.⁶⁹⁵ Tanya Haj-Hassan was in the floor below the attack at the same time.⁶⁹⁶ Several days earlier, she recounted the sense of “pure terror” as she woke up when bombs went off around her in the middle of the night. It took her 20 minutes to calm down.⁶⁹⁷

There have been a few attempts to bring the voices of the health workers together. In July 2024, 45 American physicians and nurses (including some of those cited above) wrote an open letter to US President Joe Biden, describing conditions in Gaza from their own perspective.⁶⁹⁸ They stated that “with marginal exceptions, everyone in Gaza is sick, injured, or both” and that “every single signatory” to the letter treated children who “suffered violence that must have been deliberately directed at them” – specifically that each of them treated on a daily basis pre-teen children who were shot in the head and chest. Their own observations led them to believe that the death toll was “many times higher” than what is reported by the Gaza Ministry of Health.

In early October 2024, a subsequent version of the letter was signed by 99 American medical professionals who returned from Gaza, having spent there a cumulative 254 weeks.⁶⁹⁹ They otherwise reiterated their statements from the previous letter, with stronger urgency and more examples, noting also that none of the doctors had seen any type of Palestinian militant activity in Gaza's hospitals or other medical facilities. They estimated that the death toll was likely already greater than 118,908 (the official death toll was about 42,000 at the time).⁷⁰⁰ The author of the letter, Feroze Sidhwa, also surveyed a total of 65 professionals in a poll published by the New York Times.⁷⁰¹ In the survey, 44 medical professionals saw multiple cases of preteen children shot in the head or chest in Gaza; 52 observed “nearly universal psychiatric distress in young children”; 25 saw babies who were born healthy return to hospitals and die of dehydration, starvation or infections; 64 observed that even the most basic medical necessities

⁶⁹⁴ <https://x.com/NourNaim88/status/1798622171125952937> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2024/may/20/most-horrific-of-surgeries-on-panadol-australian-doctor-recalls-operating-on-gaza-child-video>

⁶⁹⁵ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/148095/> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2025-04-11/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000196-1e9d-d710-a1bf-beff60070000>

⁶⁹⁶ <https://x.com/amanpour/status/1907768999607181523>

⁶⁹⁷ <https://x.com/amanpour/status/1907768999607181523>

⁶⁹⁸ <https://x.com/FerozeSidhwa/status/1816488896005648589> ; <https://tinyurl.com/gazadoctorsletter> ; <https://tinyurl.com/gazadoctorsletterappendix> ; <https://amp.cnn.com/cnn/2024/07/26/world/open-letter-45-us-physicians-gaza> . More than 20 doctors spoke to Sunday Morning about gunshot wounds in children: <https://x.com/adinitay/status/1815604394815103325>

⁶⁹⁹ <https://www.gazahealthcareletters.org/usa-letter-oct-2-2024>

⁷⁰⁰ <https://www.gazahealthcareletters.org/usa-letter-oct-2-2024>

⁷⁰¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/09/opinion/gaza-doctor-interviews.html> ; Hebrew translation here: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/world/middle-east/2024-10-17/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/00000192-9a6e-d8fa-a9df-fb6effa00000>

such as soap and gloves were usually unavailable.⁷⁰² After online commentators doubted the testimonies, the New York Times clarified that they stood behind the poll.⁷⁰³ Sidhwa himself noted in a subsequent interview that “it’s misleading to call this an Israeli war, it’s a US-Israeli attack on Gaza”, adding that “We have normalized a situation in which it’s normal to kill doctors, it’s normal to kill nurses, it’s normal to bomb hospitals from the air, with tanks, with artillery, with drones, anything you like.”⁷⁰⁴ In response to the letter of American doctors, 117 Israeli medical workers signed their own letter against the war, supporting their American colleagues and speaking out against a culture of silence and fear of punishment.⁷⁰⁵

In November 2024, a group of 25 Canadian health workers who volunteered in Gaza – reportedly all the Canadian health workers who had volunteered in Gaza during the war – held a press conference in which they discussed their experiences stating that they were unified in their understanding of the situation. Members of the group spoke about the mass casualties in Gaza, the impact of the war on children, the lack of medical supplies, lack of food and water, and the poor humanitarian condition in and around the hospitals. The group called upon Canada to demand a ceasefire and condemn Israel.⁷⁰⁶ Another group of Canadian healthcare workers spoke out against the war in late May 2025, again sharing their experiences in a press conference. This time, the group also criticized the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, pointing to it as symbolizing the collapse of the humanitarian system. The group called for an arms embargo, sanctions on Netanyahu and his cabinet, and the recognition of Palestine as a state.⁷⁰⁷

Although Israel has alleged that Hamas regularly uses hospitals, the only international doctor I could find whose testimony referred to Hamas’ presence is the Kurdish doctor Baxtiyar Baram who was in two hospitals (al-Awda and Kamal Adwan) in Gaza over April-May 2024. Baram claimed Hamas exploited the hospitals for its own needs, treating its own people and refusing treatment to others. He also claimed that Hamas and Gazans “hate Kurds”.⁷⁰⁸ Other than the aforementioned letter of 99 medical professionals, Feroze Sidhwa said that he did not see Hamas using hospitals and rejected claims about Hamas tunnels under hospitals, stating instead that the IDF spokesperson was not telling the truth about those matters.⁷⁰⁹ Other doctors said similar things. UK surgeon Goher Rahbour said he saw “zero, absolutely zero” evidence of Hamas inside and around the hospital he was at in May-June 2025.⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰² <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/09/opinion/gaza-doctor-interviews.html> ; see also interviews with three doctors here: <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/141636/>

⁷⁰³ <https://www.nytimes.com/press/response-to-recent-criticisms-on-new-york-times-opinion-essay/> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bk7nyc6jux>

⁷⁰⁴ <https://x.com/AymanMSNBC/status/1848175741139067370> ; <https://x.com/AymanMSNBC/status/1848176355021586740> ; see also: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxHD3DBoYHg>

⁷⁰⁵ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/anti-war-israelis-fear-speaking-gaza-100-medical-workers-letter_n_6716f31be4bob4263c8b4dce

⁷⁰⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/live/sXddaetjBig>

⁷⁰⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/live/WC49cqtHYfY>

⁷⁰⁸ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-804116>

⁷⁰⁹ <https://x.com/FerozeSidhwa/status/1925965283522396359> ;

<https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1922895821785252177>

⁷¹⁰ <https://x.com/AbubakerAbedW/status/1929837290454409481>

Mass graves and anonymous dead

The number of Palestinian deaths has led to digging graves and mass graves everywhere, including in formerly built areas, parks and schools.⁷¹¹ Already in late October 2023 there were at least 10 mass graves.⁷¹² An NGO documented around 130 random mass graves of Palestinians across the Gaza Strip.⁷¹³ Some corpses have been interred in improvised burials within built areas.⁷¹⁴ Others appear to have been more organized. On several occasions since the beginning of the war, Israel returned to Gaza dozens of often unidentified corpses, which were then buried in mass graves. A partial list includes over 100 corpses of people reportedly detained in hospitals in November 2023,⁷¹⁵ 80 corpses in December 2023,⁷¹⁶ 100 corpses in January 2024,⁷¹⁷ over 80 corpses in August 2024,⁷¹⁸ and 88 corpses in September 2024.⁷¹⁹ Some of the mass graves were later reopened and the human remains within them were reburied in a regular cemetery.⁷²⁰ In one case, over 30 Palestinian corpses were found in black plastic bags, blindfolded and handcuffed.⁷²¹ Similar events were reported in al-Shifa hospital, according to several eyewitness accounts (see also Zoom-In 1 below).⁷²² Few of these cases have even been covered in Israeli media.⁷²³

Additional decomposed corpses⁷²⁴ and skeletons remained on the streets for prolonged periods of time.⁷²⁵ Many of these have been eaten by stray animals according to video and

⁷¹¹ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1759600702886748387> ;
<https://twitter.com/omarsuleiman504/status/1769735691808743563> ;
<https://twitter.com/EuroMedHR/status/1783855639006986260> ;
<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1886363105493430342>

⁷¹² <https://news.sky.com/story/israel-hamas-war-how-many-people-have-died-in-gaza-12998755>

⁷¹³ <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/EuroMedHR/status/1783855639006986260>

⁷¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1769304583325483266>

⁷¹⁵ <https://x.com/AJEnglish/status/1727439521514418542>

⁷¹⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/palestinians-work-identify-80-dead-handed-over-israel-2023-12-27/>

⁷¹⁷ <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/141199>

⁷¹⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-returns-80-palestinian-bodies-gaza-keeps-up-military-pressure-2024-08-05/>

⁷¹⁹ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-sends-truck-full-decomposed-bodies-gaza-health-ministry-refuses-accept>

⁷²⁰ <https://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/the-bodies-of-20-palestinians-killed-during-israeli-raids-news-photo/2196658659> ; <https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1886363105493430342> ;

<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1900167674023600609> ;
<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1900335238867517799> ;
<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1901297556346253708>

⁷²¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/1/palestinians-demand-international-inquiry-after-mass-grave-found-in-gaza>

⁷²² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlerY4MgkQc> ;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghWSjdV7ACU>

⁷²³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra13792905> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syv8bslop>

⁷²⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Poydd3EG_-8 ;
<https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761369042596647177> ;
<https://twitter.com/OnlinePalEng/status/1773440806411546953> ; <https://www.972mag.com/beit-lahiya-gaza-rubble-corpses/> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/186760731581107198>

written evidence from Israeli, Palestinian and international sources.⁷²⁶ One soldier had noted that Palestinian corpses were left to rot on the streets, but that before the arrival of humanitarian convoys, an IDF bulldozer would come in and bury the corpses under the rubble to prevent further images of decomposed corpses emerging from Gaza.⁷²⁷ On some occasions, Palestinians were not allowed to take or bury the corpses of their loved ones and were forced to leave them behind.⁷²⁸ During the second ceasefire in early 2025 human remains were retrieved from many locations,⁷²⁹ such as the Kamal Adwan hospital's vicinity where dozens of corpses were found,⁷³⁰ Gaza City,⁷³¹ the Netzarim corridor, where the IDF had killed hundreds of Palestinians,⁷³² the major Al-Rashid highway,⁷³³ or Rafah, which was held by the IDF for months.⁷³⁴

⁷²⁵ <https://x.com/KufiyyaPS/status/1795870171237646833> (appears reliable) ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1796525578499088829> ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1796550174111645766> ;

<https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1798345071722684760> ; <https://www.972mag.com/beit-lahiya-gaza-rubble-corpses/> ; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1863610704571289798>

⁷²⁶ <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1828112551835484352> ;

<https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1818743874195476778> ; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-tel-al-hawa-hospital-obob323dd471bacd18d135cf9e597e0b> ;

<https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/137173/> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1826673829110055347> ;

<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1852462667304186344> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-fi4c-dec7-afda-fidd75c60000> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1868289900812128313> ; <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/idf-disaster-routine/> ; <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1861400610362322983> ;

https://x.com/Abu_Salah9/status/1859689522071732563 ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1861038441334510076 ;

<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1863294227939217409> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1869051914115047587 ;

<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1871125917436903904> ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1870410270130004376> ;

<https://x.com/amanpour/status/1887570811260928246> ;

<https://x.com/fnaim65/status/1919024317204934824> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2025-07-03/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000197-bae0-d013-a5b7-bbf4e39c0000>

⁷²⁷ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/137173/>

⁷²⁸ <https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1903841594500907405>

⁷²⁹ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/66-palestinian-bodies-retrieved-from-sand-mounds-built-by-israel-in-gaza/3474340> ; https://x.com/dn_osama_rabee/status/1897140589185110370 ;

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DFdAxx7NXdr/> ;

<https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1881616257663094861> ;

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-271-gaza-strip> ;

<https://x.com/Timesofgaza/status/1884982632317911339> ;

https://x.com/dn_osama_rabee/status/1884196297717973267 ;

https://x.com/dn_osama_rabee/status/188532947191158020 ;

<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1881329181960683909> ;

<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1880903396561182835>

⁷³⁰ https://x.com/dn_osama_rabee/status/1898094893399986638

⁷³¹ <https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1891166694137122899> ;

<https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1882426748849250330> ;

<https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1881319491344409080> ;

⁷³² <https://x.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1888603329317749108> ;

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DFU6JQlt4S4/> ;

<https://x.com/EyeonPalestine/status/1884298714623402249> ; <https://www.972mag.com/netzarim-corridor-gaza-missing-bodies/> . For IDF killing Palestinians in Netzarim:

In some cases, the weapons used, or the fires they cause, destroy most of the human body, leaving only pieces that can often be impossible to identify.⁷³⁵ In at least some occasions, Palestinians had to place in bags human remains that were often unidentifiable.⁷³⁶ In at least one case, the Al-Taba'een school attack in August 2024, these remains were counted in kilograms and families were given an bag of anonymous human remains to bury.⁷³⁷

Israeli public opinion and lack of accountability

The Israeli public has been uncritical towards these cases, with many also supporting the continuation of the war, at least until the summer of 2024. Subsequently, polling questions changed asking whether respondents would prefer reaching a ceasefire deal in exchange for the remaining hostages. In a January 2024 poll, two thirds of Israelis favored continuing the war in its current form of “intense fighting” (i.e. excessive bombardment and violence).⁷³⁸ In a poll from February, about three quarters of Israeli Jews supported extending of the military operation to Rafah.⁷³⁹ A poll from March-April found that only 4% of Israeli Jews believe the military campaign had gone too far.⁷⁴⁰ According to a March-April poll (published in August) Jewish Israelis thought people should not be allowed to post some types of content on social media such as expressing sympathy for civilians in Gaza (70%) or graphic violence in the war (76%).⁷⁴¹ A poll from August 2024 found that 66.5 percent of Jewish Israelis thought that Israel could achieve more militarily in Gaza.⁷⁴² A September poll found that 45 percent of Israeli Jews thought it was time to end the war (the most common reason was to return the hostages).⁷⁴³

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-12-18/ty-article-magazine/.premium/idf-soldiers-expose-arbitrary-killings-and-rampant-lawlessness-in-gazas-netzarim-corridor/00000193-da7f-de86-a9f3-fefff2e50000> ; <https://x.com/TimesofGaza/status/1884171483691495756>

⁷³³ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1884578741256384619>

⁷³⁴ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2025/1/20/live-palestinian-prisoners-freed-by-israel-after-captives-released-in-gaza> ;

⁷³⁵ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1855648724095029658> ;

<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1912387722875895829>

⁷³⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2024/9/16/rescuers-put-human-remains-in-backpack-after-israeli-attack-on-gaza-city> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/18/father-gathers-body-dead-son-two-plastic-bag-gaza-shelling> ;

<https://x.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1834126509319356525> ;

<https://x.com/AJEnglish/status/1827481009027264525> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1925219161757692246>

⁷³⁷ <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2024-08-12/ty-article-opinion/.premium/on-saturday-gazans-collected-body-parts-in-plastic-bags-israel-stayed-unbothered/00000191-4802-d7c5-a3df-4f631d9a0000> ; <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/08/the-fajr-massacre-every-70-kg-bag-of-human-remains-is-considered-a-martyr/> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1823350836304494725> ; <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/collection-of-body-parts-in-plastic-bags-from-gaza-school-strike-highlights-israel-s-brutality/3301279> ;

⁷³⁸ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/52071>

⁷³⁹ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/53276>

⁷⁴⁰ <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/05/30/views-of-the-israel-hamas-war-may-2024/>

⁷⁴¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/08/26/many-israelis-say-social-media-content-about-the-israel-hamas-war-should-be-censored/>

⁷⁴² <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/55806>

⁷⁴³ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/56112>

The same poll also found that only 6 percent of Jewish Israelis thought that IDF's moral conduct during the war was poor.⁷⁴⁴

An October 2024 poll found that Israeli Jews rated the IDF's moral conduct during the fighting at 4.43 (of a maximum of 5).⁷⁴⁵ In a November poll, 63.5 percent of Jewish Israelis believed that a "terrorist" must be killed after neutralized, even if he was in a non-threatening state. In the case of rocket fire from Gaza on Israeli population, 55% believed that the IDF should fire heavily at Palestinian civilian populations to "burn into their consciousness the price of provocation". And 49 percent agreed that the use of Palestinian civilians as human shields to check an area to avoid risking IDF soldiers is legitimate. The first two questions had been asked previously, and support for them increased significantly (by over 25%) in the past six years.⁷⁴⁶ The same poll also found that 60 percent of Jewish Israelis believed that the IDF's ethical conduct prevents it from conducting its missions.⁷⁴⁷ A December 2024 poll found that 64% of Jewish Israelis thought that the IDF properly investigates or investigates too many cases in which soldiers may have acted against the law.⁷⁴⁸ By the end of 2024, only 10 Israelis openly refused to serve for moral reasons.⁷⁴⁹ The war became substantially less popular in early 2025, primarily in light of a potential hostage deal that would bring back the Israeli hostages and general war fatigue. In late February, for example, almost 70% of Jewish Israelis (73% of all Israelis) wanted to continue the hostage deal and put a final stop to the war.⁷⁵⁰ At the same time, life for most Israelis returned to normal. A March 2025 poll found that 70% of Jewish Israelis and 46% of Palestinian Israelis returned to their normal lives or close to it.⁷⁵¹ By June 2025, despite the paucity of reporting in Israeli media on suffering in Gaza (discussed in the Media and Propaganda section), 64% of Israelis saw no need for more such reporting and a similar number believed that there were no innocent people in the Strip.⁷⁵²

After the inauguration of US President Donald Trump in January 2025 and his proposal to empty the Gaza Strip of Gazans, a series of polls found strong support among Israelis for these ideas. Two Israeli TV polls found that 72 and 69 percent of Israelis supported Trump's plan.⁷⁵³ A Jerusalem Post poll from February found that 65 percent of Israelis supported "relocation", with another 14 percent supporting the plan only if it involved "voluntary relocation". Only 10 percent of respondents said the plan was morally reprehensible.⁷⁵⁴ A research institute poll reached similar results, highlighting that among Israeli Jews only 3 percent considered the plan "immoral".⁷⁵⁵ A March 2025 Penn State University poll found that 82 percent of Jewish Israelis supported forced displacement of Palestinians from Gaza, that 47 percent of Israelis

⁷⁴⁴ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/56112>

⁷⁴⁵ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/57459>

⁷⁴⁶ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/57172>

⁷⁴⁷ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/57172>

⁷⁴⁸ <https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/survey-december-2024/> . Another 18% thought it did not investigate those cases well enough, and 18% had no opinion.

⁷⁴⁹ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/חובש-קרבי-מסרב-לחזור-לצבא-לא-מוכן-לעצום/>

⁷⁵⁰ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/58604> ; also <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/57946>

⁷⁵¹ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/58980>

⁷⁵² <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-06-10/ty-article/.premium/64-of-israelis-see-no-need-for-more-reporting-on-gazans-sufferings/00000197-59e8-deed-a9bf-5def9d770000>

⁷⁵³ <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/politics/politics/survey-904449424/?pid=98577> ; https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2025_q1/Article-b259081b841e491027.htm

⁷⁵⁴ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-841693>

⁷⁵⁵ <https://jppi.org.il/en/סקר-החברה-הישראלית-לחודש-פברואר-רוב-גד/>

supported the biblical idea of killing all the inhabitants of a conquered city, and 65 percent believed there was a contemporary Amalek (for more on this see the Dehumanization section).⁷⁵⁶

Israeli state institutions have refrained from accountability or taking responsibility in the past. Not only does the Israeli security apparatus actively obstruct the ability of Palestinians to file claims,⁷⁵⁷ but it also maintains, even before the war, a negligible rate of indictments for those complaints that are submitted. Of the 1,260 complaints filed regarding Israeli soldiers harming Palestinians in the West Bank and their property between 2017 and 2021, less than 1% resulted in indictments.⁷⁵⁸ This pattern is part of a long-standing policy aimed at assuring international observers that Israel was indeed investigating such claims. The miniscule number of indictments, trials and punishments serves as a fig leaf masking many other cases where no criminal action is taken.⁷⁵⁹

At the same time, the Israeli legal system – which is praised by Israelis internationally, as in the ICJ case by then Judge ad hoc Barak (“Israel is a democracy with a strong legal system and an independent judicial system”)⁷⁶⁰ – remained silent. A survey of the Israeli Supreme Court’s rulings over the course of the war revealed that it green-lighted Israel’s policy to starve the Gaza Strip, the disappearing of people, preventing journalists from accessing the Gaza Strip, and preventing the Red Cross from visiting Gazan detainees despite widespread reports on the abuse they suffered in the Israeli prison system.⁷⁶¹

⁷⁵⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2025-05-22/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/00000196-f3a3-d6d3-ab9e-f3bbf6070000> ; <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fbpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com%2Fsites.psu.edu%2Fdist%2F5%2F129010%2Ffiles%2F2025%2Fo6%2FSorek-Eliminatory-attitudes-method.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK> . This poll drove some public debate in Israel, see: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-06-03/ty-article/.premium/a-grim-poll-shows-most-jewish-israelis-support-expelling-gazans-its-brutal-and-true/00000197-3640-d9fi-abb7-7e742b300000> ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/א-אפשר-להישאר-נייטרליים-מול-רכבת-הגיר/> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2025-06-03/ty-article-opinion/.premium/00000197-3587-do79-ab97-75c7b9390000> ;

<https://www.facebook.com/100000436025845/posts/pfbidoFJUNJbrn8PAFZMHPUTdswcuwMJnVoqyWZp3AmktDXbzH41MfwMDzf2DSaYUJWUapl/?d=w>

⁷⁵⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/magazine/israel-west-bank-settler-violence-impunity.html>

⁷⁵⁸ <https://www.npr.org/2024/05/15/1250417719/israel-military-idf-investigations-icc>

⁷⁵⁹ See for example: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-08-01/ty-article-opinion/.premium/00000191-0e24-dc1a-a1b7-iffc85020000>

⁷⁶⁰ <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/203452>

⁷⁶¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2025-05-21/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/00000196-f2fd-d85b-af9f-fbfd236a0000> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-03-27/ty-article/.premium/00000195-d8ac-da7e-adb7-f9bc5f5d0000>

Causing the deaths of civilian populations

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Israel has placed a stranglehold on the Palestinian population of Gaza since the beginning of the war.⁷⁶² The absence of supplies in Gaza – a siege – has been the stated policy of top Israeli officials since the beginning of the war.⁷⁶³ Israel's military operations have destroyed much of the local infrastructure for food production in Gaza (agricultural lands, greenhouses, fishing boats and food production facilities such as bakeries and manufacturing)⁷⁶⁴ as well as severely degrading, destroying or putting out of use much of the water infrastructure (wells, reservoirs and desalination plants).⁷⁶⁵ Throughout the war, only some 100-150 full truckloads have been allowed in daily,⁷⁶⁶ out of about 300 that are necessary for humanitarian needs (supply of food and water).⁷⁶⁷

Israel has weaponized humanitarian aid to Gaza, limiting its entrance to Gaza based on political reasoning which is often opaque.⁷⁶⁸ Trucks that attempt to enter the Strip encounter multiple problems as they try to do so, including attacks by the IDF.⁷⁶⁹ The list of items that are forbidden in the Gaza strip remains unclear six months into the war, but has included

⁷⁶² <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

⁷⁶³ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/defense-minister-announces-complete-siege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/ ; <https://twitter.com/KnessetT/status/171650248633113922>

⁷⁶⁴ E.g. <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inflicting-unprecedented-suffering-and-destruction-seven-ways-the-government-of-621591/>, p. 9; https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Feb_July2024_Special_Brief.pdf

⁷⁶⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/flash-analysis-report-over-two-months-attacks-food-security-gaza-december-2023>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-167>

⁷⁶⁶ <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiTlZTVkYmEwNmMtZWYxNyooODhlLWlZjctNjIzMzQ5OGQxNzY5liwidCI6IjIzMmY2YTQxLTlwZTktdNDEoMC04ZDNiLWZkZjVlZWNiNDEiNyIsImMiOiIj9&pageName=ReportSection3306863add46319dc574> ; the discrepancy with the Israeli numbers is probably the result of the Israeli numbers counting trucks entering, but also demanding that these trucks be only half full.

⁷⁶⁷ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147342>; <https://www.wfp.org/news/famine-imminent-northern-gaza-new-report-warns> . For comparison, before the war, some 500 trucks entered Gaza daily with various supplies – about 200 truckloads of gas as well as 300 truckloads of commodities and food. In 2022, an average of 73 truckloads with food entered Gaza daily (as well as 24 truckloads with products such as livestock and animal feed). <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/crossings>

⁷⁶⁸ For example, under political pressure Israel eased its siege in early April: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-says-israel-approved-reopening-of-20-bakeries-water-pipeline-in-northern-gaza/> ; <https://twitter.com/HossamShabat/status/1779526925980995661>

⁷⁶⁹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-175> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/remarks-media-secretary-general> ; <https://edition.cnn.com/audio/podcasts/tug-of-war/episodes/oe6112dc-ae58-1ee-8bd1-6f9c6607faid> ; <https://jewishcurrents.org/israel-policy-starvation-gaza-aid> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/20/world/middleeast/gaza-aid-delivery.html> ; <https://www.wfp.org/news/famine-imminent-northern-gaza-new-report-warns> ; <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

chocolate croissants, animal feed, nail clippers, toys in wooden boxes, and crutches.⁷⁷⁰ In one case, it took a UN organization three months to get approval to deliver 500 tons of animal feed.⁷⁷¹ 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.⁷⁷²

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).⁷⁷³ 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.⁷⁷⁴ The numbers were similar in May.⁷⁷⁵ Some of the food on these trucks rots during the long times they wait to enter Gaza.⁷⁷⁶

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 an IDF officer stated “Hamas police is Hamas... and we won't allow Hamas to control the humanitarian assistance”.⁷⁷⁷ 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.⁷⁷⁸ 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.⁷⁷⁹ Both the US and the UN asked Israel to stop targeting the police to avoid “a total breakdown

⁷⁷⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/11/israel-aid-gaza-banned-blocked/>

⁷⁷¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148296>

⁷⁷² <https://twitter.com/ChronicBabak/status/1778616402280059360> ; <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/kix/kixkc2nwph>

⁷⁷³ <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/

⁷⁷⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-140>

⁷⁷⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

⁷⁷⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000009486472/gaza-food-aid-trucks-rafah-egypt.html>

⁷⁷⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/21/gaza-police-aid-hamas/>

⁷⁷⁸ <https://www.ft.com/content/8aa813fc-a87e-4002-9aaf-890c11a0ec35> ; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/>

⁷⁷⁹ <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”.⁷⁸⁰ 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.⁷⁸¹ 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.⁷⁸² Israel reduced the number of trucks it let into the Strip to less than a third than what it had committed to facilitating,⁷⁸³ while also attacking Gazan police officers responsible for coordinating aid.⁷⁸⁴ 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.⁷⁸⁵ 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.⁷⁸⁶ Additional police officers associated with the distribution of aid were killed in April.⁷⁸⁷

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.⁷⁸⁸

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.⁷⁸⁹ 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.⁷⁹⁰ In January, a survey among shop owners revealed a significant shortage of basic food items, with 81% indicating depletion and

⁷⁸⁰ <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>

⁷⁸¹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

⁷⁸² <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza> (footnote 105).

⁷⁸³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/>

⁷⁸⁴ 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>

⁷⁸⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/18/israel-hamas-gaza-shifa-issa/>

⁷⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/UNLazarini/status/1771917857598693549>

⁷⁸⁷ 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-daaf-afaf-e7f555f60000?liveBlogItemId=1978850928#1978850928> . Also <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra13878899>

⁷⁸⁸ <https://gaza-aid-attacks.forensic-architecture.org/> ;

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

⁷⁸⁹ https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/202404_manufacturing_famine_heb.pdf

⁷⁹⁰ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza> (footnote 54).

19% having only limited supplies.⁷⁹¹ 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.⁷⁹² In late February, the price of a plate with some raw meat and rice reached \$95 (US) according to social media,⁷⁹³ while a nurse in Al-Shifa hospital claimed he had not eaten bread for 2 months during which he consumed animal feed.⁷⁹⁴ 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".⁷⁹⁵ 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.⁷⁹⁶ In April, the price of a kilogram of sugar reached between \$19 and \$30.⁷⁹⁷

As of mid-April, at least 31 people (of which 28 were children) in Gaza died of malnutrition or dehydration.⁷⁹⁸ 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".⁷⁹⁹ Leading NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Oxfam concluded

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

⁷⁹² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-02-07/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018d-8213-daa1-a9fd-e21b04660000> ; <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20231117-give-us-our-daily-bread-gaza-faces-flour-crisis>

⁷⁹³ <https://twitter.com/HamzaAbuToha/status/1760588426103963720>

⁷⁹⁴ <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1762736475957829852>

⁷⁹⁵ <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>

⁷⁹⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/2024-03-03/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-03c5-da4e-adbf-83fdcofooooo>

⁷⁹⁷ <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/>

⁷⁹⁸ <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/muhammadshehad2/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>

⁷⁹⁹ <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”.⁸⁰⁰ Israeli accounts have de facto admitted this,⁸⁰¹ and within a broader historical context, Israel has long used food in such a manner in Gaza.⁸⁰² A report by a global authority on food security and nutrition from mid March stated that famine (their definition here⁸⁰³) was imminent in the northern governorates of the Strip over the next two months.⁸⁰⁴ 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.⁸⁰⁵ The price of a bag of flour in northern Gaza increased to \$275 (normally \$8) by mid March, alongside rampant banditry.⁸⁰⁶ By late March, apparently in the same area, the price of a few dozen kilograms (estimated from video) of vegetables reached some \$3,000.⁸⁰⁷ For context, the average income in Gaza before the war was \$13-20/day.⁸⁰⁸ 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.⁸⁰⁹ Individual accounts confirm these details.⁸¹⁰

As a result, the vast majority of Gaza’s population is at risk of famine.⁸¹¹ Already by January virtually all households were skipping meals every day, with 50-80% of households going entire days and nights without eating.⁸¹² Some 90% of civilians in Gaza experienced “high levels of acute food insecurity”.⁸¹³ In late January the World Health Organization’s Director-General noted the food shortages that result in medical staff and patients receiving only one meal per day.⁸¹⁴ Some 40% experience “emergency levels” and over 15% (378,000) experience catastrophic levels, namely “extreme lack of food, starvation and exhaustion of coping

⁸⁰⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/19/israeli-forces-conduct-gaza>

⁸⁰¹ <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/>

⁸⁰² <https://www.nybooks.com/online/2024/03/30/the-road-to-famine-in-gaza/>

⁸⁰³ 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>

⁸⁰⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/18/world/middleeast/gaza-famine-report-starvation.html>

⁸⁰⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/22/unicef-official-utter-annihilation-gaza>

⁸⁰⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/22/gaza-aid-deliveries-looting-police-hamas/>

⁸⁰⁷ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1770911921870446966>

⁸⁰⁸ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-investment-climate-statements/west-bank-and-gaza/>

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

⁸¹⁰ <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/gaza-starvation-denial-aipac/>

⁸¹¹ 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/>

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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/>

⁸¹³ <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>

⁸¹⁴ <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”.⁸¹⁵ 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.”⁸¹⁶ Despite this situation, IDF officers demanded a further lowering of the humanitarian aid to Gaza.⁸¹⁷ 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 career⁸¹⁸ 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”.⁸¹⁹

In February, an aid organization stated on CNN that Gaza was the fastest decline in nutritional status ever recorded in a human population.⁸²⁰ 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.⁸²¹ On more than one occasion, the IDF attacked a food convoy.⁸²² 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.⁸²³ In late March, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to allow unimpeded food aid into Gaza.⁸²⁴ 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”.⁸²⁵ 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.⁸²⁶ 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”.⁸²⁷ 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

⁸¹⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-113>

⁸¹⁶ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/gaza-is-starving>

⁸¹⁷ <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3633138>

⁸¹⁸ 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

⁸¹⁹ <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>

⁸²⁰ <https://twitter.com/MedicalAidPal/status/1763172220900151317>

⁸²¹ <https://twitter.com/UNRWA/status/1759993361702748380> ;

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

⁸²² 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.

⁸²³ <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/>

⁸²⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/28/famine-is-setting-in-icj-orders-israel-to-unblock-gaza-food-aid>

⁸²⁵ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/gaza-collapse-famine_n_660c96aac4bo328a72be47f5

⁸²⁶ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/people-northern-gaza-forced-survive-245-calories-day-less-can-beans-oxfam>

⁸²⁷ <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).⁸²⁸ 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.⁸²⁹ Images and videos from the strip appear to confirm these findings.⁸³⁰

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.⁸³¹ In the rest of May, the amount of food entering Gaza dropped by 70%⁸³² (discrepancies with Israeli-supplied numbers derive from the different ways of counting trucks,⁸³³ as well as the entry of commercial food sales).⁸³⁴ 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.⁸³⁵ The much-heralded US pier,⁸³⁶ 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.⁸³⁷ 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,

⁸²⁸ <https://www.devex.com/news/exclusive-usaid-officials-say-israel-breached-us-directive-on-gaza-aid-107545>

⁸²⁹ <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-65d4650d8f08f68df4c9a84&filterKeyEvents=false#liveblog-navigation>

⁸³⁰ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1750503719806923075> ;

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

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

⁸³¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/22/gaza-famine-aid-israel-hamas/>

⁸³² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/30/israel-hamas-war-news-gaza-palestine-rafah/>

⁸³³ <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/>

⁸³⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-reopens-gaza-food-sales-rafah-raid-chokes-aid-2024-05-30/>

⁸³⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-west-bank-jenin-raid-a3320a77a3a6ccff41db2a4bc63e4aa3>

⁸³⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/04/27/world/middleeast/gaza-pier-israel-hamas-war.html>

⁸³⁷ <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).⁸³⁸ 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).⁸³⁹

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.⁸⁴⁰ 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”.⁸⁴¹ 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.⁸⁴² The UN’s aid chief said that “delivering aid has become almost impossible” in Gaza.⁸⁴³ In late May, head of USAID said that conditions in Gaza are “worse... than ever before”.⁸⁴⁴ 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”.⁸⁴⁵ 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.⁸⁴⁶ 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.⁸⁴⁷

⁸³⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-reopens-gaza-food-sales-rafa-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>

⁸³⁹ <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/980>

⁸⁴⁰ <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

⁸⁴¹ <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

⁸⁴² <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-hunger-un-07afb7fe4a1654f54b81b944a0dab535> ; <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000159235/download/>

⁸⁴³ <https://x.com/UNReliefChief/status/1798118788576989489>

⁸⁴⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/30/israel-hamas-war-news-gaza-palestine-rafa/>

⁸⁴⁵ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/05/1150486> ;

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

⁸⁴⁶ <https://x.com/blarn357857/status/1801920586677154113>

⁸⁴⁷ 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.⁸⁴⁸ Media coverage refers to people eating horse meat,⁸⁴⁹ grass and drinking contaminated water or sea water.⁸⁵⁰ One video shows a group of people swimming in an area flooded with sewage to procure airdropped aid that landed in that area.⁸⁵¹ 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).⁸⁵² Others fell as a building on which an airdrop of aid landed had collapsed.⁸⁵³

About 60 percent of Israeli Jews oppose humanitarian aid to Gaza, a stable figure over time.⁸⁵⁴ Jewish activists have completely blocked the entrance of aid to Gaza on several occasions in recent months.⁸⁵⁵ IDF soldiers recorded themselves destroying and burning food warehouses in Gaza.⁸⁵⁶ In May, Israeli settlers/protestors blocked⁸⁵⁷ and sometimes attacked Jordanian convoys of aid to Gaza.⁸⁵⁸ Such attacks included causing massive damage to the trucks themselves, as well as throwing away the humanitarian aid onto the road.⁸⁵⁹ 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>

⁸⁴⁸ <https://twitter.com/amirs74/status/1771198476446998611>

⁸⁴⁹ <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240224-dead-horses-scrap-leaves-gaza-s-hungry-get-desperate>; <https://twitter.com/KhalilAsslan/status/1773732648847876569>

⁸⁵⁰ <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>

⁸⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/sarabaha94/status/1771278625175654815>

⁸⁵² <https://twitter.com/arixegal/status/1772657137136619838> ; <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/26/middleeast/palestinians-drown-gaza-aid-drop-intl/index.html>

⁸⁵³ <https://twitter.com/stairwayto3dom/status/1787522270555996657>

⁸⁵⁴ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/52967>

⁸⁵⁵ <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>

⁸⁵⁶ <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)

⁸⁵⁷ <https://twitter.com/JoshuaPHilll/status/1789407061555445951>

⁸⁵⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/jordan-says-israeli-settlers-attacked-jordanian-aid-convoys-way-gaza-2024-05-01/>

⁸⁵⁹ <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.⁸⁶⁰ Other road blocks took place in major cities – including Jerusalem – with little to no police interference.⁸⁶¹ In at least two occasions trucks were burned,⁸⁶² 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).⁸⁶³ 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.⁸⁶⁴ The deputy speaker of the Israeli Knesset claimed he blocked aid trucks with his private car.⁸⁶⁵ 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.⁸⁶⁶

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).⁸⁶⁷ As of December, fuel prices had increased by over 500 percent.⁸⁶⁸ In April, the price of a liter of gasoline reached 150 shekels (~\$40).⁸⁶⁹ 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

⁸⁶⁰ <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/>

⁸⁶¹ <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>

⁸⁶² <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>

⁸⁶³ <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>

⁸⁶⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/21/israeli-soldiers-and-police-tipping-off-groups-that-attack-gaza-aid-trucks>

⁸⁶⁵ <https://twitter.com/lirishavit/status/1790723920221311015>

⁸⁶⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hj6opjuba>

⁸⁶⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/page/gaza-strip-electricity-supply>

⁸⁶⁸ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000154766/download/>

⁸⁶⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-04-04/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-a379-d315-ab9f-aff98d4b0000>

Gaza City) compared to the pre-war reality.⁸⁷⁰ 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.⁸⁷¹

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),⁸⁷² but this number decreased to less than one liter on average in February.⁸⁷³ Even basic medical supplies are in short supply. Gauze, for example, is sterilized and reused for the next patient.⁸⁷⁴ Some have begun to die from treatable diseases such as hepatitis.⁸⁷⁵

The lack of medical supplies has resulted in the conduct of medical operations, including C-sections and amputations, without anesthesia or blood supplies.⁸⁷⁶ An online video shows a Gazan doctor who had to amputate his daughter's foot on the dining table in their home without anesthesia.⁸⁷⁷ 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.⁸⁷⁸ 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.⁸⁷⁹ 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.⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁷⁰ <https://www.care.org/news-and-stories/press-releases/care-warns-84-of-gazas-lights-extinguished-people-left-sick-and-starving/>

⁸⁷¹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/specials/gaza-universities-destroyed-israel-military-war/index.html>

⁸⁷² <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000154766/download/>

⁸⁷³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/27/un-israel-food-starvation-palestinians-war-crime-genocide>

⁸⁷⁴ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/244-stopping-famine-gaza>

⁸⁷⁵ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1783398458004578791>

⁸⁷⁶ <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>

⁸⁷⁷ <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>

⁸⁷⁸ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1763960723695185934>

⁸⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1770677587670684039> ; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/single-worst-top-oxford-surgeon-horrors-gaza-hospital/>

⁸⁸⁰ <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.⁸⁸¹ 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".⁸⁸² Miscarriages in Gaza have increased by 300% compared to the pre-war situation.⁸⁸³ 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.⁸⁸⁴ Women in Gaza also have difficulties finding menstrual pads, with some using alternatives such as the corners of their tents to manage their periods.⁸⁸⁵

Gaza's health system

Gaza's health system has all but collapsed. 84% of all health facilities have been damaged or destroyed.⁸⁸⁶ At times, less than a third of Gaza's hospitals and a quarter of its primary health centers were even partially operational.⁸⁸⁷ As of writing, about half of the hospitals in the Strip are partially operational.⁸⁸⁸ 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.⁸⁸⁹ There are over a million reported cases of diseases in Gaza so far.⁸⁹⁰ As of mid June, there have been over 865,000 cases of acute respiratory infections.⁸⁹¹ Over 485,000 cases of diarrhea have been reported, over 113,000 of which are among children aged 5 or less.⁸⁹² 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).⁸⁹³

⁸⁸¹ https://www.juzoor.org/cached_uploads/download/2023/11/11/maternal-health-report-final-1699726911.pdf

⁸⁸² <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>

⁸⁸³ <https://jezebel.com/miscarriages-in-gaza-have-increased-300-under-israeli-1851168680>

⁸⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/abierkhatib/status/1771451982500229193>

⁸⁸⁵ <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2024/01/11/1224201620/another-layer-of-misery-women-in-gaza-struggle-to-find-menstrual-pads-running-wa>

⁸⁸⁶ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf>

⁸⁸⁷ <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

⁸⁸⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

⁸⁸⁹ 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>

⁸⁹⁰ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

⁸⁹¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

⁸⁹² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

⁸⁹³ <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 220.⁸⁹⁴ 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 Minister⁸⁹⁵ – have spoken in favor of allowing diseases to decimate the civilian population in Gaza.⁸⁹⁶ 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.⁸⁹⁷ Exposure to high temperatures within refugee tents has also killed Palestinians sheltering inside them.⁸⁹⁸

Israel has systematically dismantled the health system in Gaza, making it inoperable.⁸⁹⁹ In late February, the head of MSF stated that “there is no health system to speak of left in Gaza”.⁹⁰⁰ 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”.⁹⁰¹ 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”.⁹⁰² 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).⁹⁰³ 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.⁹⁰⁴

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

⁸⁹⁴ <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).

⁸⁹⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rizlcnoga>

⁸⁹⁶ <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001462900>

⁸⁹⁷ <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inflicting-unprecedented-suffering-and-destruction-seven-ways-the-government-of-621591/>

⁸⁹⁸ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1783397508154052793>

⁸⁹⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/world/middleeast/gaza-israel-hospitals-medical-system.html>

⁹⁰⁰ <https://www.msf.org/msf-briefing-gaza-un-security-council>

⁹⁰¹ <https://www.msf.org/msf-briefing-gaza-un-security-council>

⁹⁰² <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/>

⁹⁰³ <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

⁹⁰⁴ <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”.⁹⁰⁵ Other academics reached similar and more detailed conclusions.⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/29/health-organisations-disease-gaza-population-outbreaks-conflict>

⁹⁰⁶ 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).⁹⁰⁷ 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",⁹⁰⁸ stated that "this war is civilization against barbarism"⁹⁰⁹ and defined the war as a battle against the Biblical Amalek in both a speech and in a letter he sent to IDF soldiers.⁹¹⁰ The Bible directs to annihilate Amalek completely: men, women, children and livestock.⁹¹¹ Israel's President has stated that Israel did not distinguish between militants and civilians, "it's an entire nation out there that is responsible".⁹¹² He also personally wrote a message on an artillery shell to be shot into Gaza.⁹¹³ 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.⁹¹⁴ Israel's National Security minister told Border Police troops they should shoot terrorists even if the terrorists do not threaten them, against procedure.⁹¹⁵ 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.⁹¹⁶ 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.⁹¹⁷ 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".⁹¹⁸ Other politicians

⁹⁰⁷ <https://humanityjournal.org/blog/discourses-of-palestinian-disappearance/>

⁹⁰⁸ <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/children-post-deleted-netanyahu/>

⁹⁰⁹ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-to-dutch-leader-this-war-is-civilization-vs-barbarism/

⁹¹⁰ <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>

⁹¹¹ 1 Samuel 15.2-3.

⁹¹² https://www.huffpost.com/entry/israel-gaza-isaac-herzog_n_65295ee8e4b03ea0c004e2a8

⁹¹³ <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>

⁹¹⁴ <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>

⁹¹⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkxxialft>

⁹¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/GolanMay/status/1759675501424042329;>

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

⁹¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1771246005368861008>

⁹¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMexnNkQSfmQ>

have done the same.⁹¹⁹ 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.⁹²⁰ In March, a former general described the people in three areas from which Israel retreated (Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon) as "human animals".⁹²¹ 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".⁹²² 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".⁹²³ In mid June, Israel's Foreign Ministry placed an ad that claimed that "there are no innocent civilians there [in Gaza]".⁹²⁴

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.⁹²⁵ 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.⁹²⁶ 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.⁹²⁷ 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.⁹²⁸ 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.⁹²⁹ 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

⁹¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/AmirHetsroni/status/1743063371551822292> (speaker is Moshe Feiglin); <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syqooiunoo6>

⁹²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQtqvSYjMlc>

⁹²¹ <https://twitter.com/GLZRadio/status/1773260052683469178>

⁹²² <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1781995666593456397> ;

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

⁹²³ <https://twitter.com/MacaesBruno/status/1787573947690819907>

⁹²⁴ <https://x.com/MaxBlumenthal/status/1801745356289622225>

⁹²⁵ 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>

⁹²⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/literature/2024-03-26/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-7ad9-d96c-af9f-7ed9egfa0000>

⁹²⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-05-15/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018f-7c03-d808-a9bf-ff1745530000>

⁹²⁸ 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>

⁹²⁹ https://ynet-pic1.yit.co.il/picservers5/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.⁹³⁰ The decision was delayed after a petition by the charity Physicians for Human Rights to Israel's Supreme Court.⁹³¹ In April, the IDF scattered fake money bills in the Strip with a portrait of the local Hamas leader depicted as a rat.⁹³²

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.⁹³³

Dehumanization in the IDF

The dehumanization of Palestinians is now normative, pervasive and obvious in many hundreds⁹³⁴ of images and videos, almost all of which were uploaded by IDF soldiers to social media.⁹³⁵ These videos and images present shooting civilians waving white flags,⁹³⁶ abuse of

⁹³⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/health/article/h17117hua6>

⁹³¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-20/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-5d54-d27e-a7af-7ffe83dc0000> ; https://twitter.com/PHR_IL/status/1770877688539988234

⁹³² <https://twitter.com/N12News/status/1780977153166688378>

⁹³³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-21/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-9b46-dce9-a1cf-ffc6dcee0000> ; <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/05/israels-extortion-leaflets-and-namecheap-how-to-do-corporate-accountability-during-a-genocide/>

⁹³⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAT9NQ4WkEo> (hundreds; see below for many others)

⁹³⁵ <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,⁹³⁷ captives and corpses,⁹³⁸ gleefully damaging or destroying houses⁹³⁹, various structures and institutions,⁹⁴⁰ religious sites⁹⁴¹ and looting of personal belongings,⁹⁴² 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>
⁹³⁶ <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.
⁹³⁷
<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>
⁹³⁸ Long list of videos at: <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/171353460290076817>,
<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>
⁹³⁹ <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,⁹⁴³ shooting local animals,⁹⁴⁴ destroying private property,⁹⁴⁵ burning books within libraries,⁹⁴⁶ defacing Palestinian⁹⁴⁷ and Islamic symbols⁹⁴⁸ (including

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798325368023384423> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1798685435356393524> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801743066497212733>
⁹⁴⁰ <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>
⁹⁴¹ 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>
⁹⁴² <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>
⁹⁴³ <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>
⁹⁴⁴ https://twitter.com/Sarah_Hassan94/status/1754620276271149451
⁹⁴⁵ <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>
⁹⁴⁶ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1793628894245118205> ; <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/israeli-soldier-burning-books/>

burning Qurans⁹⁴⁹ and turning mosques into dining spaces⁹⁵⁰) and declaring a new Nakba.⁹⁵¹ More videos are covered by *The New York Times*⁹⁵² and *CNN*.⁹⁵³

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”.⁹⁵⁴ 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.⁹⁵⁵ 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.⁹⁵⁶ 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.⁹⁵⁷ A Palestinian woman claimed that IDF soldiers carved a Star of David on her husband’s back during his time in detention.⁹⁵⁸ 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.⁹⁵⁹

Looting has become normalized⁹⁶⁰ to the extent that one case was featured approvingly in a popular Friday evening news segment,⁹⁶¹ 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”.⁹⁶² Soldiers shared an image of themselves with tens of thousands of shekels (thousands of dollars).⁹⁶³ A military doctor noted disapprovingly that looting had become “almost institutionalized”.⁹⁶⁴ An IDF soldier attempted to sell online a Gazan passport

⁹⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1742273606699106542>;

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

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

⁹⁴⁸ <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1769378368431047090>

⁹⁴⁹ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1793032057649512671> ; also

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

⁹⁵⁰ <https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1801193479470534674>

⁹⁵¹ <https://x.com/YousefMunayyer/status/1791807669797347571> ;

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

⁹⁵² <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/06/world/middleeast/israel-idf-soldiers-war-social-media-video.html>

⁹⁵³ <https://twitter.com/amanpour/status/1758204651927744784>

⁹⁵⁴ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1752433175320478060>

⁹⁵⁵ <https://twitter.com/adham922/status/1756068057779245412>

⁹⁵⁶ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1756605167946899965>

⁹⁵⁷ <https://snd.ps/post/117484/> ; [هدبل-الدحوح-حاول-الاحتلال-دفنها-وأخضعها-وأطفالها-لتحليل-جيني](https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1773318803075531136) ;

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

⁹⁵⁸ https://www.instagram.com/landpalestine/p/C4qQ6pltu5N/?img_index=1

⁹⁵⁹ <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1766132416899420637>

⁹⁶⁰ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/132092/> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-05-15/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018f-7c03-d808-a9bf-ffi745530000>

⁹⁶¹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1756438313899024862>

⁹⁶² <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1760599708857237838>

⁹⁶³ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772972625532207265> ; also

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

⁹⁶⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra13792905>

and other items he had looted while serving in Gaza.⁹⁶⁵ 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.⁹⁶⁶

Revenge is a common theme in this content.⁹⁶⁷ Some IDF soldiers shared social media content that explicitly compared Gazans to the biblical Amalek (see above),⁹⁶⁸ as well as stating that they have fulfilled the religious commandment to annihilate the memory of Amalek.⁹⁶⁹ 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.⁹⁷⁰ Other soldiers upload much revenge content and relate it to the destruction of the Gaza Strip, including the destruction they themselves caused.⁹⁷¹ 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”.⁹⁷² High ranking officers have said similar things.⁹⁷³ 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.⁹⁷⁴ 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).⁹⁷⁵ Soldiers preparing to enter Rafah in early May called for “let’s take Rafah apart” as their battle cry.⁹⁷⁶

Many soldiers release videos that portray their experience and destruction in Gaza as fun and humorous,⁹⁷⁷ treating their experience like a video game,⁹⁷⁸ or content that ignores the war,

⁹⁶⁵ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/rjytktkra

⁹⁶⁶ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796133135400210700>

⁹⁶⁷ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1750219568428036237> ;

<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1756652152607457781>

⁹⁶⁸ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1762185882994425961> ;

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

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

⁹⁶⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1779808804751757387>

⁹⁷⁰ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1765386577855791185>

⁹⁷¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1767900767313182897>

⁹⁷² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1772304727457317039>

⁹⁷³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqEj3DzadiM>

⁹⁷⁴ <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>

⁹⁷⁵ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1771197890829898017>

⁹⁷⁶ <https://twitter.com/ofercass/status/1787791098095534223>

⁹⁷⁷ <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/1762212620576069120> ;
<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>
⁹⁷⁸ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1800822593777545634> ;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1802060863731319253>

such as conducting a yoga class in an abandoned home in Gaza,⁹⁷⁹ or a soldier holding up a sign advertising a barber shop in Israel with corpses of dead Palestinians around him.⁹⁸⁰ 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”.⁹⁸¹ One soldier expressed his will to poison the flour on the trucks bringing humanitarian aid to Gazans.⁹⁸² Other photos include soldiers posing near election banners for local (Israeli) politicians and restaurant chains “coming soon” to Gaza.⁹⁸³ Recurring types of content include humorously presenting the lingerie of Gazan women⁹⁸⁴ or posing with items (often toys) from abandoned Gazan houses.⁹⁸⁵ *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.⁹⁸⁶ 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.⁹⁸⁷ The IDF has even brought influencers to

⁹⁷⁹ <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>

⁹⁸⁰ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1755129771825000637>

⁹⁸¹ <https://twitter.com/ozleisraelaza/status/1780525230064058757>

⁹⁸² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1780159773981220987>

⁹⁸³ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760407071747719357> ;

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

⁹⁸⁴ <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>

⁹⁸⁵ <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>

⁹⁸⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/food/2024-02-13/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018d-82c5-d6dc-ab9f-cffdiebcoooo>

⁹⁸⁷ https://www.mako.co.il/news-n12_magazine/781730bdada5e810/Article-979e397c1ea9f81027.htm

mockingly “review” a “hotel” in Gaza.⁹⁸⁸ An IDF soldier reflected that other soldiers went into the Gaza Strip as a form of tourism to see the destruction.⁹⁸⁹

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.⁹⁹⁰ 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.⁹⁹¹ 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.⁹⁹² 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.⁹⁹³ 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).⁹⁹⁴ Similar calls appear in public space, for example in graffiti.⁹⁹⁵ In October, an adviser to Israel’s Prime Minister called for torturing Hamas militants in a graphic way.⁹⁹⁶ In November, 90 Israeli doctors signed a letter calling to bomb hospitals in Gaza,⁹⁹⁷ while the president of Israel’s largest university compared Hamas to Amalek.⁹⁹⁸ A popular singer used a long series of expletives against Gaza during a show for Israeli soldiers.⁹⁹⁹ In early January, a long list of rabbis, academics and ten MPs have called for the cessation of all humanitarian aid to Gaza.¹⁰⁰⁰ 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

⁹⁸⁸ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1743296706576269446>;
<https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1739728935779234254> ; also the similar
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1801625890633159060>

⁹⁸⁹ <https://twitter.com/WarWatchs/status/1783121782557352320>

⁹⁹⁰ <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>

⁹⁹¹ <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

⁹⁹² <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/750891/>

⁹⁹³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkrbsjbvc>

⁹⁹⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-war-rhetoric.html>

⁹⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1790031034408394798>

⁹⁹⁶ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-war-sara-netanyahu-advisor-torture-gazans-rant>

⁹⁹⁷ <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/11/israeli-doctors-urge-the-bombing-of-gaza-hospitals/>

⁹⁹⁸ <https://www.hidabroot.org/article/1188125>

⁹⁹⁹ <https://www.ice.co.il/social/news/article/988380> “Gaza, you daughter of a bitch, Gaza, you Black, you garbage can, Gaza, you whore...”

¹⁰⁰⁰ <https://twitter.com/shilofreid/status/1742919348401135788>

humanitarian aid.¹⁰⁰¹ The Rabbi of Tzefat compared the Gazans to Amalek and claimed that they should be eradicated.¹⁰⁰²

In April, 42% of Israeli Jews claimed that Israel should not follow international humanitarian law.¹⁰⁰³ 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.¹⁰⁰⁴ 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”.¹⁰⁰⁵ Similar sentiments appear on Israel’s main TV channels.¹⁰⁰⁶ Similar messages are directed at Arabs/Palestinians in general. An Israeli model/influencer stated that all Palestinians with Israeli citizenship should be annihilated,¹⁰⁰⁷ a sentiment followed by a cameraman for the Israeli Channel 14.¹⁰⁰⁸ 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.¹⁰⁰⁹ 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.¹⁰¹⁰

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.¹⁰¹¹ 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.¹⁰¹² A popular Israeli stand-up comedian mocked Gazans who were killed from faulty airdropped humanitarian aid, declaring that they were “such morons”.¹⁰¹³ 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).¹⁰¹⁴ 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”).¹⁰¹⁵ A senior journalist

¹⁰⁰¹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1757837275830907052>

¹⁰⁰² <https://www.yeshiva.org.il/midrash/52638>

¹⁰⁰³ <https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/swords-of-iron-15/>

¹⁰⁰⁴ https://twitter.com/itamar_green/status/1741504115874627765

¹⁰⁰⁵ <https://twitter.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1782029404916285857> ;

https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%99%D7%94%D7%95%D7%93%D7%94_%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%96%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%92%D7%A8 ; also: <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1795012044699079164>

¹⁰⁰⁶ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1790909070708285910>

¹⁰⁰⁷ https://x.com/z_ooplz/status/1791336664666603703

¹⁰⁰⁸ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1794698212206653773>

¹⁰⁰⁹ https://x.com/Ahmad_tibi/status/1801934557723419012;

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

¹⁰¹⁰ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1794351306028839298>

¹⁰¹¹ <https://twitter.com/CensoredMen/status/1765773664325075354>

¹⁰¹² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sy3bfhu6p> ; also <https://olam-katan.co.il/archives/12261>

¹⁰¹³ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1769159335299485732> ; also

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

¹⁰¹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVopEUXMz6M>

¹⁰¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1768989430084227090> ;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irk3n9V-aQs> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfZOJYA7EOg>

asserted that Gazans “have earned that hell fairly, and I don't have a milligram of empathy”.¹⁰¹⁶ A senior commentator stated that “to destroy Hamas... you have to bring Gaza to a humanitarian disaster”.¹⁰¹⁷ Many other media workers and artists have said similar things.¹⁰¹⁸ Voices on the street speak openly and positively about the killing of civilians in Gaza in interviews.¹⁰¹⁹ One t-shirt in Israel features the text “May your [i.e. Arab] village burn”.¹⁰²⁰ 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.¹⁰²¹ When the IDF killed three sons and four grandchildren of Ismail Haniyeh, one of Hamas's leaders,¹⁰²² an Israeli journalist cited the religious commandment to erase the memory of Amalek.¹⁰²³ 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”.¹⁰²⁴ Some Israeli police officers apparently believe that there are no innocents in Gaza, including a fetus in his mother's womb.¹⁰²⁵

Israeli demonstrators have repeatedly attempted to block humanitarian aid from entering Gaza, including holding a rave/protest just outside the border wall.¹⁰²⁶ 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.¹⁰²⁷ Some IDF soldiers have also called to stop all humanitarian aid.¹⁰²⁸ 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.¹⁰²⁹ 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.¹⁰³⁰ When a

¹⁰¹⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2023-12-19/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-7d09-de44-a9be-7d9d47790000>

¹⁰¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/freyisraeli/status/1769996721591877793>

¹⁰¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1768045698350465445> ; <https://twitter.com/bokeralmog/status/1782777513678196933> ; see also <https://x.com/IsraelGaley/status/1799689832257749110>

¹⁰¹⁹ <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C5YJhcglsyz/>

¹⁰²⁰ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1780222143445205191>

¹⁰²¹ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1775162156792631334>

¹⁰²² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/three-sons-hamas-leader-haniyeh-killed-israeli-airstrike-2024-04-10/>

¹⁰²³ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1778072422530400755>

¹⁰²⁴ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794826941209702699> ; also <https://x.com/idanlandau/status/1794956280504930630>

¹⁰²⁵ <https://twitter.com/AlissaShira/status/1787096840216654241>

¹⁰²⁶ <https://twitter.com/Lowkeyonline/status/1757326323712774650> ; <https://twitter.com/loffredojeremy/status/1762480372963508266> ; <https://twitter.com/mekomit/status/1768220704833446359>

¹⁰²⁷ <https://twitter.com/itamarbengvir/status/1763196768458604583>

¹⁰²⁸ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1785410517823046018>

¹⁰²⁹ <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-7f5518fco000>; <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>

¹⁰³⁰ <https://twitter.com/UNLazzarini/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”.¹⁰³¹

The dehumanization of Palestinians is closely associated with a sharp increase in Israeli militarism. Israeli dating practices attest to both these changes.¹⁰³² 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.¹⁰³³ One Tinder bio, for example, stated that “We are not only here to fuck Hamas”.¹⁰³⁴ 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).¹⁰³⁵ 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.¹⁰³⁶ Many of these Palestinians (as much as 85-90% according to Israeli media) are detained without any concrete connection to Hamas.¹⁰³⁷ The conditions throughout the process of arrest and

¹⁰³¹ <https://x.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1791788316943106366>

¹⁰³² <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>

¹⁰³³ <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>

¹⁰³⁴ <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>

¹⁰³⁵ <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>

¹⁰³⁶ <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>

¹⁰³⁷ <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>

At least 8 Palestinian prisoners and captives have died in Israeli jails since the beginning of the war,¹⁰⁴⁵ where conditions are appalling as well.¹⁰⁴⁶ The IDF has admitted that additional detained Palestinians from Gaza have died but refused to supply additional details,¹⁰⁴⁷ until in early March *Ha'aretz* revealed that 27 Gazans died in IDF detention.¹⁰⁴⁸ By late May, the number increased to 35 including two who died en route to the detention facility after soldiers

[iffedcf70000](https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1781018819961454697) ;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.¹⁰⁴⁹ By early June, the number of Palestinians who died in potentially criminal circumstances according to the IDF increased further to 48.¹⁰⁵⁰ For comparison, in the notorious American Guantánamo prison, 9 prisoners died over more than 20 years of operation.¹⁰⁵¹ The IDF refused to answer whether it opened Military Police investigations for the deaths of these Gazans.¹⁰⁵² 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.¹⁰⁵³

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).¹⁰⁵⁴ The same law was used, for example, to detain and imprison an 82-year old woman with Alzheimer’s disease for almost two months.¹⁰⁵⁵ 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.¹⁰⁵⁶ 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.¹⁰⁵⁷

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.¹⁰⁵⁸ 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).¹⁰⁵⁹ Detainees were threatened with prolonged

¹⁰⁴⁹ <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>

¹⁰⁵⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-06-03/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-dab1-dbod-a98f-def9186a0000>

¹⁰⁵¹ <https://reprieve.org/uk/campaign/guantanamo/faq/>

¹⁰⁵² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-c6e1-d6c4-ab8d-e7f5fd670000>

¹⁰⁵³ <https://www.phr.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Death-in-Israeli-Prisons-28.03.24-Ver.pdf>

¹⁰⁵⁴ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/20-שעות-על-הברכיים-מי-שזו-מוצה-אזרחים-20/>

¹⁰⁵⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-02-01/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-5fi8-doaf-a3af-7fbcea840000>

¹⁰⁵⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-3945-d516-afbf-ffc73dd00000>

¹⁰⁵⁷ <https://twitter.com/Hanineog/status/1769258663837827582>

¹⁰⁵⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/03/world/middleeast/unrwa-gaza-detention-israel.html>

¹⁰⁵⁹

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.¹⁰⁶⁰ 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).¹⁰⁶¹ 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.¹⁰⁶² Another detainee recounted he lost 37 kilograms during his period in detention and described experiencing electric shocks as a form of torture.¹⁰⁶³ One released detainee recounted that he could use the restroom for only four minutes, after which he would be electrocuted.¹⁰⁶⁴ 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.¹⁰⁶⁵ 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”,¹⁰⁶⁶ while the UNICEF spokesperson revealed the extent of destruction in the then-empty hospital.¹⁰⁶⁷ As of June, according to one NGO, international press reports documented at least 7 cases of rape against Palestinian prisoners and detainees.¹⁰⁶⁸

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 handcuffed¹⁰⁶⁹ (even before the war, 95% of prisoners were restrained when they received medical treatment)¹⁰⁷⁰. 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”.¹⁰⁷¹ A medical source described the situation as “it’s like a different world or a black hole. There’s a disease incubator there”.¹⁰⁷² In mid-April

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

¹⁰⁶¹

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

¹⁰⁶² <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-04-19/allegations-of-gaza-abuse/103692464>

¹⁰⁶³ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-04-19/allegations-of-gaza-abuse/103692464>

¹⁰⁶⁴ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6367/Killing,-torture,-and-injections-of-unknown-substances:-Intl.-community-must-act-on-Israeli-violations-of-Gaza-detainees>

¹⁰⁶⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEBcDUYtMts>

¹⁰⁶⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68513408>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68546268>

¹⁰⁶⁷ https://twitter.com/ijames_elder/status/1770440852717912117

¹⁰⁶⁸ <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.

¹⁰⁶⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-04/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-gac3-dd2b-ad9f-dadb900f0000>

¹⁰⁷⁰ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/health/article/14391915>

¹⁰⁷¹ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-04-19/allegations-of-gaza-abuse/103692464>

¹⁰⁷² <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”.¹⁰⁷³ 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”.¹⁰⁷⁴ A *New York Times* report in June provided additional similar evidence, adding details about the rape of male Gazan detainees.¹⁰⁷⁵ 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.¹⁰⁷⁶ 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),¹⁰⁷⁷ but Israel began phasing out the camp in early June.¹⁰⁷⁸

The number of women detained in Gaza (and the West Bank) since Oct. 7 has been in the hundreds (140 in Gaza in mid-December¹⁰⁷⁹). 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.¹⁰⁸⁰ One Palestinian detained woman stated that “For the most of the interrogations, I and the majority of the detainees were repeatedly threatened with rape”.¹⁰⁸¹ Another Palestinian woman has spoken about the sexual, emotional and physical abuse she has experienced for over a month in which she was detained.¹⁰⁸² Other women have said similar things.¹⁰⁸³ In late March, an

¹⁰⁷³ <https://www.phr.org.il/en/shut-down-the-sde-teiman-facility-now/>

¹⁰⁷⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/10/middleeast/israel-sde-teiman-detention-whistleblowers-intl-cmd/index.html>

¹⁰⁷⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/06/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-detention-base.html>

¹⁰⁷⁶ <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>

¹⁰⁷⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-04/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-9ac3-dd2b-ad9f-dadb900f0000>

¹⁰⁷⁸ <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>

¹⁰⁷⁹ <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>

¹⁰⁸⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/israelopt-un-experts-appalled-reported-human-rights-violations-against>

¹⁰⁸¹ <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).

¹⁰⁸² <https://twitter.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1762502752184467495>

¹⁰⁸³ <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->

Israeli former general claimed that a US official accused the IDF of “systematically” abusing Palestinian women.¹⁰⁸⁴ 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.¹⁰⁸⁵

[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/>
¹⁰⁸⁴ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-793420>
¹⁰⁸⁵ [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/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,¹⁰⁸⁶ National Security (who also stated he would like to live in Gaza),¹⁰⁸⁷ Heritage (who also called to drop a nuclear bomb on Gaza),¹⁰⁸⁸ Agriculture (who claimed that another Nakba was ongoing),¹⁰⁸⁹ the former Minister of Information¹⁰⁹⁰ and a former Minister of Justice.¹⁰⁹¹ Israel MPs have also participated in the discussion.¹⁰⁹² 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”.¹⁰⁹³ Some IDF officers and soldiers fighting in Gaza support the same idea.¹⁰⁹⁴ An Israeli government plan proposing to repopulate all Gazans to the Sinai Peninsula (part of Egypt) has been leaked.¹⁰⁹⁵ Israel has also attempted to get the US to pressure Egypt into accepting Gazan refugees,¹⁰⁹⁶ and has attempted to convince several countries including Congo to accept Palestinian refugees.¹⁰⁹⁷ Other locations members of Israel’s government suggested as potential resettlement locations include Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the European Union and Chile.¹⁰⁹⁸ 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.¹⁰⁹⁹ 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”.¹¹⁰⁰ In mid-February a local human rights organization revealed that Egypt was

¹⁰⁸⁶ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-call-for-resettling-gazas-palestinians-building-settlements-in-strip/> ; <https://x.com/N12News/status/1798769743119167566>

¹⁰⁸⁷ <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>

¹⁰⁸⁸ https://twitter.com/Eliyahu_a/status/1772645094295830643 ; <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/596470/>

¹⁰⁸⁹ <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>

¹⁰⁹⁰ <https://www.hidabroot.org/article/1187840>

¹⁰⁹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEu-dQWOIL4>

¹⁰⁹² <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.

¹⁰⁹³ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-778367>

¹⁰⁹⁴ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794113236708573451> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1794826941209702699>

¹⁰⁹⁵ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/המסמך-המלא-של-משרד-המודיעין-כיבוש-עזה-ו/> ; <https://www.972mag.com/intelligence-ministry-gaza-population-transfer/>

¹⁰⁹⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/12/21/biden-netanyahu-dispute-palestinian-state/>

¹⁰⁹⁷ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/israeli-officials-said-in-talks-with-congo-others-on-taking-in-gaza-emigrants/

¹⁰⁹⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/01/04/gaza-displaced-civilians-resettlement-israel/>

¹⁰⁹⁹ <https://www.zman.co.il/453910/popup/>

¹¹⁰⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-02-05/ty-article-live/0000018d-762a-dd6e-a98d-f62a9c200000?liveBlogItemId=310435701#310435701>

building a high-security area for the reception of Palestinian refugees,¹¹⁰¹ and in late March an Egyptian source claimed Egypt was preparing for the entrance of 150,000 Palestinians during an Israeli invasion of Rafah.¹¹⁰² 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".¹¹⁰³ According to estimates, the number of Palestinians who left for Egypt by April was 30-50 thousand.¹¹⁰⁴ 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".¹¹⁰⁵ 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.¹¹⁰⁶

The absence of clear war plans,¹¹⁰⁷ 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.¹¹⁰⁸ Over 30 right-wing organizations have supported this goal in a late January conference.¹¹⁰⁹ A total of 11 ministers and 15 MPs (of a total of 120) participated in the conference.¹¹¹⁰ Several IDF soldiers have stated their will to resettle Gaza while uniformed and within Gaza.¹¹¹¹ In March, the commander of an armored battalion did the same during an interview with Israeli TV.¹¹¹² 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.¹¹¹³ Other polls from January, February, March and April reveal that some 20-25% of Israeli Jews believe that Israel should resettle

¹¹⁰¹ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-egypt-building-buffer-zone-palestinian-refugees>

¹¹⁰² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hklu44rkc> ; <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/-مصر-تطلب-معلومات-ومساعدات-من-أميركا-قبل-عملية-رفع>

¹¹⁰³ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/mar/19/jared-kushner-gaza-waterfront-property-israel-negev>

¹¹⁰⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2024-04-04/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-a379-d315-ab9f-aff98d4b0000>

¹¹⁰⁵ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1777360030380986803>

¹¹⁰⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1785075803870404644> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-30/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-2e6c-d502-a5bf-eeeeebb50000>

¹¹⁰⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/18/biden-israel-gaza-rafah-palestinians/>

¹¹⁰⁸ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2023_q4/Article-9f47fed9563eb81027.htm ; <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-794770>

¹¹⁰⁹ <https://twitter.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1746855797328433438> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/09/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-settlers.html>

¹¹¹⁰ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2024_q1/Article-7ce65d03aa05d81027.htm

¹¹¹¹ <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>

¹¹¹² <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/727102/> ; he was reprimanded as a result.

¹¹¹³ <https://www.now14.co.il/%D7%A1%D7%A7%D7%A8-%D7%A6%D7%A9%D7%A8-%D7%AA%D7%A9%D7%A-%D7%A4%D7%A0%D7%A9-%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.¹¹¹⁴ A poll from March-April revealed that 50% of Israeli Jews thought that Israel should govern the Gaza Strip after the war.¹¹¹⁵

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”.¹¹¹⁶ In early March, Jewish activists were able to briefly enter the Gaza Strip in an attempt to build a settlement there.¹¹¹⁷ 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.¹¹¹⁸ 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.¹¹¹⁹ 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”.¹¹²⁰

Inside the Gaza Strip, IDF soldiers appear to have constructed “the first synagogue in Khan Younis”,¹¹²¹ another synagogue there,¹¹²² 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).¹¹²³ One soldier filmed himself spray painting the Temple in Jerusalem on the ruins of a destroyed mosque in Gaza.¹¹²⁴ 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.¹¹²⁵ 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.¹¹²⁶ 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.¹¹²⁷ Many of these initiatives, it seems,

¹¹¹⁴ <https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/swords-of-iron-14/> ; <https://ippi.org.il/en/%D7%A1%D7%A7%D7%A8-%D7%97%D7%93%D7%A9-%D7%94%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%95%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%9C-%D7%94%D7%90%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%A7%D7%90%D7%99-%D7%A2%D7%9C-%D7%9E%D7%A1> ; <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/53666>

¹¹¹⁵ <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/05/30/israeli-views-of-the-israel-hamas-war/>

¹¹¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760758994350588388>

¹¹¹⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ruoner3a> ; <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-settlers-gaza-outpost-erez-crossing/>

¹¹¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/VerminusM/status/1774080556701245486>

¹¹¹⁹ <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>

¹¹²⁰ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1802435990251848148>

¹¹²¹ <https://twitter.com/yanivkub/status/1742189448006127715>

¹¹²² <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1745979741931282775>

¹¹²³ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1743588216630919271> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750793042850664750> ; <https://twitter.com/KhalilAsslan/status/1753364384800252200> ; <https://x.com/moshebs11/status/1766830282219372906>

¹¹²⁴ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/175666688231988140>

¹¹²⁵ <https://twitter.com/arixegal/status/1747704367145201666>

¹¹²⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1759534834710352030>

¹¹²⁷ <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.¹¹²⁸ 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.¹¹²⁹ A different unit took over a Gazan school, transforming it into its base.¹¹³⁰ In May, a journalist showcased the first military synagogue in the area of Rafah,¹¹³¹ while soldiers from an IDF unit prepared a makeshift sign declaring a new settlement in the Gaza Strip.¹¹³²

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.¹¹³³ 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.¹¹³⁴ 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).¹¹³⁵ In mid May a UN official stated that rebuilding could cost around \$50 billion over two decades.¹¹³⁶ 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.¹¹³⁷ A top UN demining official claimed that simply clearing the debris could take as much as 14 years.¹¹³⁸ 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 uninhabitable, which is itself a crime against humanity.¹¹³⁹

¹¹²⁸ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1771974813491360211>

¹¹²⁹ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1778864079995568598> ;

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

¹¹³⁰ <https://twitter.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1785413134011838765>

¹¹³¹ <https://twitter.com/YakiAdamker/status/1787846143096828303>

¹¹³² https://twitter.com/T_Nachala/status/1786806755374084274

¹¹³³ <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>

¹¹³⁴ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542> ;

https://twitter.com/NRC_MiddleEast/status/17413413431110950

¹¹³⁵ <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/>

¹¹³⁶ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-05-02/rebuilding-gaza-to-cost-50-billion-over-two-decades-un-says>

¹¹³⁷ <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>

¹¹³⁸ <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>

¹¹³⁹ <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.¹¹⁴⁰ 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,¹¹⁴¹ as well as the fights against ISIS in Mosul (2016-7) and Raqqa (2017).¹¹⁴²

Over 60 percent of Gaza's housing units have been destroyed or damaged.¹¹⁴³ As of mid-January experts estimate based on satellite imagery that between 142,900 to 176,900 buildings have been damaged.¹¹⁴⁴ 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).¹¹⁴⁵ By early June, the amount increased to 58.5%.¹¹⁴⁶ Drone videos reveal the extent of the destruction.¹¹⁴⁷ 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.¹¹⁴⁸ Some of the destruction is purposeful, as indicated in videos by IDF troops.¹¹⁴⁹ As a result of the war and destruction, 89% of Gazan workers lost their jobs by December.¹¹⁵⁰ As of April, all staff of at least one hospital have not been paid since October 7.¹¹⁵¹ According to estimates, the GDP of Gaza has decreased by some 80%.¹¹⁵²

¹¹⁴⁰ <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/>

¹¹⁴¹ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-bombs-destruction-death-toll-scope-419488c51f83c85baea22458472a796>

¹¹⁴² <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/14/gaza-war-israel-civilian-deaths-urban-warfare-hamas/>

¹¹⁴³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

¹¹⁴⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2024/jan/30/how-war-destroyed-gazas-neighbourhoods-visual-investigation>

¹¹⁴⁵

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).

¹¹⁴⁶ <https://www.conflict-damage.org/>, accessed June 17 (the number is updated to June 1).

¹¹⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1777786701768708193>

¹¹⁴⁸ <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>

¹¹⁴⁹ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1796232276818424251>

¹¹⁵⁰ <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-032024-Final.pdf>

¹¹⁵¹ https://www.democracynow.org/2024/4/11/surgeons_in_gaza

¹¹⁵² <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,¹¹⁵³ but also a long list of cultural institutions,¹¹⁵⁴ historical and archaeological sites,¹¹⁵⁵ dozens of governmental buildings (including the parliament¹¹⁵⁶ and the main courthouse)¹¹⁵⁷, religious buildings (over 233 mosques and 3 churches¹¹⁵⁸), 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),¹¹⁵⁹ hospitals,¹¹⁶⁰ educational facilities (88% of school buildings sustained some level of damage; 13 public libraries were destroyed or damaged),¹¹⁶¹ archives,¹¹⁶² and UN offices.¹¹⁶³ Already in early December, Israeli attacks destroyed or damaged more than 100 heritage sites, including buildings from Gaza's medieval, Byzantine and Roman periods¹¹⁶⁴ (by mid April the number rose to 195 such sites).¹¹⁶⁵ 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).¹¹⁶⁶ 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.¹¹⁶⁷ Certain

¹¹⁵³ <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/> ; <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1790901748346867875> ; https://x.com/JalalAK_jojo/status/1797296916763418747

¹¹⁵⁴ E.g. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israeli-army-says-it-struck-islamic-university-of-gaza/3015542>

¹¹⁵⁵ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-26/ty-article-magazine/.premium/bombing-historical-sites-in-gaza-israel-is-destroying-everything-beautiful/0000018c-a565-df1f-a7bf-b7e53e8e0000>; <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2023/12/22/gaza-city-archives-among-heritage-sites-destroyed-in-israel-hamas-war> ; <https://www.unesco.org/en/gaza/assessment> ; <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1766458940118769799>

¹¹⁵⁶ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-a528542>

¹¹⁵⁷ <https://www.newarab.com/news/israel-destroys-gaza-courthouse-dozens-govt-buildings>

¹¹⁵⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-192>

¹¹⁵⁹ <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>

¹¹⁶⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1760766861279391872>

¹¹⁶¹ <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>

¹¹⁶² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCNftkL7cx4>

¹¹⁶³ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771195504883339683>

¹¹⁶⁴ <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>

¹¹⁶⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>

¹¹⁶⁶ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240122-israel-army-displays-artefacts-stolen-from-gaza-in-the-knesset/> ; <https://twitter.com/EmekShavehHeb/status/1749030636529008651>

¹¹⁶⁷ <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.¹¹⁶⁸ 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.¹¹⁶⁹ An alternative is to rent half destroyed and burnt apartments. One such apartment in Khan Younis cost \$330/month.¹¹⁷⁰

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.¹¹⁷¹ Some 88% of all school buildings have sustained damage.¹¹⁷² 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.¹¹⁷³ Using an ATM or attempting to get access to one's money through money changers have high commissions (e.g. 17%).¹¹⁷⁴ At least 16 cemeteries have been desecrated by the IDF, often by bulldozing.¹¹⁷⁵ One video shows a bulldozer driving within a cemetery,¹¹⁷⁶ while another shows the results of such an operation, with corpses left scattered across the landscape.¹¹⁷⁷ The IDF has also bulldozed burial sites at Nasser hospital.¹¹⁷⁸ The IDF further bulldozed broad areas in the Gaza Strip.¹¹⁷⁹ An online video depicts the torching of the Shujjaiya neighborhood in a military operation.¹¹⁸⁰ Satellite images reveal the massive extent of destruction of Khan Younis.¹¹⁸¹ 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".¹¹⁸²

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".¹¹⁸³ This buffer

¹¹⁶⁸ <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>

¹¹⁶⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-economy.html>

¹¹⁷⁰ <https://x.com/lamIbrahim21/status/1797521016702550496>

¹¹⁷¹ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/14e309cd34e04e40b90eb19afa7b5d15-0280012024/original/Gaza-Interim-Damage-Assessment-032924-Final.pdf>

¹¹⁷² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

¹¹⁷³ <https://twitter.com/ryangrim/status/1774422433736393207>

¹¹⁷⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-economy.html>

¹¹⁷⁵ <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>

¹¹⁷⁶ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771125186370101561>

¹¹⁷⁷ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1743386378606412188>

¹¹⁷⁸ <https://news.sky.com/story/israel-bulldozed-mass-graves-at-gaza-hospital-sky-news-analysis-shows-13121638>

¹¹⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1750443193575886945>

¹¹⁸⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1767698980127838474>

¹¹⁸¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-14/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-3bab-db12-agef-fbfb627d0000>

¹¹⁸² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/22/unicef-official-utter-annihilation-gaza>

¹¹⁸³ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1758376261628436523>

zone will take over 16% of the territory of the Gaza Strip.¹¹⁸⁴ 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".¹¹⁸⁵ 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.¹¹⁸⁶ In early March, its construction was completed,¹¹⁸⁷ and it enables rapid movement and will be held by Israel for "at least another year" according to the IDF.¹¹⁸⁸ At least 750 buildings have been destroyed to create a buffer zone on both sides of the road.¹¹⁸⁹ 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.¹¹⁹⁰

The destruction in Gaza has resulted in the displacement of some 75 percent of Gaza's population.¹¹⁹¹ An investigation of Israel's evacuation orders to Gazans revealed numerous unclarities and inconsistencies within the IDF's official orders.¹¹⁹² This included, for example, five different geographical definitions of the al-Mawasi "safe zone", which was itself bombed and invaded by IDF ground troops.¹¹⁹³ 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.¹¹⁹⁴ Some of the evacuation orders were given online during periods of full communication outages.¹¹⁹⁵ Already by early February, 67% of the Gaza Strip's area was under

¹¹⁸⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-28/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018d-9cc9-df62-a3fd-9ecdb8420000> ; <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-hamas-war-buffer-zone-explained-2a7347af> ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/135417/>

¹¹⁸⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/widespread-destruction-israeli-defence-forces-civilian-infrastructure-gaza>

¹¹⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/YairWallach/status/1759572148559962424>

¹¹⁸⁷ <https://news.sky.com/story/israel-completes-construction-of-road-which-cuts-across-gaza-strip-13089556>

¹¹⁸⁸ 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>

¹¹⁸⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/17/gaza-israel-netzarim-corridor-war-hamas/>

¹¹⁹⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/17/gaza-israel-netzarim-corridor-war-hamas/> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-04-18/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-f03c-d240-a19f-f43f6da50000> ; <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1795129920902873557> ; <https://inews.co.uk/news/world/israel-gaza-superhighway-watchtower-post-war-plans-3090909>

¹¹⁹¹ <https://twitter.com/UNHumanRights/status/1742863747683668418> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-12-june-2024>

¹¹⁹² 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>

¹¹⁹³ <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.

¹¹⁹⁴ <https://twitter.com/NBCNightlyNews/status/178400112124932600>

¹¹⁹⁵ https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Humanitarian-Violence_Report_FA.pdf (e.g. p. 28)

evacuation orders.¹¹⁹⁶ As a result of these repeated orders and the general overcrowdedness of the Strip, many Palestinians have been displaced several times.¹¹⁹⁷

¹¹⁹⁶ https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/israel-s-evacuation-covers-67-of-gaza-leaves-palestinians-crammed-124020600748_1.html

¹¹⁹⁷ <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-ברפיח-מידור-ותושבים-בורחים-למרכז> ; 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:*¹¹⁹⁸ March 9, 2025

On October 7, 2023 Hamas and several other Palestinian militant groups captured 251 hostages and took them to the Gaza Strip,¹¹⁹⁹ where two Israeli civilian hostages and two corpses of IDF soldiers had been held since 2014 and 2015.¹²⁰⁰ The hostages included Israeli citizens, Israeli soldiers, foreign workers who came to Israel and other foreigners.¹²⁰¹ More than half had foreign passports, from 25 countries.¹²⁰² Some of the hostages were captured alive, of whom some were injured, and some were already dead.¹²⁰³ Hamas' official narrative states that taking Israeli soldiers as hostages/prisoners of war was central to their plans on October 7.¹²⁰⁴ 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".¹²⁰⁵ 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.¹²⁰⁶ Accordingly, hostage-taking was one of the charges the ICC advanced against three Hamas leaders.¹²⁰⁷

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

¹¹⁹⁸ I thank Iris Agmon and two anonymous readers for their detailed comments on drafts leading to the March 2025 version of this section.

¹¹⁹⁹ 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>

¹²⁰⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67165002>

¹²⁰¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/more-than-half-hamas-hostages-have-foreign-nationality-israel-2023-10-25/>

¹²⁰² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/more-than-half-hamas-hostages-have-foreign-nationality-israel-2023-10-25/>

¹²⁰³ For example: <https://www.makorrishon.co.il/news/782103/>

¹²⁰⁴ 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).

¹²⁰⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65OXS7ymafl&rco=1> (3:40);

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

¹²⁰⁶ <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=65OXS7ymafl&rco=1>

¹²⁰⁷ 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.¹²⁰⁸ 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.¹²⁰⁹

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.¹²¹⁰ 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.¹²¹¹

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.¹²¹²

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.¹²¹³ 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.¹²¹⁴ The return of the hostages remained a proclaimed war goal by mid-January 2025, leading to the second ceasefire agreement.¹²¹⁵

Evidence from the hostages released during the second ceasefire agreement reveals the harsh conditions in which they were held.¹²¹⁶ Many of these conditions were known to Israeli

¹²⁰⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/18/gilad-shalit-palestine-prisoners-freed>

¹²⁰⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/26/world/middleeast/hamas-sinwar-israel-doctor-prison-swap.html>

¹²¹⁰ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/newstv/p-11894/s1/571854/> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hjgk45hzt>

¹²¹¹ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/newstv/p-11894/s1/571854/> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hjgk45hzt>

¹²¹² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hjok5jzqp> ; <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3637685> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/huiffsup>

¹²¹³ <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>

¹²¹⁴ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/588169/>

¹²¹⁵ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-return-of-the-hostages-a-war-goal-we-wont-let-up-until-its-completed/

¹²¹⁶ 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,¹²¹⁷ also based on the experiences of hostages released in the first deal.¹²¹⁸ Some hostages were held underground for most of their time in Gaza (some 500 days).¹²¹⁹ One noted that he took a shower only once every several months and was barefoot most of the time.¹²²⁰ Another noted that he underwent a medical operation without anesthesia.¹²²¹ One said his legs remained in chains for over a year.¹²²² Some hostages were moved frequently – one reported 33 such moves between places in Gaza.¹²²³ Some reported physical and psychological torture.¹²²⁴ Many reported the lack of food,¹²²⁵ although some hostages received additional food before their release.¹²²⁶ Many reported the danger they experienced from Israeli attacks.¹²²⁷ 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.¹²²⁸ 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.¹²²⁹

Despite government proclamations otherwise, this report argues that freeing the hostages (59 remain in Gaza as of writing¹²³⁰) 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.¹²³¹ 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

¹²¹⁷ https://www.mako.co.il/news-diplomatic/2025_q1/Article-c209c2d9ff90591027.htm

¹²¹⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/siopuoksyg> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkmpy9obkl>

¹²¹⁹ <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/00000195-6ceo-d46d-a3f7-eded98570000>

¹²²⁰ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1171380>

¹²²¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-02-23/ty-article/00000195-33f9-d5d4-adf7-f3ffac310000>

¹²²² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bktsrhocie>

¹²²³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymanrc5yx>

¹²²⁴ <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>

¹²²⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-02-23/ty-article/00000195-33f9-d5d4-adf7-f3ffac310000> ; https://x.com/Uvda_tweet/status/1895220233184665913 ; <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>

¹²²⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bjncumhkje>

¹²²⁷ <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>

¹²²⁸ https://x.com/Uvda_tweet/status/1895214428305735953 ;

<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1888300883655454951>

¹²²⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14254462> . The reduction in food appears to have been the result of the difficulty to reach the hostages for operational reasons.

¹²³⁰ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/hostages-data>

¹²³¹ 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.¹²³² Another hostage was found by himself in a tunnel by military forces in late August 2024.¹²³³ 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.¹²³⁴ A military operation that freed four hostages in June 2024 killed 274 Gazans, many of whom were women and children, and wounded hundreds.¹²³⁵ 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.¹²³⁶

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.¹²³⁷ One source pointed out that early in the war "the hostages simply had no influence on attack policy".¹²³⁸ 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.¹²³⁹ 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.¹²⁴⁰

¹²³² <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-ffcdcbcd0000> ;

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

¹²³³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ryikidoso>; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ryxxr4iic>

¹²³⁴ <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>

¹²³⁵ <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-d084-abef-f7e94fff0000> ; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-pounds-central-gaza-palestinian-death-toll-hostage-rescue-raid-rises-274-2024-06-09/> ; also <https://www.972mag.com/nuseirat-camp-israeli-hostages-massacre-gaza/>

¹²³⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/08/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-hostages.html>

¹²³⁷ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/141114/>

¹²³⁸ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/תוצר-ליווי-ידוע-מראש-הגז-שהרג-חטופים-1/>

¹²³⁹ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-1061467>

¹²⁴⁰ <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.¹²⁴¹ According to Israeli sources by September 2024 the number was at least 26 hostages.¹²⁴² In November 2023, three hostages were killed by gas (carbon monoxide) released by bunker buster bombs the IDF used to target a Hamas commander.¹²⁴³ Three Israeli hostages were killed by IDF forces within Gaza in December 2023 despite waving white flags and calling for help.¹²⁴⁴ In January 2024, a hostage was killed during an attempted rescue operation.¹²⁴⁵ In late February 2024 an Israeli report concluded that at least 10 hostages were killed by the IDF's actions.¹²⁴⁶ 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.¹²⁴⁷ 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.¹²⁴⁸

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.¹²⁴⁹ US intelligence assessments at the time seemed to suggest a similar number.¹²⁵⁰ The number appeared to decrease by late May.¹²⁵¹ By October 2024, the aforementioned military intelligence journalist relayed estimates that only 25-30 hostages were still alive,¹²⁵² yet in November another journalist claimed that 51 hostages were alive.¹²⁵³

¹²⁴¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/08/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-hostages.html>

¹²⁴² <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-ליואי-ידוע-מראש-הגז-שהרג-חטופים-1/>

¹²⁴³ 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-ליואי-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-convinced-15461312>

¹²⁴⁴ <https://www.ft.com/content/2e299603-2fed-4855-9694-9801008c48dc>

¹²⁴⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjzpou17da>

¹²⁴⁶ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/post/revital-host-idf>

¹²⁴⁷ <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>

¹²⁴⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-12-04/ty-article/00000193-91a0-d6ba-afdb-9bbc5eag0000> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ripigeo7kx>

¹²⁴⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/yossimelman/2024-03-26/ty-article/0000018e-7564-d787-a5de-75e616c60000>

¹²⁵⁰ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/hamas-may-not-have-enough-living-hostages-for-cease-fire-deal-61606c66>

¹²⁵¹ <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)

¹²⁵² https://x.com/yossi_melman/status/1844485557990355003

¹²⁵³ <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.¹²⁵⁴ Some were suspected to have been killed directly or indirectly by IDF fire.¹²⁵⁵ 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.¹²⁵⁶ 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).¹²⁵⁷ 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.¹²⁵⁸ There were also indications that the IDF refrained from acting upon information that could have saved the six hostages.¹²⁵⁹ No other hostages or corpses were recovered until early December 2024, when one corpse was recovered.¹²⁶⁰ In early January 2025, two corpses of hostages were recovered¹²⁶¹ near corpses of their captors, suggesting that they were all killed by an IDF attack.¹²⁶² The corpse of an IDF soldier held in Gaza since 2014 was recovered shortly afterwards, just before the second ceasefire.¹²⁶³

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.¹²⁶⁴ IDF commanders acknowledged that the fighting precluded returning the hostages.¹²⁶⁵ 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

¹²⁵⁴ Four in mid-May: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r1p9klsmc>, <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r1jicsi70>; three in late May: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rkhpnsp7r>; five in late July: <https://www.mako.co.il/pzm-soldiers/Article-c8c7be0986e091027.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>

¹²⁵⁵ <https://www.mako.co.il/pzm-soldiers/Article-498964b7abe6191026.htm>; <https://x.com/JackyHugi/status/1825787237054763159>; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ryeugbmsr>; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-08-20/ty-article/.premium/00000191-7037-dabo-agb7-f43f194a0000>

¹²⁵⁶ <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>

¹²⁵⁷ <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/israel-protests-hostage-deal-palestine/>

¹²⁵⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syhlkonnc>

¹²⁵⁹ <https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/036814c74a0e1910/Article-4606a2c9b6e0491026.htm>

¹²⁶⁰ Itay Svirsky, <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hjcihirmyl>

¹²⁶¹ Youssef and Hamza al-Ziyadne <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/s1c3bm2ukg>

¹²⁶² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-01-08/ty-article/.premium/00000194-468d-d354-abff-76af9c7e0000>

¹²⁶³ Oron Shaul, <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-01-19/ty-article/.premium/00000194-7d23-de1b-agbd-7d67f9790000>

¹²⁶⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-06-28/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000190-5aa7-de5e-abdo-fbf704260000>

¹²⁶⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkeh2hfbkl>

number of soldiers who were willing to report for reserve duty.¹²⁶⁶ One of the explicit reasons for refusing to enlist was the failure to release hostages.¹²⁶⁷ 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.¹²⁶⁸ In response, the IDF removed from its rolls those reservists who refused to serve.¹²⁶⁹ 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.¹²⁷⁰ More indications of flagging morale appeared in early March 2025.¹²⁷¹

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.¹²⁷² 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.¹²⁷³ Anonymous sources put the actual numbers at 21-22 living hostages and 37-38 dead.¹²⁷⁴

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.¹²⁷⁵ 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.¹²⁷⁶ 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

¹²⁶⁶ <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/>

¹²⁶⁷ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/idf-droppings/>

¹²⁶⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-10-09/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-4ca8-dfda-ab92-6ded7a8a0000>

¹²⁶⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-15/ty-article/.premium/00000192-902f-d2db-ab97-ddffbfd80000>

¹²⁷⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-01-03/ty-article/.premium/00000194-28b8-ddaf-adb7-6bb89cfb0000>

¹²⁷¹ <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>

¹²⁷² <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1896218617408303170>

¹²⁷³ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1896218617408303170>

¹²⁷⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2025-03-02/ty-article-opinion/.premium/00000195-574f-d636-a3df-7f6f095d0000>

¹²⁷⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/palestinians-israel-military-prisoners-hostage-hamas-soldiers-e75729364f8cob453da272365c16d136>

¹²⁷⁶ <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.¹²⁷⁷ 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.¹²⁷⁸ 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”.¹²⁷⁹ 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 Hamas and trusted its ability to rescue the hostages in daring operations.¹²⁸⁰

In late November 2023, the two sides agreed to a temporary ceasefire and a hostage deal that resulted in the release of 105 hostages.¹²⁸¹ 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.¹²⁸² 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.¹²⁸³ 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.¹²⁸⁴

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

¹²⁷⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2023-10-11/ty-article-opinion/0000018b-1a18-d2fc-a59f-dbige6e10000> ; <https://newmedia.calcalist.co.il/magazine-12-10-23/mo2.html>

¹²⁷⁸ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/Article-1048160>

¹²⁷⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rkijrqbdje> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sycmqdema>

¹²⁸⁰ <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2024/09/israel-gaza-war-biden-netanyahu-peace-negotiations/679581/>

¹²⁸¹ <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2023/12/world/hostage-israel-hamas-deal-dg/>

¹²⁸² <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/>

¹²⁸³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/01/world/middleeast/palestinian-prisoners-released-gaza.html>

¹²⁸⁴ <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.¹²⁸⁵ 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.¹²⁸⁶ 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.¹²⁸⁷ 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.¹²⁸⁸ 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.¹²⁸⁹ This insistence was formally agreed to in the Israeli cabinet.¹²⁹⁰ 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.¹²⁹¹ Subsequent reports revealed that in early July, the differences between the demands of the negotiating sides were small.¹²⁹² 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.¹²⁹³ 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.¹²⁹⁴

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

¹²⁸⁵ 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/>

¹²⁸⁶ 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-1f18083ec658191026.htm ; <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/domestic/internal/dklkf-904243646/>

¹²⁸⁷ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2024_q4/Article-b48c14cc5be5391027.htm

¹²⁸⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14060618> ; <https://x.com/eranetzion/status/1830514863132586170> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/biuhlw3r>

¹²⁸⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/biuhlw3r>

¹²⁹⁰ https://x.com/academic_la/status/1829581501559865555

¹²⁹¹ <https://www.makorrishon.co.il/news/779331/> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bkpo48mnr>

¹²⁹² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14119332>

¹²⁹³ <https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1887919951295696943>

¹²⁹⁴ <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,¹²⁹⁵ 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.¹²⁹⁶ 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.¹²⁹⁷

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.¹²⁹⁸ 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.¹²⁹⁹ 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.¹³⁰⁰ A subsequent investigation concluded that there was no proof that the leaked document could be associated with Sinwar.¹³⁰¹ 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.¹³⁰² 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.¹³⁰³ Netanyahu's wife also cited the *Bild* article when she met with

¹²⁹⁵ <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>

¹²⁹⁶ <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>.

¹²⁹⁷ <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>

¹²⁹⁸ The spokesperson received the document through an IDF reservist,

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syu70ocpmke> . See also: <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/bild-exklusiv-zum-schaudern-das-plant-der-hamas-chef-mit-den-geiseln-66d98503cofd674dd9f5d092>

¹²⁹⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syu70ocpmke> ; original coverage:

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

¹³⁰⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syu70ocpmke> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sicr9npgye>

¹³⁰¹ <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.972mag.com/bild-german-media-netanyahu-bibileaks/>

¹³⁰² For the piece: <https://archive.md/x1nJg> . 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.972mag.com/jewish-chronicle-elon-perry-netanyahu-intelligence/>

¹³⁰³ <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/spoke-starto80924> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sicr9npgye> . See also the slightly earlier statements that fit the content: <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/pm-netanyahu->

families of the hostages.¹³⁰⁴ The spokesperson who leaked the document to the *Bild* was later interrogated and arrested.¹³⁰⁵ The military official who leaked the document to the spokesperson was similarly investigated but received considerable support by coalition Knesset members.¹³⁰⁶ According to the spokesperson, Netanyahu was involved in the leak.¹³⁰⁷ 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.¹³⁰⁸ 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.¹³⁰⁹ 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.¹³¹⁰ Negotiations stopped in November and resumed in December,¹³¹¹ but multiple actors and commentators from all sides appeared to agree that Netanyahu objected to ending the war.¹³¹² 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).¹³¹³

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.¹³¹⁴ 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.¹³¹⁵ 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>

¹³⁰⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14071321>

¹³⁰⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sicr9npqye>

¹³⁰⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bks8o8qikg> ; <https://www.kikar.co.il/israel-news/ari-rosenfeld-court-hearing> ; <https://www.srugim.co.il/1079525-הצד-אין-העז-גולדקנופף-ביקר-את-ארי-רוןנפלד> ; <https://www.inn.co.il/news/658118> ;

https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1169556447868985&id=100044439219465&set=a.513948996763070&locale=ko_KR ;

¹³⁰⁷ <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3717731>

¹³⁰⁸ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/in-recording-netanyahu-pessimistic-on-hostage-deal-israel-looking-for-partial-agreement/

¹³⁰⁹ <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>

¹³¹⁰ <https://x.com/RadmanMoshe/status/1863172477335032102>

¹³¹¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14193739>

¹³¹² <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/syu7oocpmke> ;

<https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1866904405418574122>

¹³¹³ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/poll-plurality-of-israelis-think-reason-for-no-hostage-deal-is-pms-fear-coalition-will-collapse/

¹³¹⁴ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/ben-gvir-says-he-repeatedly-foiled-a-hostage-deal-over-the-last-year-sparking-outcry/

¹³¹⁵ <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”.¹³¹⁶

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.¹³¹⁷ In the deal, Israel was willing to waive several of its formerly defined red lines (such as an Israeli retreat from Philadelphi corridor).¹³¹⁸ 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.¹³¹⁹

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.¹³²⁰ An Israeli document in Hebrew leaked to the public included the core parts of the eventual deal already in May 2024.¹³²¹ Hamas had accepted the final draft before Israel.¹³²²

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.¹³²³ Smotrich had obstructed other deals in Gaza in the past.¹³²⁴ 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.¹³²⁵ During the first stage of the deal, Israel’s Deputy

¹³¹⁶ <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1729567921989419239>

¹³¹⁷ <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.

¹³¹⁸ For example: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14225655> ; https://x.com/academic_la/status/1878889705837842653

¹³¹⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sk3thhlma> ; <https://www.davar.co.il/573055/>

¹³²⁰ <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1880372566298358054>

¹³²¹ <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>

¹³²² <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1878875724561445298>

¹³²³ https://www.mako.co.il/news-politics/2025_q1/Article-b532c4400696491026.htm

¹³²⁴ <https://x.com/AssalRad/status/1887919951295696943>

¹³²⁵ <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.¹³²⁶

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.¹³²⁷ Both sides repeatedly accused the other of violating the ceasefire agreement. Many violations were minor or symbolic, and were often corrected quickly.¹³²⁸ The most substantial violations on Hamas' side included putting up ceremonies for the release of Israeli hostages that humiliated them as well as using the hostages for propaganda purposes.¹³²⁹ Israel retaliated in kind by humiliating the Palestinians it released in different ways.¹³³⁰ 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.¹³³¹ An Israeli commentator counted over 50 such attacks,¹³³² and an NGO recorded at least 16 attacks on civilians during the ceasefire until February 9.¹³³³ At the same time, Hamas allegedly fired a single rocket from the Strip that fell inside the Strip.¹³³⁴

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.¹³³⁵ An anonymous source provided five examples that demonstrate that Israel had no intention to continue to the second stage of the deal.¹³³⁶ Finally, Israel refused to evacuate from the Philadelphi corridor even though it was part of the first stage of the deal.¹³³⁷ Upon the completion of the first stage of the deal in early March 2025 Israel stopped all humanitarian aid to Gaza.¹³³⁸ 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

¹³²⁶ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1889703204868460726>

¹³²⁷ 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=o>

¹³²⁸ 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>

¹³²⁹ <https://www.lbc.co.uk/world-news/netanyahu-delay-release-palestinian-prisoners-hamas/>

¹³³⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hjrfscwckg> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skihrwxkje>

¹³³¹ <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>

¹³³² <https://x.com/AirFreelance/status/1896165562562310237>

¹³³³ <https://x.com/ForensicArchi/status/1895539459040391643> ; https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025.02.25_FA_Ceasefire_Report.pdf

¹³³⁴ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-says-it-is-striking-source-of-rocket-launch-in-southern-gaza-that-fell-in-strip/

¹³³⁵ <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>

¹³³⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14261639>

¹³³⁷ <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>

¹³³⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2025-03-02/ty-article-live/00000195-5409-d544-a795-dc99af10000?liveBlogItemId=1977840289#1977840289>

the deal than to resume fighting.¹³³⁹ A poll among Israelis from February 2025 found that 73 percent of Israelis wanted to continue to the second stage of the deal.¹³⁴⁰ Another poll in early March found that only 9 percent preferred to resume fighting.¹³⁴¹

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 7.¹³⁴² Already during the winter of 2023, a propaganda array appeared to support the government by attacking hostages' families online, sometimes leading to violence.¹³⁴³ As early as March 2024, several government members scorned the hostages' family members.¹³⁴⁴ In May, coalition Knesset members ramped up their explicit attacks against the hostages' families,¹³⁴⁵ while police and government supporters acted with violence and scorn against them in the streets.¹³⁴⁶ Additional events, including counter-demonstrations against the hostages' families and vandalism, took place in subsequent months.¹³⁴⁷ 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.¹³⁴⁸ He also reportedly told families that the government's moves were driven by polling.¹³⁴⁹

¹³³⁹ <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-hamas-in-attempt-to-sabotage-them/

¹³⁴⁰ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/58604> ; also: <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/article-1174561>

¹³⁴¹ https://x.com/kann_news/status/1896633246408142994

¹³⁴² <https://www.mako.co.il/news-money/tech12/Article-457a7b32ff48d81026.htm>

¹³⁴³ <https://www.themarker.com/captain-internet/2024-02-12/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-gd76-d92c-aged-ffff9ca60000> ; <https://www.themarker.com/magazine/2024-01-07/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-bfe2-d3e0-abac-ffeb2bb40000>

¹³⁴⁴ <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>

¹³⁴⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hk000u9uma>

¹³⁴⁶ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/local/article/15767757> ; <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/local/article/15775483>

¹³⁴⁷ 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.

¹³⁴⁸ <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/sju8wnino> ; <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/Article-1103425>

¹³⁴⁹ <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.¹³⁵⁰ 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.¹³⁵¹ In parallel, hostage families experienced increasing threats of death and violence, which were generally perceived to emanate from government supporters.¹³⁵² 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.¹³⁵³ Eggs were thrown at other representatives of hostages outside another formal Likud event.¹³⁵⁴ Hostage relatives were also attacked regularly on an Israeli TV channel.¹³⁵⁵

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.¹³⁵⁶ 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.¹³⁵⁷ A different group of about 100 rabbis publicly rejected the deal.¹³⁵⁸ 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.¹³⁵⁹ An Israeli TV channel broadcast an interview with an Israeli who called to destroy everyone in Gaza, "including our hostages".¹³⁶⁰ 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.¹³⁶¹ 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.¹³⁶² When released hostage Eli Sharabi explicitly linked the conditions he experienced to Ben Gvir's statements about the

¹³⁵⁰ <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>

¹³⁵¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skvlxniao>

¹³⁵² <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hy115tj7ca>

¹³⁵³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bykbzfxac>

¹³⁵⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/dailynews/2024-09-25/ty-article-live/00000192-25fd-d1f6-a596-6dfdb2bf0000?liveBlogItemId=1815058734#1815058734>

¹³⁵⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/28/magazine/einav-zangauker-hamas-hostages-netanyahu.html>

¹³⁵⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rk557bc5ke>

¹³⁵⁷ <https://ladaat.co/archives/81505>

¹³⁵⁸ <https://www.inn.co.il/news/658660>

¹³⁵⁹ <https://www.emess.co.il/radio/1662956> ; <https://hm-news.co.il/535493/>

¹³⁶⁰ <https://x.com/DvirKariv/status/189110578812248227>

¹³⁶¹ <https://x.com/FakeReporter/status/1886102873848557818>

¹³⁶² <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.¹³⁶³

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",¹³⁶⁴ while others left the meeting in outrage.¹³⁶⁵ A brother of an Israeli hostage killed by the IDF threatened Israeli Defense Minister by stating that he would haunt him in his sleep.¹³⁶⁶ 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".¹³⁶⁷

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.¹³⁶⁸ Similar feelings were expressed within Israel's security apparatus.¹³⁶⁹ In late March some of the hostages' family members publicly blamed Israel's Prime Minister for continuously postponing a deal to release the hostages.¹³⁷⁰ 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.¹³⁷¹ As early as March 2024, some family members stated that Netanyahu's conduct regarding the hostages amounted to "a crime".¹³⁷² 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.¹³⁷³ A former spokesperson for the hostage families agreed that Israel's Prime Minister was preventing a deal due to personal political reasons.¹³⁷⁴ Several domestic and foreign

¹³⁶³ <https://x.com/danielpet4/status/1895892543331844277>

¹³⁶⁴ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/06/middleeast/leaked-audio-of-heated-meeting-reveals-hostages-fury-at-netanyahu/index.html>

¹³⁶⁵ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/chaos-and-yelling-freed-hostages-family-members-clash-with-netanyahu-in-meeting>.

¹³⁶⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2023/12/21/israel-hamas-war-live-global-condemnation-as-gaza-death-toll-hits-20000?update=2572293>

¹³⁶⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/h1qvood1fr>

¹³⁶⁸ <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/politics/security/sqpwy-903972705/>

¹³⁶⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/yossimelman/2024-03-26/ty-article/0000018e-7564-d787-a5de-75e616c60000>

¹³⁷⁰ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bjebbohyc>

¹³⁷¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/nearly-600-relatives-of-81-hostages-ask-biden-to-pressure-pm-for-deal-to-free-them/>

¹³⁷² <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/28/magazine/einav-zangauker-hamas-hostages-netanyahu.html>

¹³⁷³ https://twitter.com/Uvda_tweet/status/1778496650798833931

¹³⁷⁴ <https://www.zman.co.il/481871/>

sources, including sources from Qatar, said similar things.¹³⁷⁵ Family members of the hostages agreed as well.¹³⁷⁶ In May, families said that the government was sacrificing the hostages.¹³⁷⁷

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.¹³⁷⁸ 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.¹³⁷⁹ 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.¹³⁸⁰ 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.¹³⁸¹ Another source involved in the negotiations claimed that Netanyahu was sabotaging the talks "once again".¹³⁸² 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.¹³⁸³ 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.¹³⁸⁴ 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.¹³⁸⁵

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.¹³⁸⁶ 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.¹³⁸⁷ A father of one of the hostages accused

¹³⁷⁵ <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/yokra13937291> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hyw3njro>

¹³⁷⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/28/magazine/einav-zangauker-hamas-hostages-netanyahu.html>

¹³⁷⁷ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/government-sacrificing-hostages-families-say-after-fraught-hanegbi-meet/>

¹³⁷⁸ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/760712/>

¹³⁷⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-07-26/ty-article/.premium/00000190-ef0e-d8b8-a59a-ef9ea1250000>

¹³⁸⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-08-02/ty-article/.premium/00000191-1442-db7e-a99d-1edabb590000>

¹³⁸¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ryu9auja> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2024-09-14/ty-article-live/00000191-ed46-d2ao-a7f5-ed5e21960000?liveBlogItemId=844356126#844356126>

¹³⁸² <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>

¹³⁸³ <https://x.com/gershonbaskin/status/1829807974006571448>

¹³⁸⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/kolkore/2024-12-30/ty-article/00000194-1396-da22-affeb9661f0000>

¹³⁸⁵ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1154424>

¹³⁸⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/yossimelman/2025-01-22/ty-article-magazine/00000194-8d16-d288-afd4-dd5689b40000>

¹³⁸⁷ https://www.mako.co.il/news-diplomatic/2025_q1/Article-c209c2d9ff90591027.htm

Netanyahu of “playing games” with the return of his son in March 2025.¹³⁸⁸ 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.¹³⁸⁹ Seven released hostages also visited US President Donald Trump in an attempt to expedite the return of the remaining hostages.¹³⁹⁰

Government treatment of hostages’ families and released hostages

Throughout the war, the Israeli government weaponized the hostage issue domestically and internationally but did not support 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 7.¹³⁹¹ 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.¹³⁹² These communication issues were pervasive throughout the war.¹³⁹³ In April 2024, for example, the father of a hostage stated that Netanyahu’s “lack of communication with us is a ‘national embarrassment’”.¹³⁹⁴ On several occasions Israeli media referred to cases in which families attempted to meet with Netanyahu or government officials but were ignored or refused.¹³⁹⁵ 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.¹³⁹⁶ 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”.¹³⁹⁷ Although the IDF discovered that hostages were killed by its own airstrikes in March 2024, it notified their families only in September.¹³⁹⁸ 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.¹³⁹⁹

¹³⁸⁸ <https://www.thetimes.com/world/middle-east/israel-hamas-war/article/stop-playing-games-over-israeli-hostages-families-tell-netanyahu-hqjctjomp>

¹³⁸⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/war-2023/2025-03-07/ty-article-live/00000195-6d91-d690-a39f-7d9dd7f30000?liveBlogItemId=986784789#986784789>

¹³⁹⁰ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/17488516>

¹³⁹¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/no-doubt-netanyahu-preventing-hostage-deal-charges-ex-spokesman-of-families-forum/>

¹³⁹² <https://www.timesofisrael.com/no-doubt-netanyahu-preventing-hostage-deal-charges-ex-spokesman-of-families-forum/>

¹³⁹³ <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>

¹³⁹⁴ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-795842>

¹³⁹⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bky8ovgcc> ; <https://www.gly.co.il/item?id=49406>

¹³⁹⁶ <https://x.com/RotemShtarkman/status/1884346229452157055> ; also <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hqjctjomp>

¹³⁹⁷ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/12/06/middleeast/leaked-audio-of-heated-meeting-reveals-hostages-fury-at-netanyahu/index.html>

¹³⁹⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/08/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-hostages.html>

¹³⁹⁹ <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.¹⁴⁰⁰ 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.¹⁴⁰¹ According to a prominent Israeli MK, Israel had negotiated with Sinwar over a pre-October 7 hostage deal until the summer of 2023.¹⁴⁰²

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.¹⁴⁰³ A Likud MK accused a hostage's brother of using the situation to promote a political agenda.¹⁴⁰⁴ 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.¹⁴⁰⁵ 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.¹⁴⁰⁶

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,¹⁴⁰⁷ the return of a family that became one of the symbols of the war drew much public attention in Israel and abroad.¹⁴⁰⁸ 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 already died in an Israeli airstrike in November 2023,¹⁴⁰⁹ the IDF spokesperson stated that based on forensic evidence they were killed by their captors'

¹⁴⁰⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2015-07-09/ty-article/0000017f-ea02-d639-af7f-ebd7baad0000> ; <https://x.com/ArikW/status/1893223789640450275>

¹⁴⁰¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-says-real-opportunity-for-prisoner-swap-if-israel-gets-serious/>

¹⁴⁰² <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/620173/>

¹⁴⁰³ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/report-sara-netanyahu-accused-hostage-families-of-helping-hamas/

¹⁴⁰⁴ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/government-sacrificing-hostages-families-say-after-fraught-hanegbi-meet/>

¹⁴⁰⁵ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/syxhpvmiyyg> ; <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1876301687197204960> ; <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/144508/>

¹⁴⁰⁶ <https://x.com/N12News/status/1896569248274932215> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkuo3xmoix> ; <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1896826182504767619>

¹⁴⁰⁷ https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2024_q3/Article-106ea7c9e070291026.htm

¹⁴⁰⁸ <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>

¹⁴⁰⁹ <https://x.com/jeremyscahill/status/1892170530209337573>

hands.¹⁴¹⁰ Neither side offered evidence for their claims.¹⁴¹¹ 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.¹⁴¹²

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.¹⁴¹³ At the same time, Yarden and his family publicly declined to have any state representative at the funeral.¹⁴¹⁴ 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.¹⁴¹⁵ Despite these requests, Netanyahu spoke publicly about those details in two separate cases (at a military ceremony and at AIPAC).¹⁴¹⁶ A couple of weeks later, Yarden wrote a letter to Netanyahu asking him to take responsibility for his role in the October 7 fiasco.¹⁴¹⁷

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 the hostages' families.¹⁴¹⁸ 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.¹⁴¹⁹ 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.¹⁴²⁰ Already early in the war, the government appointed a coordinator for the hostages and their families,

¹⁴¹⁰ <https://www.tiktok.com/@13newsil/video/7473877029788814600> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-02-21/ty-article/.premium/00000195-28da-d293-a1d5-eeef81ab0000> ; <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>

¹⁴¹¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/08/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-gaza-hostages.html>

¹⁴¹² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-02-27/ty-article/.premium/00000195-4343-de32-ad9d-73d7229a0000>

¹⁴¹³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjdzo5d51x> ; <https://x.com/netanyahu/status/1892938637559603683> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/s1qlsf59jl> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymimqf5ye>

¹⁴¹⁴ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/at-bibas-familys-request-no-government-minister-to-attend-funeral-for-shiri-ariel-and-kfir/

¹⁴¹⁵ <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/19cdccc6439fae0a919707ffeoae/pnia.pdf> . Also:

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkfownq9kl>

¹⁴¹⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bioly8sq1x>

¹⁴¹⁷ <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/skdgrxiie> ; <https://x.com/NTarnopolsky/status/1896579284992753898>

¹⁴¹⁸ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/508670>

¹⁴¹⁹ <https://x.com/talschneider/status/1825832401030807846>

¹⁴²⁰ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/hkqcmmqi6

who told them that they should not hold demonstrations.¹⁴²¹ 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”.¹⁴²²

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).¹⁴²³ 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.¹⁴²⁴ 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.¹⁴²⁵ The CEO changed as well in July 2024 after the original CEO was accused of sexual harassment and verbal abuse.¹⁴²⁶ The Forum’s strategic advisor changed three times by November 2024 (one left in March after rumors that he was Netanyahu’s associate,¹⁴²⁷ the third left in November 2024¹⁴²⁸). At the same time, the Forum hired an advisor who had worked with Netanyahu and participated in a Likud campaign.¹⁴²⁹ 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.¹⁴³⁰

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.¹⁴³¹ An Israeli TV journalist considered supportive of Netanyahu

¹⁴²¹ <https://www.zman.co.il/481871/popup/>

¹⁴²² https://twitter.com/Bar_ShemUr/status/1757852992215056477

¹⁴²³ 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>

¹⁴²⁴ 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>

¹⁴²⁵ 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/>

¹⁴²⁶ 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.

¹⁴²⁷ Daniel Kogan: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rylgedoca> ;

<https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rjnf2wdap>

¹⁴²⁸ Lior Horev: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-11-27/ty-article/00000193-6d1d-d7d8-adbb-fd5db6e00000> ; 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/>

¹⁴²⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-11-27/ty-article/00000193-6d1d-d7d8-adbb-fd5db6e00000>

¹⁴³⁰ <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/politics/politics/y4nlr-904150478/> ; <https://www.zman.co.il/213246/>

¹⁴³¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bikutcon6>

implied 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.¹⁴³² 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.

¹⁴³² <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.¹⁴³³ 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).¹⁴³⁴ About 4,000 Palestinians have been displaced in the West Bank in 2023,¹⁴³⁵ and 2,155 have been displaced since October 7 because of the destruction of their homes.¹⁴³⁶ Jewish settlers have killed several Palestinians, and have wounded, terrorized and abused others.¹⁴³⁷ Settlers conducted periodic larger rampages against Palestinian villages as well.¹⁴³⁸ 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.¹⁴³⁹ 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.¹⁴⁴⁰ In late May the IDF announced it would provide rifles to settlers who are not part of the territorial defense units.¹⁴⁴¹

A total of 521 Palestinians have been killed between October 7 and the time of writing.¹⁴⁴² 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

¹⁴³³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/magazine/israel-west-bank-settler-violence-impunity.html>

¹⁴³⁴ <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> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-30/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018f-1068-d97f-abcf-fce987090000> (18)

¹⁴³⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/about-4000-palestinians-displaced-west-bank-2023>

¹⁴³⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-178-west-bank>

¹⁴³⁷ 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>

¹⁴³⁸ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-hamas-west-bank-war-f85997a95d5579159ffe83d2c0cb988e> ; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-west-bank-7e75e1ef8f5307946d24f8b9a190fd66> ; <https://twitter.com/AlonLeeGreen/status/1779136328480805197>

¹⁴³⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/yedioth/article/yokra13889978>

¹⁴⁴⁰ <https://x.com/btselem/status/1793384580046565608> ; <https://x.com/nurityohanan/status/1798226333186871622> ; <https://x.com/QudsNen/status/1801295354840629385>

¹⁴⁴¹ <https://x.com/tzvisuccot/status/1796110479816818955>

¹⁴⁴² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-178-west-bank>

Palestinian rioters, killing five in early-mid October.¹⁴⁴³ Since October 7, 5,200 Palestinians have been injured in the West Bank.¹⁴⁴⁴ 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.¹⁴⁴⁵ In late March the IDF was still blocking the entrances to West Bank villages, forcing residents to make long detours to enter or leave.¹⁴⁴⁶ 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.¹⁴⁴⁷ In some cases, Israel has also prevented Palestinians from working their agricultural lands for many months.¹⁴⁴⁸

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,¹⁴⁴⁹ including the single largest land seizure since at least 1993.¹⁴⁵⁰ 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.¹⁴⁵¹ 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.¹⁴⁵²

Evidence for the killing of Palestinians

Several videos depict the killing of unarmed and unthreatening Palestinians.¹⁴⁵³ When an Israeli police officer shot and killed a 12 year old boy who launched a firework, Israel's National

¹⁴⁴³ <https://twitter.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1754079208643420204>

¹⁴⁴⁴ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-178-west-bank>

¹⁴⁴⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/video/series/in-depth-features/visual-evidence-shows-illegal-settler-construction-in-west-bank-surgings/BF11225B-45A7-430A-A39C-48336B5B8286>

¹⁴⁴⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-19/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-50c4-dca4-ad8e-f4fe5f020000>

¹⁴⁴⁷ <https://news.sky.com/story/the-war-may-be-in-gaza-but-its-effects-can-mean-starvation-in-the-west-bank-13101929>

¹⁴⁴⁸ <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>

¹⁴⁴⁹ <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>

¹⁴⁵⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/22/israel-largest-west-bank-settlement-blinken-visit/>

¹⁴⁵¹ <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>

¹⁴⁵² <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%20מסמך%20חומש%20מרחב%20ההתנתקות%20חוק%20ביטול%20דבר%20צו%20.pdf>

¹⁴⁵³ <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.¹⁴⁵⁴ 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.¹⁴⁵⁵ 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.¹⁴⁵⁶ Two Palestinian herders were killed by settlers when IDF soldiers were present but did not get involved.¹⁴⁵⁷

Abuse, humiliation and detainment of Palestinians

Multiple videos present Israeli troops abusing and humiliating Palestinians,¹⁴⁵⁸ hitting or firing at them,¹⁴⁵⁹ parading them half-naked in the streets,¹⁴⁶⁰ destroying their property¹⁴⁶¹ or public infrastructure,¹⁴⁶² blocking roads,¹⁴⁶³ defacing Palestinian symbols,¹⁴⁶⁴ and calling for another

¹⁴⁵⁴ <https://twitter.com/Kahlissee/status/1767976353532383504> ;

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

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

¹⁴⁵⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-forces-kill-3-gunmen-west-bank-hospital-army-says-2024-01-30/>

¹⁴⁵⁶ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hym4dpyot> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hk9p5nact> ;

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

¹⁴⁵⁷ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/133998/>

¹⁴⁵⁸ <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>

¹⁴⁵⁹ <https://twitter.com/AdameMedia/status/1761508331598848224> ;

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

¹⁴⁶⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1787112612880105776>

¹⁴⁶¹ <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>

¹⁴⁶² <https://twitter.com/QudsNen/status/1751125745701671025>

¹⁴⁶³ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1782135295204262065>

¹⁴⁶⁴ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1768010284860416327>

Nakba.¹⁴⁶⁵ One soldier shared an image in which he claimed to have stolen a bag full of money notes.¹⁴⁶⁶ Another shows a soldier celebrating his birthday(?) with balloons while a handcuffed and blindfolded Palestinian is lying on the ground behind him.¹⁴⁶⁷ 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.¹⁴⁶⁸ As in Gaza, here too there are video clips humiliating and dehumanizing Palestinians,¹⁴⁶⁹ describing them as Amalek,¹⁴⁷⁰ as well as images of soldiers posing with lingerie inside Palestinian houses they raided.¹⁴⁷¹ There are several video clips of settler youths confronting and attacking Palestinians,¹⁴⁷² as well as settlers dressed up as soldiers who detain Palestinians, including on their own lands.¹⁴⁷³ Yet other videos show settlers stealing Palestinian property,¹⁴⁷⁴ or soldiers who do not intervene when settlers harm Palestinian civilians and their property.¹⁴⁷⁵ 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.¹⁴⁷⁶

More Palestinians, including children,¹⁴⁷⁷ 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.¹⁴⁷⁸ 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).¹⁴⁷⁹ At that moment, Israel held under arrest or detention (i.e. before their conviction) 7,016 people, of which 4,299

¹⁴⁶⁵ <https://x.com/btselem/status/1793384580046565608>

¹⁴⁶⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1756695309239939117>

¹⁴⁶⁷ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1758619734809928130>

¹⁴⁶⁸ <https://twitter.com/TameeOliveFern/status/1752615765092815206>

¹⁴⁶⁹ <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> ;

¹⁴⁷⁰ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1790921496421937522>

¹⁴⁷¹ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1782837821432082700>

¹⁴⁷² <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1769277315941339483> ;

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

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

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

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

<https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1785895596198400359> ;

<https://twitter.com/Issaamro/status/1790820035201466412>

¹⁴⁷³ <https://twitter.com/masafering/status/1769453241929011501>

¹⁴⁷⁴ <https://twitter.com/Mistaclim/status/1753732272816029757> ;

<https://x.com/Mistaclim/status/1794071598372172056>

¹⁴⁷⁵ https://twitter.com/Yesh_Din/status/1779501559379849229

¹⁴⁷⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-05-20/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-9268-d212-abcf-d66d978d0000>

¹⁴⁷⁷ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1775555921151693151>

¹⁴⁷⁸ <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/>

¹⁴⁷⁹ <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>

(over 60%) were held without a trial or an indictment (the numbers do not include Gazans).¹⁴⁸⁰

Many descriptions of released detainees refer to constant abuse by their prison staff.¹⁴⁸¹ 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.¹⁴⁸² 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.¹⁴⁸³ Online social media content includes more evidence.¹⁴⁸⁴ 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.¹⁴⁸⁵

¹⁴⁸⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-05-28/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018f-beff-dob7-abdf-feff4a90000>

¹⁴⁸¹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/2023-12-30/ty-article/0000018c-b51e-d45c-a98e-bf5e7a340000> ; <https://twitter.com/RZabaneh/status/1784223150156181904>

¹⁴⁸² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-02/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-c6e5-d6c4-ab8d-e7f561840000>

¹⁴⁸³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/twilightzone/2024-03-22/ty-article/.premium/0000018c-62b4-d541-a78e-ffff79470000>

¹⁴⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1761463527489900685> ; <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1801267126956618150>

¹⁴⁸⁵ <https://x.com/QudsNen/status/1801743540436771252> ; <https://x.com/Palestinecapti1/status/1801781895413555571>

The media, propaganda and the war (disclaimer)¹⁴⁸⁶

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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”).¹⁴⁸⁷

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.¹⁴⁸⁸ 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.¹⁴⁸⁹ 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.¹⁴⁹⁰ 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.¹⁴⁹¹ 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.¹⁴⁹² When the censor intervenes in an article, the media outlet cannot convey that information to readers (for example by blacklining excised content).¹⁴⁹³ Israel’s Prime Minister has pressured the chief censor of the IDF to intervene in additional cases, including cases without a security justification.¹⁴⁹⁴ In a similar case, a website without formal affiliation that was created by the

¹⁴⁸⁶ 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.

¹⁴⁸⁷ https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/התעמולה_הישראלית ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/272146>

¹⁴⁸⁸ <https://lib.civics.cet.ac.il/pages/item.asp?item=9260&kwd=2079>

¹⁴⁸⁹ <https://lib.civics.cet.ac.il/pages/item.asp?item=9260&kwd=2079>

¹⁴⁹⁰ <https://firstdraftnews.org/long-form-article/understanding-information-disorder/>

¹⁴⁹¹ <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/07/gaza-israel-netanyahu-propaganda-lies-palestinians/>

¹⁴⁹² See for example: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2022-07-26/ty-article-opinion/00000182-39f9-d145-a3df-7dfb21db0000>

¹⁴⁹³ <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-adeb-ecfb884f0000>

¹⁴⁹⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-11-29/ty-article/.highlight/0000018c-iadf-d4e4-a1df-3edf52340000>

Israeli Ministry of Hasbara and aimed at international consumption had been blocked from access within Israel.¹⁴⁹⁵

The state of Israel has been buying positive coverage in international media since 2018, claiming that many other countries have been doing the same.¹⁴⁹⁶ A long list of local politicians and government offices have been doing the same in national media.¹⁴⁹⁷

Government offices have sometimes used contracts that allow them to veto the content of the positive coverage that they had bought.¹⁴⁹⁸ 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.¹⁴⁹⁹ 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).¹⁵⁰⁰ The Israeli government had worked with hundreds of these organizations and likely maintains these connections.¹⁵⁰¹ 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.¹⁵⁰² In January 2024, Israel acquired a technological system for mass influence that can create content suitable for online influence operations and began using it.¹⁵⁰³ In addition to state-led efforts, several start-up companies have attempted to influence discourse on their own both before and during the war.¹⁵⁰⁴

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),

¹⁴⁹⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-04-02/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018e-9ef0-d9c2-afbe-bef6abb00000> ; <https://saturday-october-seven.com/>

¹⁴⁹⁶ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/281581>

¹⁴⁹⁷ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/281581> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/268428> ; many examples in <https://shakuf.co.il/books/critical-reading.html>

¹⁴⁹⁸ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/281581>

¹⁴⁹⁹ <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/>

¹⁵⁰⁰ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/272146>

¹⁵⁰¹ <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_ZCFAxVhElkFHcatCNwQFnoECBEQAAQ&usq=AOvVaw2FYnzeiNfDxOLulPUg-2rX (p. 8).

¹⁵⁰² <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>

¹⁵⁰³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-01-16/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018c-e8c1-d765-ab9d-f8fd29800000>

¹⁵⁰⁴ <https://www.israelhayom.com/opinions/can-ai-help-hasbara/> ; <https://wordsofiron.com/> ; <https://www.calcalistech.com/ctechnews/article/rkrug57na>

not providing key context to current events (e.g. the situation pre-Oct. 7), editing out controversial material (e.g. references to genocide and starvation), adding disclaimers about the un-verifiable nature of even personal statements (e.g. the deaths of interviewees' extended family members), removal of names and contact information of Palestinian speakers from internal databases, and ignoring genocidal statements by Israeli officials.¹⁵⁰⁵ This was at least partially related to complaint campaigns by right-wing lobby groups, which produced a chilling effect.¹⁵⁰⁶ 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.¹⁵⁰⁷

Following a pattern from earlier wars in Gaza,¹⁵⁰⁸ the current war has been enabled and facilitated by massive media efforts¹⁵⁰⁹ to shape discourse in Israel as well as in the West – in countries such as the United States, Canada,¹⁵¹⁰ the United Kingdom and Germany¹⁵¹¹. 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”.¹⁵¹² 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.¹⁵¹³ 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.¹⁵¹⁴ 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

¹⁵⁰⁵ <https://breachmedia.ca/cbc-whitewashed-israels-crimes-gaza-firsthand/>

¹⁵⁰⁶ <https://breachmedia.ca/cbc-whitewashed-israels-crimes-gaza-firsthand/>

¹⁵⁰⁷ <https://www.semafor.com/article/11/09/2023/billionaires-discuss-50-million-anti-hamas-media-blitz>

¹⁵⁰⁸ Amer, “War Reporting in the International Press: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Gaza War of 2008-2009”, Ph.D Dissertation (Hamburg, 2015).

¹⁵⁰⁹ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/israel-social-media-twitter-messaging-david-saranga-1234874381/>

¹⁵¹⁰ <https://breachmedia.ca/cbc-whitewashed-israels-crimes-gaza-firsthand/>

¹⁵¹¹ <https://adamtooze.substack.com/p/chartbook-271-reasons-of-state-memory>

¹⁵¹² <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/07/gaza-israel-netanyahu-propaganda-lies-palestinians/> ; also <https://newyorkwarcrimes.com/a-continuous-series-of-insults-to-our-understanding>

¹⁵¹³ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/03/11/israel-gaza-hamas-netanyahu-warfare-misinformation/>

¹⁵¹⁴ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/israel-social-media-twitter-messaging-david-saranga-1234874381/>

images they contained.¹⁵¹⁵ A different review found that in less than two weeks, Israel targeted audiences in Western Europe in particular with some 88 ads, spending \$7.1 million to reach nearly a billion impressions.¹⁵¹⁶ 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.¹⁵¹⁷ In the first month of the war, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' digital team estimated they had reached 2 billion people.¹⁵¹⁸ 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.¹⁵¹⁹ 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).¹⁵²⁰

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.¹⁵²¹ Most Israeli media chose not to inform the public that these stories had been refuted.¹⁵²² 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."¹⁵²³ 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.¹⁵²⁴ The IDF accepted and claimed to have verified evidence of beheaded babies, later found out to be false.¹⁵²⁵ 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

¹⁵¹⁵ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israel-social-media-opinion-hamas-war/>

¹⁵¹⁶ <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/>

¹⁵¹⁷ <https://www.eurogamer.net/rovio-blocks-disturbing-pro-israel-ad-found-in-angry-birds-and-other-games>

¹⁵¹⁸ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/israel-social-media-twitter-messaging-david-saranga-1234874381/>

¹⁵¹⁹ <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/12/06/israel-palestinian-advocacy-groups-social-media-spending-00130118>

¹⁵²⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-03-19/ty-article-magazine/.premium/0000018e-4cd5-d26a-afbf-ecd552de0000>; [https://fakereporter.net/pdf/pro-israel influence network report-0324.pdf?v=2](https://fakereporter.net/pdf/pro-israel%20influence%20network%20report-0324.pdf?v=2); <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/technology/israel-campaign-gaza-social-media.html>

¹⁵²¹ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-sexual-violence-zaka-ca7905bf9520b1e646f86d72cdf03244>

¹⁵²² 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

¹⁵²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rq5hTirpLqs>

¹⁵²⁴ <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3623538>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSqQOF48h34>; <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/health/Article-1067610>; investigation here: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/hamas-committed-documented-atrocities-but-a-few-false-stories-feed-the-deniers/0000018c-34f3-da74-afce-b5fbc24f0000>

¹⁵²⁵ <https://twitter.com/i/broadcasts/1MYGNorgigLJw>; <https://theintercept.com/2024/02/07/gaza-israel-netanyahu-propaganda-lies-palestinians/>

as well.¹⁵²⁶ Israeli officials such as Israel's Minister of Economy continued to repeat these falsified stories in international interviews at least as late as April.¹⁵²⁷

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.¹⁵²⁸ 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).¹⁵²⁹

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.¹⁵³⁰ When Amnesty International claimed war crimes were conducted by both sides in late October, Israel attacked it as antisemitic.¹⁵³¹ 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).¹⁵³² Greta was subsequently removed from the Ministry of Education's materials in Israel.¹⁵³³ Supporters of a ceasefire in Gaza in November were smeared as "pro-Hamas" or "pro-Palestinians" in both Israel and the

¹⁵²⁶ <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).

¹⁵²⁷ <https://twitter.com/waleedshahid/status/1775934807165272158>

¹⁵²⁸ <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/>

¹⁵²⁹ <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/>

¹⁵³⁰ <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1649970> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qoTFxpp7pco> ; <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/opinion/2024/04/10/jewish-faculty-reject-the-weaponization-of-antisemitism/>

¹⁵³¹ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israel-calls-amnesty-international-antisemitic-and-biased-after-it-criticized-war-crimes-by-all-parties/>

¹⁵³² <https://www.dw.com/en/greta-thunberg-faces-backlash-for-pro-palestinian-post/a-67172344>

¹⁵³³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/environment-science/article/biuzeagf6>

US.¹⁵³⁴ 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.¹⁵³⁵ 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.¹⁵³⁶

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”.¹⁵³⁷ To place this harsh criticism in context, Khan was Israel’s preferred candidate for the position back in 2021.¹⁵³⁸ Israel’s Prime Minister also described the issue of warrants as “an antisemitic hate crime”.¹⁵³⁹ 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.¹⁵⁴⁰ 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.¹⁵⁴¹

Limiting information flow from Gaza

¹⁵³⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/skttx8uiba>; <https://theintercept.com/2023/11/09/republican-debate-hamas-gaza-ceasefire/>

¹⁵³⁵ 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-200be1ba4736f1c1f1c13cdaeb65d04>

¹⁵³⁶ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/12/21/metabroken-promises/systemic-censorship-palestine-content-instagram-and>; and for context: <https://www.972mag.com/meta-arabic-palestine-censorship/> .

For more on Meta’s internal censorship of any support for or solidarity with Palestinians:

<https://theintercept.com/2024/05/22/whatsapp-security-vulnerability-meta-israel-palestine/> .

On Israel’s Cyber Unit’s work with social media companies to censor content see:

<https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/10292> ; on the Biden admin working with social media

companies see also: <https://www.kenklippenstein.com/p/biden-admin-working-with-social-media>

¹⁵³⁷ <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/>

¹⁵³⁸ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/uks-karim-khan-elected-next-icc-prosecutor-will-replace-controversial-bensouda/>

¹⁵³⁹ <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>

¹⁵⁴⁰ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/חשיפה-המלחמה-המלוכלכת-של-ישראל-נגד-בית/>;

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/28/israeli-spy-chief-icc-prosecutor-war-crimes-inquiry>

¹⁵⁴¹ 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,¹⁵⁴² and hindering investigations of atrocities within the Strip such as the "flour massacre".¹⁵⁴³ 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.¹⁵⁴⁴ CNN, for example, has admitted that it runs all its Gaza coverage through its Jerusalem bureau, itself monitored by the censor.¹⁵⁴⁵ 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.¹⁵⁴⁶ Already in December, Israeli researchers declared that the media was becoming a propaganda arm of the government.¹⁵⁴⁷ 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).¹⁵⁴⁸ In total, the censors intervened in 31% of the articles sent to it.¹⁵⁴⁹ 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.¹⁵⁵⁰ 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.¹⁵⁵¹

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 have been repressing anti-war protests since the beginning of

¹⁵⁴² <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>

¹⁵⁴³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/17/opinion/gaza-journalists-censorship-israel.html>

¹⁵⁴⁴ <https://theintercept.com/2023/12/23/israel-military-idf-media-censor/>

¹⁵⁴⁵ 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/>

¹⁵⁴⁶ <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>

¹⁵⁴⁷ <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>

¹⁵⁴⁸ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/134881/>

¹⁵⁴⁹ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/134881/>

¹⁵⁵⁰ <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>

¹⁵⁵¹ <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>

the war, often with excessive violence.¹⁵⁵² 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,¹⁵⁵³ 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".¹⁵⁵⁴ 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.¹⁵⁵⁵ 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.¹⁵⁵⁶ The Minister for National Security established a police team to track and remove human rights activists from the West Bank.¹⁵⁵⁷ The police have repeatedly seized and shredded signs with anti-war messages held in "a long list of demonstrations and vigils".¹⁵⁵⁸ 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.¹⁵⁵⁹ The Israeli Channel 12 decided to minimize attention to protests by the families of the Israeli hostages in Gaza against the government.¹⁵⁶⁰ In June it was revealed that an elite police unit was tasked with disrupting anti-government or pro-hostage release protests in Jerusalem.¹⁵⁶¹

Palestinian citizens of Israel were not allowed to protest early during the war with the support of Israel's Supreme Court,¹⁵⁶² a situation that has only partially improved subsequently.¹⁵⁶³ Freedom of speech, particularly among Palestinian citizens of Israel, has been curtailed significantly.¹⁵⁶⁴ 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.¹⁵⁶⁵ Israel has attempted to pressure Palestinian journalists from the West Bank from publishing about the war.¹⁵⁶⁶ In early April Israel passed a law to shut down the operations of the critical channel Al-Jazeera in the country.¹⁵⁶⁷ After some deliberation, the government decided to shut down the channel in early May, sending police to immediately raid some of its local offices.¹⁵⁶⁸ Also in

¹⁵⁵² <https://www.972mag.com/israel-police-repression-protests-gaza/>

¹⁵⁵³ <https://twitter.com/JoshBreiner/status/1772662679225635054>

¹⁵⁵⁴ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/b1pqgh4yr>

¹⁵⁵⁵ <https://twitter.com/OmerArvili/status/1776192429709812033>

¹⁵⁵⁶ <https://twitter.com/RedRevDanny/status/1779844167226609787>

¹⁵⁵⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra13887273>

¹⁵⁵⁸ https://www.acri.org.il/post/_1084 ; also <https://twitter.com/ofercass/status/1783896320933036133>

¹⁵⁵⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkj7dmdvo>

¹⁵⁶⁰ <https://www.themarket.com/blogs/2024-06-06/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-ecfe-dcb4-a38f-fdffd470000?gift=4cc430b6ec7c45b3adafo5ab9bioba52>

¹⁵⁶¹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rkotbkyba>

¹⁵⁶² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/2023-11-16/ty-article/.premium/0000018b-d84e-dffa-adeff-4e97f50000>; <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/>

¹⁵⁶³ For example: <https://x.com/nirhasson/status/1796567421412938129>

¹⁵⁶⁴ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/ryzhcrogo

¹⁵⁶⁵ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/521195>

¹⁵⁶⁶ <https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1774836624280473643>

¹⁵⁶⁷ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-al-jazeera-qatar-hamas-war-gaza-49c2aa4afb3c3boee6ac314b63d80716>; <https://www.ynet.co.il/entertainment/article/r17bidyo>

¹⁵⁶⁸ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rkdg3nhfc#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.¹⁵⁶⁹ In the same month, the University of Haifa forbade a student demonstration against the war in its area,¹⁵⁷⁰ 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.¹⁵⁷¹ 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.¹⁵⁷²

In addition, an Israeli media outlet 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.¹⁵⁷³ 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.¹⁵⁷⁴

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”.¹⁵⁷⁵

¹⁵⁶⁹ <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/> ;

¹⁵⁷⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/2024-05-20/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-91a1-d17a-a9df-91f1247f0000>

¹⁵⁷¹ <https://x.com/rafaelshimunov/status/1795813951940202938> ; <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/rasha-kraiem>

¹⁵⁷² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/gallery-news/2024-06-08/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-f899-df2e-a5df-fefd24c30000>

¹⁵⁷³ <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> ;

¹⁵⁷⁴ <https://www.ha-makom.co.il/idf-pr>

¹⁵⁷⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/magazine/2023-12-28/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018c-aaf0-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.¹⁵⁷⁶ 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.¹⁵⁷⁷ For example, despite Israeli claims to have killed large amounts of Hamas militants (10,000-13,000 as of late February-early March),¹⁵⁷⁸ 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.¹⁵⁷⁹ For several months, the IDF spokesperson presented the IDF's perspective on prime time every day on all Israeli TV channels with little criticism.¹⁵⁸⁰

There is almost no attention in Israeli media to the experiences of civilians in Gaza or the horrors of war.¹⁵⁸¹ Destruction, when showed, is sanitized through images of buildings destroyed from far away.¹⁵⁸² 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.¹⁵⁸³ For example, the dozens of civilian deaths caused by the military operation that released two hostages in February were barely covered in Israeli media.¹⁵⁸⁴ Most Israeli media outlets have 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.¹⁵⁸⁵ The main challenges to dominant Israeli narrative in Hebrew language discourse come from independent media such as +972

¹⁵⁷⁶ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/inside-israel-its-a-very-different-war-628097b2>

¹⁵⁷⁷ <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>

¹⁵⁷⁸ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/defense/article/15395367> ; <https://www.ynet.co.il/blogs/1u8daysofwar/article/sksjxiy9a> ; <https://www.politico.eu/article/israels-netanyahu-says-he-will-defy-bidens-red-line-and-invade-rafah/>

¹⁵⁷⁹ 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>

¹⁵⁸⁰ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-25/ty-article-magazine/.premium/how-israeli-media-became-a-war-time-government-propaganda-arm/0000018c-a0d3-d957-a98f-aed3ea560000>

¹⁵⁸¹ <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>

¹⁵⁸² <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-25/ty-article-magazine/.premium/how-israeli-media-became-a-war-time-government-propaganda-arm/0000018c-a0d3-d957-a98f-aed3ea560000>

¹⁵⁸³ <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/53666>

¹⁵⁸⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-03/ty-article/.highlight/0000018e-a04c-dedo-a18f-e2fc22fc0000>

¹⁵⁸⁵ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-12-25/ty-article-magazine/.premium/how-israeli-media-became-a-war-time-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 resources¹⁵⁸⁶ and are themselves under military censorship¹⁵⁸⁷ as well as NGOs such as B'Tselem and Gisha.¹⁵⁸⁸

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".¹⁵⁸⁹ In this context, Israel has obstructed external official investigations into the Oct. 7 atrocities, for example one led by the UN Human Rights Council,¹⁵⁹⁰ and another that aimed to investigate sexual violence on Oct. 7.¹⁵⁹¹ 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.¹⁵⁹² 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).¹⁵⁹³ An important Israeli journalist has stated that he believes that journalism should be used to bolster Israeli morale during the war.¹⁵⁹⁴ 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.¹⁵⁹⁵

The Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* (considered to be leftist by Israeli standards), for example, waited for five months until it called for a ceasefire,¹⁵⁹⁶ despite overwhelming evidence for the

¹⁵⁸⁶ <https://www.972mag.com/> ; <https://www.the7eye.org.il/>

¹⁵⁸⁷ https://www.democracynow.org/2023/12/1/israel_gaza_war_gospel_artificial_intelligence

¹⁵⁸⁸

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/>

¹⁵⁸⁹ <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/54307>

¹⁵⁹⁰ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/government-forbids-doctors-from-speaking-to-un-group-investigating-oct-7-atrocities/>

¹⁵⁹¹ <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/>

¹⁵⁹² <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/inside-israel-its-a-very-different-war-628097b2>

¹⁵⁹³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2024-03-13/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-38a2-d21d-a3ef-3be6160f0000>

¹⁵⁹⁴ <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-9aec-bfcf6d6d0000>

¹⁵⁹⁵ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/503392>

¹⁵⁹⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2024-03-01/ty-article-opinion/0000018d-f607-da4e-adbf-f6bf17c30000> ; compare to the newspaper's position during the 2014 war in Gaza: <https://www.the7eye.org.il/128234>

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,¹⁵⁹⁷ 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.¹⁵⁹⁸ An important journalist in the newspaper flipped his own position without any admission of his earlier mistake.¹⁵⁹⁹ 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 antisemitic¹⁶⁰⁰ while *Ha'aretz* featured no less than four pieces against him.¹⁶⁰¹ 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'.¹⁶⁰²

Israeli media continued to disseminate claims that had already been debunked. A serious investigative program on Channel 12 broadcast an interview with a senior IDF general who claimed to have seen atrocities that did not happen.¹⁶⁰³ 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.¹⁶⁰⁴ 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.¹⁶⁰⁵ On other occasions, Israeli media casts doubts on evidence that weaken Israel's legitimacy. For example, in late March Channel 11 broadcast a segment under the title "Is there a famine in Gaza?"¹⁶⁰⁶ while the popular news website Ynet uncritically conveyed an official response that

¹⁵⁹⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/editorial-articles/2024-03-27/ty-article-opinion/0000018e-7bc4-d680-aicf-ffc775940000>

¹⁵⁹⁸ <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>

¹⁵⁹⁹ <https://twitter.com/idanlandau/status/1777753047789117499>

¹⁶⁰⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/media/2024-02-26/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-e6ee-d7f4-a3dd-e6ee92270000>

¹⁶⁰¹ <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-eedc00400000>; <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>

¹⁶⁰² Discussion of her speaking in another podcast at:

<https://youtu.be/WHCMVqNOreo?si=PlZXwSpzeJ4boVyR&t=2430>

¹⁶⁰³ <https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/6361323ddea5a810/Article-831cb8cdf6d6b81026.htm>, https://twitter.com/brown_johnbrown/status/1768222848361881615

¹⁶⁰⁴ <https://twitter.com/FakeReporter/status/1761696937256853788>

¹⁶⁰⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-01-21/ty-article/.premium/0000018d-2bb4-daf5-a1bf-aff41ac80000>

¹⁶⁰⁶ 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.¹⁶⁰⁷

American media

In American media, several studies and experts have pointed out that there has been a pervasive bias against Palestinians for a century.¹⁶⁰⁸ 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.¹⁶⁰⁹ The media coverage of the beginning of the war remained strongly pro-Israeli.¹⁶¹⁰ A *Newsweek* editor, for example, called for large parts of Gaza to be flattened to resemble a parking lot.¹⁶¹¹ *The New York Times* supplied direct quotes from Israeli government and military officials four times as much as the equivalent Palestinian quotes.¹⁶¹² In another example, an investigation by *The Guardian* demonstrated that *CNN*’s coverage is heavily biased towards Israel,¹⁶¹³ a critique that surfaced within the channel as well.¹⁶¹⁴ 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.¹⁶¹⁵ A different investigation found a similar effect continuing throughout February in *The New York Times*.¹⁶¹⁶ 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.¹⁶¹⁷ 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.¹⁶¹⁸ Similar editorial guidelines at the global news syndicate AFP were similarly pro-Israeli.¹⁶¹⁹

¹⁶⁰⁷ <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

¹⁶⁰⁸ 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>

¹⁶⁰⁹ <https://www.972mag.com/us-media-palestinians>. The Nation included a higher ratio (10.5%); the New Republic had no pieces authored by Palestinians.

¹⁶¹⁰ <https://www.columnblog.com/p/massacred-vs-left-to-die-documenting>

¹⁶¹¹ https://twitter.com/josh_hammer/status/1711185635229282605

¹⁶¹² <https://newyorkwarcrimes.com/the-times-quotes-israeli-and-american-sources-more-than-3-times-as-much-as-palestinians>

¹⁶¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/feb/04/cnn-staff-pro-israel-bias>

¹⁶¹⁴ <https://theintercept.com/2024/03/01/cnn-christiane-amanpour-israel-gaza-coverage/>

¹⁶¹⁵ <https://theintercept.com/2024/01/09/newspapers-israel-palestine-bias-new-york-times/>

¹⁶¹⁶ <https://newyorkwarcrimes.com/the-times-quotes-israeli-and-american-sources-more-than-3-times-as-much-as-palestinians>

¹⁶¹⁷ <https://fair.org/home/brutal-is-a-word-mostly-reserved-for-palestinian-violence/>

¹⁶¹⁸ <https://theintercept.com/2024/04/15/nyt-israel-gaza-genocide-palestine-coverage/>

¹⁶¹⁹ <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.¹⁶²⁰ An examination of 5 leading media outlets reveals how Palestinians are dehumanized and often reduced to numbers, which are then doubted.¹⁶²¹ 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.¹⁶²² 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).¹⁶²³ 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.¹⁶²⁴

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.¹⁶²⁵ 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.¹⁶²⁶ *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.¹⁶²⁷ 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 interviews¹⁶²⁸ – 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

¹⁶²⁰ <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>

¹⁶²¹ <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>

¹⁶²² <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>

¹⁶²³ <https://www.pewresearch.org/2024/03/21/emotions-news-and-knowledge-about-the-israel-hamas-war/>

¹⁶²⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/opinion/israel-military-aid.html>

¹⁶²⁵ <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/>

¹⁶²⁶ <https://fair.org/home/shielding-us-public-from-israeli-reports-of-friendly-fire-on-october-7/>

¹⁶²⁷ <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/new-york-times-complicit-plausible-genocide>

¹⁶²⁸ <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”.¹⁶²⁹ After its release, independent media as well as *The Intercept* found a long list of fundamental problems with the account.¹⁶³⁰ The *New York Times* itself had to admit that some of the information it had published was false,¹⁶³¹ and later cut its ties with the reporter.¹⁶³² *The Nation* described the piece as “the biggest failure of journalism” at the *Times* in the past two decades,¹⁶³³ while *Ha’aretz* compared the collapse of the *Times*’ piece to its October 7.¹⁶³⁴ 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.¹⁶³⁵ 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.¹⁶³⁶

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.¹⁶³⁷ Almost immediately, 16 of UNRWA’s donors – western countries – declared they would suspend their funding of UNRWA.¹⁶³⁸ 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,¹⁶³⁹ a

¹⁶²⁹ <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.

¹⁶³⁰ <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>

¹⁶³¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/25/world/middleeast/video-sexual-assault-israel-kibbutz-hamas.html>

¹⁶³² <https://www.ynetnews.com/culture/article/rkoh8h8ya>

¹⁶³³ <https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/new-york-times-intercept-hamas-rape/>

¹⁶³⁴ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/galleryfriday/2024-03-28/ty-article-magazine/.highlight/0000018e-7ab6-de80-a78f-7bf747280000>

¹⁶³⁵ <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>

¹⁶³⁶ <https://twitter.com/PulitzerPrizes/status/1787561713291645419> ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/06/business/pulitzer-prize-winners.html>

¹⁶³⁷ <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> .

¹⁶³⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/01/unrwa-funding-pause-employees-october-7-hamas-attack-claims-no-evidence-un>

¹⁶³⁹ 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/>

story in the British Channel 4 revealed the document Israel supposedly sent UNRWA's donor countries. The document itself was extremely brief. Containing no actual evidence, it includes a single line about each of the 12 UNRWA employees that were supposed perpetrators.¹⁶⁴⁰ A different intelligence dossier released by Israel contains no evidence either.¹⁶⁴¹ 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.¹⁶⁴² Other claims made by Israel were never made to UNRWA but directly to the media.¹⁶⁴³ 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".¹⁶⁴⁴ The weak evidence supporting the Israeli claim has led to several of the countries that stopped funding to resume it in March and April.¹⁶⁴⁵ Other countries did so subsequently or expressed plans to do so, and some even increased their humanitarian support for Gaza.¹⁶⁴⁶ 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.¹⁶⁴⁷ 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.¹⁶⁴⁸ 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.¹⁶⁴⁹ 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.¹⁶⁵⁰ In late April, an independent review by a former French foreign

¹⁶⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/DrSakriKaia/status/1754685268454785074>

¹⁶⁴¹ <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/>

¹⁶⁴² <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>

¹⁶⁴³ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-press-release-26feb2024/>

¹⁶⁴⁴ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-finds-claims-that-u-n-aid-agency-staff-took-part-in-hamas-attack-credible-957b747e>

¹⁶⁴⁵ <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>

¹⁶⁴⁶ <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>

¹⁶⁴⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/no-evidence-israel-back-unrwa-accusations-says-eu-humanitarian-chief-2024-03-14/>

¹⁶⁴⁸ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/unrwa-report-says-israel-coerced-some-agency-employees-to-falsely-admit-hamas-links/

¹⁶⁴⁹ <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

¹⁶⁵⁰ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/security-aviation/2024-06-05/ty-article-magazine/.premium/israel-secretly-targeted-american-lawmakers-with-gaza-war-influence->

minister and three research institutions mentioned again that the Israeli government has not yet substantiated its claims that UNRWA's staff has had links to Hamas or Islamic Jihad. It added that UNRWA regularly supplied Israel and other countries with lists of its employees for vetting, and that the Israeli government has not informed UNRWA of any concerns regarding its staff since 2011.¹⁶⁵¹

Israeli officials have long stated that they want to shut UNRWA down.¹⁶⁵² Israel has recently stated again this aim,¹⁶⁵³ and has acted upon it,¹⁶⁵⁴ going as far as proposing a bill that designated UNRWA as a terrorist organization in late May.¹⁶⁵⁵ These indicate that Israel has been weaponizing its allegations against UNRWA for this purpose.¹⁶⁵⁶ 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,¹⁶⁵⁷ 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.¹⁶⁵⁸ UNRWA also fired several employees who were found to be linked to Hamas in the past.¹⁶⁵⁹ 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 shelters¹⁶⁶⁰).

[campaign/0000018f-e7c8-d1f-a5cf-e7cb62afo000](https://www.pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/Poll%209%20English%20press%20release%2020%20March%202024.pdf); https://fakereporter.net/pdf/pro-Israeli_influence_network-new_findings-o624.pdf

¹⁶⁵¹ <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>

¹⁶⁵² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hobMANfCoBQ> ; <https://jewishcurrents.org/the-campaign-to-abolish-unrwa>

¹⁶⁵³ <https://www.kikar.co.il/israel-news/sa71dg> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-03-11/ty-article/.premium/0000018e-2dbc-d468-a9ff-2fbdabaf0000>

¹⁶⁵⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/31/israel-plan-un-dismantle-palestinian-relief-agency-unwra>; <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/mar/26/israel-unrwa-palestine>

¹⁶⁵⁵ <https://www.msf.org/israeli-proposal-designate-unrwa-terrorist-organisation-outrageous>

¹⁶⁵⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-04-24/ty-article/.premium/0000018f-1017-d361-a3ef-52f798500000>

¹⁶⁵⁷ <https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are/frequently-asked-questions> [under oversight of UNRWA spending]; https://youtu.be/LA_xtBh3eLw?si=DXUkq3gct46VbEgO&t=445

¹⁶⁵⁸ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unrwa-claims-versus-facts-press-release-26feb2024/> ; <https://jewishcurrents.org/the-campaign-to-abolish-unrwa>

¹⁶⁵⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/10/world/middleeast/unrwa-hamas-gaza.html>

¹⁶⁶⁰

<http://pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/Poll%209%20English%20press%20release%2020%20March%202024.pdf> (pp. 7-8); <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/980>

*Another case of successful propaganda: doubting the Palestinian death toll*¹⁶⁶¹

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.¹⁶⁶² 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.¹⁶⁶³

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.¹⁶⁶⁴ To the best of my knowledge, nobody, including Israel who holds the population registry for Gaza, has doubted the veracity of this list.¹⁶⁶⁵ Subsequently, Biden himself apologized for casting public doubt on the Palestinian death toll.¹⁶⁶⁶ 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.¹⁶⁶⁷ Although several experts and observers quickly refuted it as a case of shoddy statistics,¹⁶⁶⁸ a series of Israeli media outlets (as well as AIPAC) attempted to boost this message without any criticism to sow doubt.¹⁶⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶¹ I have added this content here because of public interest, particularly in the responses to my publishing of the Hebrew version of this document on March 15. I hope that it sheds some more light on both my methodology while also presenting another case of media bias, propaganda and their lingering effects throughout the war.

¹⁶⁶² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/biden-says-he-has-no-confidence-palestinian-death-count-2023-10-26/> ; <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/25/1208577490/biden-says-hes-worried-about-civilian-deaths-in-gaza-but-questions-death-toll-st> ; <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/israel-hamas-war-palestinians-news/card/biden-says-he-doubts-accuracy-of-palestinians-death-toll-reports-WXQUdN2EwX9EZO3Jhziq>

¹⁶⁶³ <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.

¹⁶⁶⁴ <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/10/this-is-a-list-of-the-names-of-more-than-6000-palestinians-that-israel-has-killed-in-gaza/>

¹⁶⁶⁵ <https://theintercept.com/2023/10/31/gaza-death-palestine-health-ministry/>

¹⁶⁶⁶ <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>

¹⁶⁶⁷ <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/how-gaza-health-ministry-fakes-casualty-numbers/>

¹⁶⁶⁸ 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.

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).¹⁶⁷⁰ 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).¹⁶⁷¹ Although the “halving” narrative was soon refuted by the Deputy Spokesperson for the UN’s Secretary-General as well as several media outlets,¹⁶⁷² the information warfare damage has been done.¹⁶⁷³

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.¹⁶⁷⁴

<https://twitter.com/joftius/status/1766199967364890949> ;

<https://twitter.com/BallouxFrancois/status/1769476779234721915>

¹⁶⁶⁹ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-791838>;

<https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/world-news/middle-east/article/15388434> ;

<https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel-at-war/artc-expert-claims-hamas-s-gaza-death-toll-exaggerated-or-faked> ; <https://www.jns.org/hamas-fakes-casualty-figures-the-numbers-are-not-real/> ; <https://twitter.com/AIPAC/status/1769387362289655835>

¹⁶⁷⁰ <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>

¹⁶⁷¹ <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/>

¹⁶⁷² <https://x.com/marcowenjones/status/1790086787764715922> ; <https://www.newsweek.com/fact-check-did-un-halve-gaza-death-toll-1900325>

¹⁶⁷³ For example: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2024/05/gaza-death-count/678400/>

¹⁶⁷⁴ 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

Several serious media outlets have accepted the Gaza death count¹⁶⁷⁵ and declared that “the figure is widely viewed as the most reliable one available”.¹⁶⁷⁶ 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.¹⁶⁷⁷ 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)¹⁶⁷⁸ and to *NPR* (a report on the death count, unpublished).¹⁶⁷⁹ 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.”¹⁶⁸⁰ In late April, both a UN official and IDF military officials agreed that the number is reliable.¹⁶⁸¹

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.¹⁶⁸² 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.¹⁶⁸³ This has been confirmed by the *Wall Street Journal*.¹⁶⁸⁴ 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 10.¹⁶⁸⁵ This range includes the Palestinian death count the next day, 31,112.¹⁶⁸⁶ 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).¹⁶⁸⁷ In late April, IDF officials estimated that the death toll was around 36,000 (the

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/1FAIpQLScndnMojIjoflfSPTD25uqkZSzUH--Go5AMwcbbyJB42bNQcw/viewform>)

¹⁶⁷⁵ <https://time.com/6909636/gaza-death-toll/>

¹⁶⁷⁶ <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/29/1234159514/gaza-death-toll-30000-palestinians-israel-hamas-war>

¹⁶⁷⁷ [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)

¹⁶⁷⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NICzTg_YEgY

¹⁶⁷⁹ <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/29/1234159514/gaza-death-toll-30000-palestinians-israel-hamas-war>

¹⁶⁸⁰ <https://time.com/6909636/gaza-death-toll/>

¹⁶⁸¹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694>

¹⁶⁸² <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/25/1208577490/biden-says-hes-worried-about-civilian-deaths-in-gaza-but-questions-death-toll-st>

¹⁶⁸³ <https://www.mekomit.co.il/הצבא-בדק-ומצא-שדיווחי-ההרוגים-במשרד-הב/>

¹⁶⁸⁴ <https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/u-s-and-israels-unprecedented-intelligence-sharing-draws-criticism-a85979b4>

¹⁶⁸⁵ <https://www.politico.eu/article/israels-netanyahu-says-he-will-defy-bidens-red-line-and-invade-rafah/>

¹⁶⁸⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-136>

¹⁶⁸⁷ <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>

Ministry estimate was more than 34,000).¹⁶⁸⁸ 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).¹⁶⁸⁹

Additional evidence supporting the Palestinian death count claims include the fact that in previous wars, the gap between the Israeli and Palestinian versions of the Palestinian death tolls have been negligible. Thus for example, for the 2014 Operation Protective Edge, Israel officially estimated 2,125 Palestinian deaths¹⁶⁹⁰ whereas the Palestinian Ministry of Health counted 2,310 Palestinian deaths¹⁶⁹¹ (the UN Human Rights Committee's count reached 2,251¹⁶⁹²). 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.¹⁶⁹³ The death toll does not include more than 10,000 people missing under the rubble.¹⁶⁹⁴ Gaza's own electronic system for counting the dead was disrupted already on Nov. 12.¹⁶⁹⁵ By April there were clear indications that the Ministry was unable to reach many of the dead.¹⁶⁹⁶

Estimates of Hamas militant deaths by Israelis are often exaggerated, as is natural and unsurprising in military engagements on both sides.¹⁶⁹⁷ 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".¹⁶⁹⁸ The overall Palestinian count back then was only 9,770.¹⁶⁹⁹ The exaggerations on the Israeli side have been strongly suggested, for example, by a BBC fact checking analysis of all IDF videos.¹⁷⁰⁰

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

¹⁶⁸⁸ <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.

¹⁶⁸⁹ <https://www.barrons.com/news/netanyahu-hamas-fighters-comprise-almost-half-gaza-s-death-toll-42cfe029>

¹⁶⁹⁰ <https://mfa.gov.il/ProtectiveEdge/Documents/PalestinianFatalities.pdf>

¹⁶⁹¹

<https://web.archive.org/web/2015011023729/http://www.maannnews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=751290>

¹⁶⁹² http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIGaza/A_HRC_CRP_4.doc

¹⁶⁹³ <https://twitter.com/BallouxFrancois/status/1743019663913537943>

¹⁶⁹⁴ <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>

¹⁶⁹⁵ <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/29/1234159514/gaza-death-toll-30000-palestinians-israel-hamas-war>

¹⁶⁹⁶ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/in-gaza-authorities-lose-count-of-the-dead-779ff694>

¹⁶⁹⁷ 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.

¹⁶⁹⁸ https://www.calcalist.co.il/local_news/article/thpkoegl5

¹⁶⁹⁹ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-death-toll-numbers-injured-5c9dc40bec95a8408c83f3c2fb759dao>

¹⁷⁰⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68387864>

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.

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).¹⁷⁰¹ 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).¹⁷⁰² Over the decade before the war (2013-2022), 68% of Israel’s weapon imports came from the US.¹⁷⁰³

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.¹⁷⁰⁴ 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.¹⁷⁰⁵ 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

¹⁷⁰¹ <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>

¹⁷⁰² <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>

¹⁷⁰³ <https://theconversation.com/where-do-israel-and-hamas-get-their-weapons-220762>

¹⁷⁰⁴ <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>

¹⁷⁰⁵ <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 shells¹⁷⁰⁶ (Israel used over 100,000 artillery shells in less than two months of fighting).¹⁷⁰⁷ Additional munitions requested include kamikaze drones, dive-bombing drones, missiles, rockets and mortar rounds.¹⁷⁰⁸ Subsequent months saw more sales of the same and similar items.¹⁷⁰⁹

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.¹⁷¹⁰ Only two approved sales to Israel had been made public by that point.¹⁷¹¹ At the same time, officials claimed there were 600 active cases of potential military transfer or sales to Israel, worth more than \$23 billion.¹⁷¹² 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.¹⁷¹³ In early April, the US administration authorized the transfer of over 2,000 smaller bombs (five-hundred pounds or smaller) to Israel.¹⁷¹⁴

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' own supplies.¹⁷¹⁵ The US continued selling weapons to Israel during April, considering a deal of more than \$18 billion to sell up to 50 fighter jets.¹⁷¹⁶ 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).¹⁷¹⁷ 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).¹⁷¹⁸ Almost in parallel,

¹⁷⁰⁶ <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>

¹⁷⁰⁷ <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-775523>

¹⁷⁰⁸ <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>

¹⁷⁰⁹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-plans-to-send-weapons-to-israel-amid-biden-push-for-cease-fire-deal-184e75bc>

¹⁷¹⁰ <https://www.wsj.com/world/how-the-u-s-arms-pipeline-to-israel-avoids-public-disclosure-e238de75>

¹⁷¹¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/03/06/us-weapons-israel-gaza/>

¹⁷¹² <https://www.wsj.com/world/how-the-u-s-arms-pipeline-to-israel-avoids-public-disclosure-e238de75>

¹⁷¹³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/03/29/us-weapons-israel-gaza-war/> .

These sales had been approved years before.

¹⁷¹⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/04/politics/us-israel-bombs-transfer/index.html>

¹⁷¹⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/world/how-the-u-s-arms-pipeline-to-israel-avoids-public-disclosure-e238de75>

¹⁷¹⁶ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/01/politics/biden-administration-f15-fighter-jets-israel/index.html>

¹⁷¹⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-house-vote-long-awaited-95-billion-ukraine-israel-aid-package-2024-04-20/>

¹⁷¹⁸ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-delays-sending-precision-weapons-to-israel-253fi2fo>

however, it continued to push existing deals – including one worth over \$1 billion – through the pipeline.¹⁷¹⁹

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.¹⁷²⁰ Other assets, such as some of the US' most powerful missile defense systems were also deployed to the Middle East.¹⁷²¹ In mid October, the US prepared about 2,000 US troops for possible deployment to Israel.¹⁷²² 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).¹⁷²³ In addition, the US sent a general and several other officers to help advise Israel's military leadership in the war.¹⁷²⁴

Some US forces operated within Israel. At least two US bases are known within Israel.¹⁷²⁵ 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.¹⁷²⁶ There were also Delta Force troops in Israel early in the war.¹⁷²⁷ 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.¹⁷²⁸ Other personnel involved in the war and in Israel include CIA officers, FBI agents, and DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency) personnel.¹⁷²⁹ 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”.¹⁷³⁰

¹⁷¹⁹ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/r1wdjobma> ;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/14/us/politics/biden-arms-sale-israel.html>

¹⁷²⁰ <https://web.archive.org/web/2023110173047/https://time.com/6325247/us-military-assistance-israel/>

¹⁷²¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/22/world/middleeast/patriot-israel-hamas-iran-gaza-eisenhower-pentagon.html>

¹⁷²² <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/10/16/politics/us-marines-pentagon-israel/index.html>

¹⁷²³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/10/23/us-evacuation-plans-israel-lebanon-hamas-war/>

¹⁷²⁴ <https://www.axios.com/2023/10/23/israel-gaza-war-marine-general-ground-operation>

¹⁷²⁵ <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/>

¹⁷²⁶ <https://theintercept.com/2023/12/11/tiktok-military-contractor-recruiting-israel/>

¹⁷²⁷ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/us/news/2023/10/20/white-house-shares-identities-secret-special-ops-israel/>

¹⁷²⁸ <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>

¹⁷²⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/06/14/us-israel-intelligence-cia-hostages/>

¹⁷³⁰ <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.¹⁷³¹ When the Houthis began attacking Israeli-affiliated ships and ships sailing to Israel,¹⁷³² the US began to bomb them as well, with strikes beginning in mid January and continuing as of the writing of this document.¹⁷³³ American support for Israel during the war led to over 170 attacks against US bases in Iraq and Syria.¹⁷³⁴ After three US service members were killed in an attack on a base in or near Jordan in late January,¹⁷³⁵ 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.¹⁷³⁶

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).¹⁷³⁷ After allegedly shooting down more than half of the Iranian missiles and drones of what was one of the largest drone strikes in history,¹⁷³⁸ the US quickly declared that it would not join Israel in counterattacking Iran.¹⁷³⁹ 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

¹⁷³¹ <https://abcnews.go.com/International/security-incident-involving-us-navy-destroyer-red-sea/story?id=104147141>

¹⁷³² For example <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/houthi-missile-drone-attack-red-sea-shipping-vessels-uss-gravely-dwight-eisenhower/>

¹⁷³³ <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/>

¹⁷³⁴ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/iran-update-january-28-2024>

¹⁷³⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/29/us/politics/us-troops-drone-attack-jordan-iran.html>

¹⁷³⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/us-strike-iraq-milita.html>

¹⁷³⁷ <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>

¹⁷³⁸ <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/>

¹⁷³⁹ <https://www.axios.com/2024/04/14/biden-netanyahu-iran-israel-us-wont-support>

violence/bloodshed” and “restoring calm”.¹⁷⁴⁰ 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.¹⁷⁴¹ 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).¹⁷⁴² 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).¹⁷⁴³ 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).¹⁷⁴⁴ 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).¹⁷⁴⁵ 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.¹⁷⁴⁶ Nonetheless, the US quickly declared that the resolution was not binding.¹⁷⁴⁷ This resolution had no impact.

The US was also involved in stopping other motions from moving forward.¹⁷⁴⁸ Therefore, for example, it vetoed the Palestinian request for full UN membership in mid April (12 countries in favor, the US against, 2 abstentions).¹⁷⁴⁹ 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”).¹⁷⁵⁰ The US’ own attempt to propose a temporary ceasefire – incidentally the first time it used the term “ceasefire” – was vetoed by Russia and China in March.¹⁷⁵¹ 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

¹⁷⁴⁰ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/state-department-internal-emails-gaza-israel_n_65296395e4boa304ff6ff95d

¹⁷⁴¹ <https://twitter.com/RobbieGramer/status/1711366571665342603>

¹⁷⁴² <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142507>

¹⁷⁴³ <https://www.reuters.com/world/un-overwhelmingly-calls-aid-truce-between-israel-hamas-2023-10-27/>

¹⁷⁴⁴ https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-12-08-23/h_a7ad699a7e1acbc51205feb2276cdf29

¹⁷⁴⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/20/us-vetoes-un-resolution-ceasefire-israel-gaza>

¹⁷⁴⁶ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147951>;
<https://twitter.com/tparsi/status/1772281999358648553>

¹⁷⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/AssalRad/status/1772315270880866802> ;
https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/us-says-ceasefire-resolution-non-binding-less-influential-security-council-members-object/ ;

¹⁷⁴⁸ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-blocks-security-council-motion-blaming-israel-for-deadly-gaza-aid-convoy-incident/>

¹⁷⁴⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/apr/18/us-veto-palestine-membership-request-united-nations-council>

¹⁷⁵⁰ <https://x.com/halalflow/status/1792944530389393422>

¹⁷⁵¹ <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.¹⁷⁵² 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.").¹⁷⁵³

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".¹⁷⁵⁴ The US administration followed by signaling that it will censure the ICC with sanctions,¹⁷⁵⁵ 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.¹⁷⁵⁶

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.¹⁷⁵⁷ 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".¹⁷⁵⁸ 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.¹⁷⁵⁹

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 rights violations. This credible information standard is

¹⁷⁵² <https://www.axios.com/2024/05/01/us-israel-palestinian-authority-icc-arrest-warrant>

¹⁷⁵³ <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>

¹⁷⁵⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/live/2024/may/20/biden-trump-democrats-immigration-latest>

¹⁷⁵⁵ <https://www.ft.com/content/6700a246-e0cd-49d8-b5ef-d2379e86290f>

¹⁷⁵⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/jun/04/us-house-icc-sanctions-netanyahu-?>

¹⁷⁵⁷ <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2024/01/04/us-hasnt-formally-assessed-if-israel-violating-human-rights-00133799>

¹⁷⁵⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/blinken-says-daily-toll-gaza-too-high-israel-genocide-charge-meritless-2024-01-09>

¹⁷⁵⁹ <https://www.propublica.org/article/israel-gaza-blinken-leahy-sanctions-human-rights-violations?taid=662030f9d453a40001f6bcc>

intentionally low and does not require proof or clear and convincing evidence.¹⁷⁶⁰ Israel, however, has long been treated leniently on this issue.¹⁷⁶¹ 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”).¹⁷⁶² A former director of the State Department office responsible for Leahy laws vetting said the same.¹⁷⁶³ 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.¹⁷⁶⁴

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.¹⁷⁶⁵ Some officials and lawmakers expressed the same concerns.¹⁷⁶⁶ As noted above, there were no indications that the US limited its intelligence sharing with Israel in response.¹⁷⁶⁷

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.¹⁷⁶⁸ On April 20 (the same day the US House voted to pass \$26 billion in Emergency Israel Aid),¹⁷⁶⁹ 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,¹⁷⁷⁰ 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).¹⁷⁷¹ 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

¹⁷⁶⁰ <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

¹⁷⁶¹ <https://www.propublica.org/article/israel-gaza-blinken-leahy-sanctions-human-rights-violations?taid=662030f9d453a40001f6bcc>

¹⁷⁶² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/18/us-supply-weapons-israel-alleged-abuses-human-rights>

¹⁷⁶³ <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

¹⁷⁶⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/18/us-supply-weapons-israel-alleged-abuses-human-rights> ; <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

¹⁷⁶⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/u-s-and-israels-unprecedented-intelligence-sharing-draws-criticism-a85979b4>

¹⁷⁶⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/06/14/us-israel-intelligence-cia-hostages/>

¹⁷⁶⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/06/14/us-israel-intelligence-cia-hostages/>

¹⁷⁶⁸ <https://www.propublica.org/article/israel-gaza-blinken-leahy-sanctions-human-rights-violations>

¹⁷⁶⁹ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/house-overwhelmingly-passes-26-billion-aid-israel-gaza-tensions-iran-escalate>

¹⁷⁷⁰ <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

¹⁷⁷¹ <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.¹⁷⁷² 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”).¹⁷⁷³ The story drew much attention for a few days,¹⁷⁷⁴ 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.¹⁷⁷⁵ A former director of the State Department office responsible for Leahy vetting later said this approach was unprecedentedly lenient.¹⁷⁷⁶

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.¹⁷⁷⁷ 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.¹⁷⁷⁸ 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.¹⁷⁷⁹ 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.¹⁷⁸⁰ An independent task force published a detailed account that strongly disputed the conclusions of the report.¹⁷⁸¹

¹⁷⁷² <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>

¹⁷⁷³ <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-fddf9a0c0000> ; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/21/us-poised-impose-sanctions-israel-defense-force-netzah-yehuda-battalion>

¹⁷⁷⁴ <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>

¹⁷⁷⁵ <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/biden-sanction-israeli-military-units-accused-human-rights/story?id=109651562>

¹⁷⁷⁶ <https://www.justsecurity.org/96522/israel-leahy-law/>

¹⁷⁷⁷ <https://www.devex.com/news/exclusive-usaid-officials-say-israel-breached-us-directive-on-gaza-aid-107545>

¹⁷⁷⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/some-us-officials-say-internal-memo-israel-may-be-violating-international-law-2024-04-27/>

¹⁷⁷⁹ <https://theintercept.com/2024/05/10/israel-human-rights-gaza-report/>

¹⁷⁸⁰ <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>

¹⁷⁸¹ <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.¹⁷⁸²

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.¹⁷⁸³ 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.¹⁷⁸⁴ 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.¹⁷⁸⁵ Although at first Israeli banks blocked the seven settlers from using their personal and business bank accounts,¹⁷⁸⁶ 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).¹⁷⁸⁷ 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.¹⁷⁸⁸ A fourth round of sanctions in mid June was directed at a settler organization that attacked humanitarian aid convoys to Gaza.¹⁷⁸⁹ The sanctions themselves, especially in their moderated version, remain limited in scale and ineffective.¹⁷⁹⁰ The settlers themselves, as well as local rights groups and Palestinians in the West Bank, described the sanctions as having minimal impact.¹⁷⁹¹ 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.

¹⁷⁸² <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

¹⁷⁸³ <https://apnews.com/article/biden-west-bank-israeli-settlers-palestinians-80f9e6be6fa7bb75dc86360ac2fa6ce>

¹⁷⁸⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-68173904>

¹⁷⁸⁵ <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/14/us-settler-sanctions-west-bank>

¹⁷⁸⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-banks-heed-us-anti-settler-sanctions-far-right-ministers-object-2024-02-05/>

¹⁷⁸⁷ <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>

¹⁷⁸⁸ <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-85cee76d68c1709id9b4d3e14f3eeb74>

¹⁷⁸⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-impose-sanctions-israeli-group-that-attacked-gaza-aid-2024-06-14/>

¹⁷⁹⁰ <https://jacobin.com/2024/03/biden-sanctions-israeli-settlers-palestine>

¹⁷⁹¹ <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' 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' 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".¹⁷⁹² 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."¹⁷⁹³

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.¹⁷⁹⁴ 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",¹⁷⁹⁵ and pressed Netanyahu to get more humanitarian aid into Gaza.¹⁷⁹⁶ 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.¹⁷⁹⁷ 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.¹⁷⁹⁸ 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.

¹⁷⁹² <https://www.c-span.org/video/?530992-1/president-biden-remarks-situation-israel>

¹⁷⁹³ <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>

¹⁷⁹⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/behind-bidens-shift-israel-hamas-war-gaza-deaths-international-pressure-2023-10-27/>

¹⁷⁹⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/15/politics/biden-60-minutes-interview-gaza-israel/index.html>

¹⁷⁹⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/30/politics/biden-netanyahu-aid-gaza/index.html>

¹⁷⁹⁷ <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.

¹⁷⁹⁸ <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.¹⁷⁹⁹ Biden and his top advisers warned Israel that international backlash would soon erode support for Israel with dire consequences to the IDF and Israel.¹⁸⁰⁰ The US President reiterated that the two-state solution was the only way to resolve the broader conflict,¹⁸⁰¹ said that al-Shifa hospital “must be protected” in the context of the first Israeli raid on it in November,¹⁸⁰² and also noted that extremist settlers in the West Bank must be held accountable for their violent acts.¹⁸⁰³ Blinken criticized Israel for not doing enough to minimize harm to civilians in Gaza, stating that “far too many” Palestinians have died and suffered.¹⁸⁰⁴ He even compared the Palestinian children he saw pulled from the wreckage to his own children, because “how can we not?”¹⁸⁰⁵ 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.¹⁸⁰⁶ Despite these warnings, the US did not establish any red lines for Israel.¹⁸⁰⁷

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”.¹⁸⁰⁸ Blinken reiterated the need for Israel to protect civilians and sustain humanitarian assistance,¹⁸⁰⁹ and pointed out the gap between Israel’s “declared intentions to protect civilians [sic] and the mounting casualties seen on the ground”.¹⁸¹⁰ He added that “there must be no enduring internal displacement” in the Strip.¹⁸¹¹ At meetings in one of his visits to Israel, Blinken clarified that Israel would have until early January to finish its ground operation,¹⁸¹² although Israel’s army chief stated that the war will continue for “many more

¹⁷⁹⁹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-11-03/blinken-shifts-israel-message-as-backlash-grows-over-gaza-deaths>

¹⁸⁰⁰ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/02/politics/biden-administration-warning-israel-gaza-civilians/index.html>

¹⁸⁰¹ <https://apnews.com/article/biden-revitalized-palestinian-authority-israel-hamas-war-bf8defe81079d6e6371f228157f9be10>

¹⁸⁰² <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/watch-al-shifa-hospital-in-gaza-must-be-protected-biden-says>

¹⁸⁰³ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/11/06/readout-of-president-bidens-call-with-prime-minister-netanyahu-of-israel-8/>

¹⁸⁰⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/blinken-israel-gaza-hamas-850cf28c13d8df087f75c0536462b604>

¹⁸⁰⁵ <https://x.com/Channel4News/status/1720452839435038986>

¹⁸⁰⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/nov/14/biden-letter-israel-gaza-war-ceasefire>

¹⁸⁰⁷ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/02/politics/biden-administration-warning-israel-gaza-civilians/index.html>

¹⁸⁰⁸ <https://apnews.com/article/biden-israel-hamas-oct-7-44c4229d4c1270d9cfa484b664a22071>

¹⁸⁰⁹ <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/>

¹⁸¹⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/08/us-israel-hamas-war-gaza-civilian-protection-anthony-blinken>

¹⁸¹¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/blinken-said-to-warn-war-cabinet-it-may-not-have-months-to-topple-hamas/>

¹⁸¹² <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/us-pressures-israel-to-end-war-against-hamas-in-a-month-3vrb52wfg>

months”.¹⁸¹³ Blinken also said that bringing the war to an end “as quickly as possible” was a top priority for the US administration.¹⁸¹⁴

In January, both Biden and Blinken attempted to discuss regional peace within the framework of the two state solution,¹⁸¹⁵ and even reviewed the options for the US to recognize a Palestinian state after the war.¹⁸¹⁶ 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.¹⁸¹⁷ 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.¹⁸¹⁸ Blinken stated that Palestinians must be allowed to return to their homes in Gaza and must not be displaced from the Gaza Strip.¹⁸¹⁹ On a different occasion he described the conflict as “gutwrenching” and that “the suffering breaks my heart”.¹⁸²⁰

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”.¹⁸²¹ 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.”¹⁸²² 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”.¹⁸²³ At the same time, three US officials admitted that the US will not punish Israel if it launches such a military campaign into Rafah.¹⁸²⁴ 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”.¹⁸²⁵ 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.¹⁸²⁶ Perhaps in response, Blinken stated that Israel’s expansion of settlements in the West Bank

¹⁸¹³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67824421>

¹⁸¹⁴ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/biden-presses-netanyahu-on-protecting-gaza-civilians-discusses-phasing-of-war/>

¹⁸¹⁵ <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/>

¹⁸¹⁶ <https://www.axios.com/2024/01/31/palestine-statehood-biden-israel-gaza-war>

¹⁸¹⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/1/19/israels-war-on-gaza-live-us-support-for-israel-ironclad-despite-rebuff?update=2635028>

¹⁸¹⁸ <https://www.axios.com/2024/01/14/biden-netanyahu-israel-gaza-war-tensions> ; <https://www.axios.com/2024/01/26/biden-netanyahu-israel-hamas-war-gaza-timetable>

¹⁸¹⁹ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/09/politics/blinken-israel-gaza-war-talks/index.html>

¹⁸²⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/blinken-says-us-demand-he-mourns-gutwrenching-scenes-gaza-2024-01-17/>

¹⁸²¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/02/08/biden-israel-gaza-speech-netanyahu/>

¹⁸²² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/02/08/biden-israel-gaza-speech-netanyahu/>

¹⁸²³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/2/11/israels-war-on-gaza-live-leaders-warn-of-catastrophe-if-rafah-invaded?update=2700975>

¹⁸²⁴ <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2024/02/13/us-wont-punish-israel-for-rafah-op-that-doesnt-protect-civilians-00141013>

¹⁸²⁵ <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-a-press-availability-46/>

¹⁸²⁶ <https://apnews.com/article/blinken-netanyahu-israel-hamas-gaza-saudi-arabia-qatar-palestinians-48ff7a3bbab5d92841df2949c29d9e72> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68410226> ; <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/biden-walks-back-prediction-monday-ceasefire-deal-gaza-hopeful-probabl-rcna141161>

was “inconsistent with international law”, returning to US policy before the Trump administration.¹⁸²⁷

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”.¹⁸²⁸ 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”,¹⁸²⁹ the US began airdropping aid into Gaza and began work on a temporary pier (see above for both).¹⁸³⁰ In mid March, the US Senate Majority Leader criticized Netanyahu, declaring that he was “a major obstacle to peace” that “lost his way”.¹⁸³¹ Biden later praised the “good” speech.¹⁸³² Biden himself said that Netanyahu was “hurting Israel more than helping Israel”,¹⁸³³ and asserted that “Humanitarian assistance cannot be a secondary consideration or a bargaining chip... Protecting and saving innocent lives has to be a priority”.¹⁸³⁴ 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.¹⁸³⁵ 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”.¹⁸³⁶ Biden’s Vice President Harris said that the US did not rule out any action against Israel if it attacks Rafah.¹⁸³⁷ Netanyahu, however, declared that if the US will not support an attack on Rafah, “we’ll do it by ourselves”.¹⁸³⁸

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”.¹⁸³⁹ 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.¹⁸⁴⁰ Biden also said that Netanyahu was

¹⁸²⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/23/blinden-oppose-new-israeli-settlements>

¹⁸²⁸ <https://x.com/KamalaHarris/status/1764409522553082344>

¹⁸²⁹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/blinden-says-all-of-gaza-facing-unprecedented-food-insecurity/>

¹⁸³⁰ <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/>

¹⁸³¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/biden-schumer-speech-netanyahu-gaza/>

¹⁸³² <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/18/politics/joe-biden-netanyahu-phone-call/index.html>

¹⁸³³ <https://apnews.com/article/biden-netanyahu-red-line-frustration-gaza-of23fa8d02288c1b9d862ddc4035872e>

¹⁸³⁴ <https://time.com/6898685/biden-israel-pressure-gaza-aid-pier-in-state-of-the-union/>

¹⁸³⁵ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/how-israel-avoided-bidens-red-line-ad715144>

¹⁸³⁶ <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-blinden-insurgency-warning>

¹⁸³⁷ <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/harris-us-ruled-consequences-israel-invades-rafah/story?id=108431225>

¹⁸³⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/22/israel-blinden-hamas-doha-negotiations/>

¹⁸³⁹ <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/>

¹⁸⁴⁰ <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-3591fb5f82b22cf8e5d106ofccaef15> ; <https://www.axios.com/2024/04/05/biden-netanyahu-us-support-israel>

making a “mistake” in his approach to Gaza.¹⁸⁴¹ Blinken warned that Israel risked becoming indistinguishable from Hamas if it didn’t protect Gazan civilians.¹⁸⁴² 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).¹⁸⁴³ 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).¹⁸⁴⁴ 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.¹⁸⁴⁵

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.”¹⁸⁴⁶ 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),¹⁸⁴⁷ but a few days later his administration pushed forward a \$1 billion arms sale to Israel.¹⁸⁴⁸ In late May, the US administration clarified that it will not change its Israel policy,¹⁸⁴⁹ as the Israeli operation in Rafah expanded.¹⁸⁵⁰ Furthermore, the bipartisan leadership of the United States House of Representatives and Senate invited Netanyahu to address a Joint Meeting of Congress.¹⁸⁵¹ At the same time, Biden called for a permanent ceasefire, making public an earlier proposal and urging both Israel and Hamas to agree.¹⁸⁵² 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,¹⁸⁵³ and anonymous top officials described

¹⁸⁴¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68766592>

¹⁸⁴² https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/blinking-warns-israel-risks-becoming-indistinguishable-from-hamas-if-it-doesnt-protect-gaza-civilians/

¹⁸⁴³ <https://www.axios.com/2024/04/09/israel-genocide-gaza-us-austin-palestinians>

¹⁸⁴⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/blinking-israel-hamas-war-gaza-saudi-arabia-co425791dc59e745021d3dd726dc8f09>

¹⁸⁴⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/blinking-israel-hamas-war-gaza-saudi-arabia-co425791dc59e745021d3dd726dc8f09>

¹⁸⁴⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/08/politics/joe-biden-interview-cnntv/index.html>

¹⁸⁴⁷ <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>

¹⁸⁴⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/14/us/politics/biden-arms-sale-israel.html>

¹⁸⁴⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-vp-harris-says-israels-deadly-strike-rafah-was-beyond-tragic-2024-05-28/>

¹⁸⁵⁰

https://www.democracynow.org/2024/5/30/headlines/israel_seizes_entire_gaza_egypt_border_continues_deadly_invasion_of_rafah

¹⁸⁵¹ <https://x.com/SpeakerJohnson/status/1796628344269623520>

¹⁸⁵² <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/31/us/politics/biden-israel-remarks-speech.html>

¹⁸⁵³ <https://theintercept.com/2024/05/10/israel-human-rights-gaza-report/>

Israel's strategy in Gaza as "self-defeating".¹⁸⁵⁴ In response, some Israeli voices attempted to draw links between the US and Hamas based on some of their shared interests,¹⁸⁵⁵ while Israel's Minister of National Security declared that "Hamas ❤️ Biden" in a tweet.¹⁸⁵⁶

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.¹⁸⁵⁷ His statement fitted a CIA assessment that concluded that Netanyahu would defy pressure to define an "end state" for Gaza.¹⁸⁵⁸ 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".¹⁸⁵⁹ For context, a Palestinian poll found that 51% of the respondents in the Gaza Strip claimed that the Rafah attack specifically displaced them.¹⁸⁶⁰

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.¹⁸⁶¹ In early May, officials who resigned said they identified an uptick in non-public resignations.¹⁸⁶² According to one of those who resigned publicly, over 24 people may have resigned privately.¹⁸⁶³ 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.¹⁸⁶⁴ 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).¹⁸⁶⁵ Several senior US officials noted in an internal memo that they

¹⁸⁵⁴ <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/05/21/biden-admin-hammering-israel-military-strategy-gaza-00159262>

¹⁸⁵⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-05-09/ty-article-opinion/.premium/0000018f-5d88-d1d4-afcf-fd8aae1d0000>

¹⁸⁵⁶ <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1788458123436433783> ; <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-800531>

¹⁸⁵⁷ <https://time.com/6984968/joe-biden-transcript-2024-interview/>

¹⁸⁵⁸ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/07/politics/cia-netanyahu-assessment/index.html>

¹⁸⁵⁹ <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/biden-administration-israel-crossed-red-line-rafah-110739181>

¹⁸⁶⁰ <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/980>

¹⁸⁶¹ <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>

¹⁸⁶² <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>

¹⁸⁶³ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/may/30/two-more-us-officials-resign-over-biden-administrations-position-on-gaza-war>

¹⁸⁶⁴ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-ivTbqPLjpzDpGdamN2LWLia-ILCkgsonDOmgBN3MT-U-3-t5DigIgrc5KORsHfOgnEluOBdCnD-5tDKX/pub>

¹⁸⁶⁵ <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/04/29/lawyers-israel-arm-sales-biden-00154958> ; <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2024/05/01/does-israel-dissent-matter-to-biden-00155488>

doubted the credibility of Israel's assurances on its use of US weapons.¹⁸⁶⁶ Others anonymously described Biden's policy on Israel as "a blatantly horrific and stupid mistake".¹⁸⁶⁷

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%.¹⁸⁶⁸ Already in January, 35% of Americans thought that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza (49% Democrats, 18% of Republicans).¹⁸⁶⁹ The ratio increased in May to 39% (56% Democrats, 23% Republicans).¹⁸⁷⁰ 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.¹⁸⁷¹ 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.¹⁸⁷² In May, 51% of American Jews supported Biden's decision to withhold arms shipments to Israel if it continued its Rafah offensive (see above).¹⁸⁷³ In May, 70% of likely voters supported a permanent ceasefire in Gaza.¹⁸⁷⁴ 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.

¹⁸⁶⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/some-us-officials-say-internal-memo-israel-may-be-violating-international-law-2024-04-27/>

¹⁸⁶⁷ <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/04/03/biden-israel-strike-aid-workers-gaza-00150356>

¹⁸⁶⁸ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/642695/majority-disapprove-israeli-action-gaza.aspx>

¹⁸⁶⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/jan/24/americans-believe-israel-committing-genocide-poll>

¹⁸⁷⁰ <https://zeteo.com/p/gaza-israel-genocide-poll-ceasefire-us-voters>

¹⁸⁷¹ <https://cepr.net/press-release/poll-majority-of-americans-say-biden-should-halt-weaponshipments-to-israel/>

¹⁸⁷² <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/04/02/younger-americans-stand-out-in-their-views-of-the-israel-hamas-war/>

¹⁸⁷³ <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/article-804548>

¹⁸⁷⁴ <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)¹⁸⁷⁵

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.¹⁸⁷⁶ Early reports from within the Strip asserted that the IDF had killed or executed some 150 young men.¹⁸⁷⁷ 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.¹⁸⁷⁸ 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.¹⁸⁷⁹ Several doctors and other health practitioners have been killed or executed,¹⁸⁸⁰ including a pharmacist who was among those executed in front of patients.¹⁸⁸¹ People who escaped provide similar testimonies,¹⁸⁸² 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.¹⁸⁸³ Footage of released detainees shows them in their underwear.¹⁸⁸⁴ Some of the released detainees were in wheelchairs.¹⁸⁸⁵ An adjacent hospital to al-Shifa (al-Helu) was bombed in the operation, hitting patient rooms as well.¹⁸⁸⁶ 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.¹⁸⁸⁷ People who did not evacuate when ordered were regarded as suspects and

¹⁸⁷⁵ 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>

¹⁸⁷⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/24/world/middleeast/al-shifa-hospital-gaza-israel.html>

¹⁸⁷⁷ <https://twitter.com/HossamShabat/status/1770813640251195394> ; the IDF claimed these were “terrorists”, <https://twitter.com/ClubReel/status/1770822632725700746>

¹⁸⁷⁸ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6236>

¹⁸⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/HCWWatch/status/1771307184145502250>

¹⁸⁸⁰ <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>

¹⁸⁸¹ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1771370478906822877>

¹⁸⁸² 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>

¹⁸⁸³ <https://twitter.com/trhxianl/status/1771648909753864280>

¹⁸⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771565663535960309>

¹⁸⁸⁵ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771565663535960309>

¹⁸⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/RamAbdu/status/1771495855587000429>

¹⁸⁸⁷ <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> ;

killed.¹⁸⁸⁸ Other eyewitnesses stated that they were not able to move and get food and water for days.¹⁸⁸⁹ An NGO's initial research found evidence for the execution of 13 children,¹⁸⁹⁰ 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.¹⁸⁹¹ Several consistent testimonies also reveal that the IDF used civilians as human shields.¹⁸⁹²

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.¹⁸⁹³ 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.¹⁸⁹⁴ 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.¹⁸⁹⁵ Doctors who were in al-Shifa during the siege reported on their extreme experiences.¹⁸⁹⁶ At least 22 patients died due to lack of oxygen, food and water.¹⁸⁹⁷

After the IDF finally left al-Shifa, hundreds of corpses were found amidst widespread destruction of and in the hospital.¹⁸⁹⁸ 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.¹⁸⁹⁹ An independent research agency based in academia found evidence that the bodies of those killed during this invasion were bulldozed.¹⁹⁰⁰

<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>

¹⁸⁸⁸ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/04/come-out-you-animals-how-the-massacre-at-al-shifa-hospital-happened>

¹⁸⁸⁹ <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>

¹⁸⁹⁰ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6246/In-a-week,-Israeli-army-executes-13-children-in-and-near-Al-Shifa-Hospital>

¹⁸⁹¹ <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/6254/Al-Shifa-Medical-Complex-Witnesses-One-of-the-Largest-Massacres-in-Palestinian-History>

¹⁸⁹² <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-israeli-army-uses-palestinian-civilians-human-shields-its-operation-shifa-medical-complex-and-its-vicinity-enar>

¹⁸⁹³ <https://twitter.com/NourNaim88/status/1772757426887926144>

¹⁸⁹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mN1SRUxoR8>

¹⁸⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/PHRIsrael/status/1771499307478229244> ; also <https://twitter.com/DrTedros/status/1771276290315653372>

¹⁸⁹⁶ <https://twitter.com/DrMadsGilbert/status/1774371251881984169>

¹⁸⁹⁷ <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>

¹⁸⁹⁸ 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>

¹⁸⁹⁹ <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.¹⁹⁰¹ 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.¹⁹⁰² 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.¹⁹⁰³ Israel's former Prime Minister also claimed that not a single civilian was killed, "unprecedented in urban warfare".¹⁹⁰⁴

An IDF spokesperson claimed on the IDF's official Twitter account that "200 terrorists [were] eliminated" and that more than 500 Palestinians were detained.¹⁹⁰⁵ 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".¹⁹⁰⁶ 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.¹⁹⁰⁷

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>

¹⁹⁰⁰ <https://twitter.com/ForensicArchi/status/1778106742737375471>

¹⁹⁰¹ <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>

¹⁹⁰² <https://twitter.com/DrMadsGilbert/status/1775300379967729675>

¹⁹⁰³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymd23pka>

¹⁹⁰⁴ <https://twitter.com/naftalibennett/status/1774663364314091870>

¹⁹⁰⁵ <https://twitter.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1774816428916412574> ; the number was "over 200" in

Israeli media: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hymd23pka>

¹⁹⁰⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/01/gaza-al-shifa-hospital-israel/>

¹⁹⁰⁷ <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.¹⁹⁰⁸ *The Guardian* described these protests as “perhaps the most significant student movement since the anti-Vietnam campus protests of the late 1960s”.¹⁹⁰⁹ 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.¹⁹¹⁰ 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.¹⁹¹¹

The protests were mainly an elite college phenomenon,¹⁹¹² 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.¹⁹¹³ 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

¹⁹⁰⁸ 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 campuses with protests:

<https://washingtonmonthly.com/2024/05/24/are-gaza-protests-happening-mostly-at-elite-colleges/>

¹⁹⁰⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/28/us-student-protests-gaza-israel>

¹⁹¹⁰ Graph at: <https://theconversation.com/media-coverage-of-campus-protests-tends-to-focus-on-the-spectacle-rather-than-the-substance-229172>

¹⁹¹¹ For student demands, organized per university, see <https://students4gaza.directory/>

¹⁹¹² <https://washingtonmonthly.com/2024/05/24/are-gaza-protests-happening-mostly-at-elite-colleges/>

¹⁹¹³ <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.¹⁹¹⁴ Serious clashes between protestors on both sides took place only in UCLA, where video evidence showed pro-Israeli counterprotestors attacking the encampment.¹⁹¹⁵ Police waited for a few hours before separating both sides, resulting in dozens of injuries among protestors in the Gaza encampment.¹⁹¹⁶

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.¹⁹¹⁷ At least two university presidents later lost their jobs as a result.¹⁹¹⁸ Prominent donors used their donations to apply pressure to universities, publicly or privately threatening and sometimes actually pulling their support.¹⁹¹⁹ 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.¹⁹²⁰ 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

¹⁹¹⁴ <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/>

¹⁹¹⁵ <https://x.com/BenzionSanders/status/1785681768349118750>; <https://x.com/FilmThePoliceLA/status/1785654963915588036>; <https://forward.com/news/608215/campus-violence-erupts-at-ucla-as-pro-israel-protesters-tries-to-dismantle-encampment/>. For the pro-Israel counterprotestors identity see: <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/16/us/ucla-student-protests-counterprotesters-invs/index.html>; <https://x.com/KyungLahCNN/status/1790908711898165639>. UCLA was otherwise tense as well but violence between protestors was concentrated in the single aforementioned night: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/apr/29/palestinian-israeli-protesters-clash-university-california>. It appears that a single pro-Israeli counterprotestor was arrested, <https://forward.com/fast-forward/617536/arrest-in-ucla-encampment-violence-edan-on/>

¹⁹¹⁶ <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>

¹⁹¹⁷ 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.

¹⁹¹⁸ 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>

¹⁹¹⁹ <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>

¹⁹²⁰ <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 protestors.¹⁹²¹ Physical violence was also prevalent, with students and faculty getting beaten up by the police, sometimes on camera.¹⁹²² As a result, over a month of protests at least 3,025 people were arrested in 61 colleges and universities.¹⁹²³ Many others were suspended or expelled from their universities. Faculty members were among those arrested as well, sometimes using excessive force.¹⁹²⁴ 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,¹⁹²⁵ keeping police on campus,¹⁹²⁶ moving ceremonies out of campus, or canceling valedictorian speeches.¹⁹²⁷

Some university administrations eventually negotiated with students, sometimes reaching an agreement that fulfilled some student demands.¹⁹²⁸ 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.¹⁹²⁹ 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,¹⁹³⁰ raising Palestinian flags or symbols or associated signs,¹⁹³¹ or demanding the cancellation of graduation ceremony speakers.¹⁹³²

Coverage and reactions

¹⁹²¹ <https://twitter.com/JoshuaPHill/status/1785443970237317351> ;

<https://x.com/Kahlisse/status/1783538202705285206> ; for heavily armed police forces see:

<https://x.com/RyanChandlerTV/status/1783197539824468403> ;

<https://x.com/balagonline/status/1783185444085117425>

¹⁹²² 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/>

¹⁹²³ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-campus-protests-50d754675b710c9b983faf9ec9164d81>

¹⁹²⁴ <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>

¹⁹²⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/22/business/columbia-tensions-passover-virtual-classes/index.html>

¹⁹²⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/30/nyregion/columbia-shafik-protests-police.html>

¹⁹²⁷ <https://dailytrojan.com/2024/04/15/valedictorian-will-not-speak-at-class-of-2024-commencement/>

¹⁹²⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/30/us/brown-divestment-deal.html> ;

<https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2024-05-06/ty-article/.premium/rutgers-faces-backlash-over-shameful-capitulation-to-pro-palestinian-student-demands/0000018f-4e92-dcda-abcf-6e9711670000> ; https://newbrunswick.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2024-05/AGREEMENT_05072024.pdf

¹⁹²⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/may/28/harvard-policy-issues-institutional-neutrality>

¹⁹³⁰ https://x.com/JalalAK_jojo/status/1793672275809718459 ;

<https://twitter.com/iamschvitzing/status/1789666643141914965>

¹⁹³¹ <https://twitter.com/brainnotonyet/status/1789796916022157770>

¹⁹³² <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.¹⁹³³ 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.¹⁹³⁴ 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).¹⁹³⁵

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".¹⁹³⁶ 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".¹⁹³⁷ In Israel, the campus protests were framed as a form of antisemitism and covered far more superficially.¹⁹³⁸ *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".¹⁹³⁹ 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).¹⁹⁴⁰

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*

¹⁹³³ <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/>

¹⁹³⁴ <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>

¹⁹³⁵ <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>

¹⁹³⁶ <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>

¹⁹³⁷ https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-says-college-protesters-chanting-from-the-river-to-the-sea-are-supporting-genocide/

¹⁹³⁸ <https://www.the7eye.org.il/517399>

¹⁹³⁹ <https://www.pressreader.com/newspapers/n/israel-hayom/20240425>

¹⁹⁴⁰ <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.¹⁹⁴¹ Other right-wing commentators blamed George Soros for them.¹⁹⁴² 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.¹⁹⁴³ 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.¹⁹⁴⁴ This talking point was amplified by the work of an initiative heavily promoted by pro-Israel elites.¹⁹⁴⁵

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”.¹⁹⁴⁶ 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.¹⁹⁴⁷

¹⁹⁴¹ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/whos-behind-the-anti-israel-protests-hamas-gaza-hezbollah-talking-points-d2f538ca>

¹⁹⁴² <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>

¹⁹⁴³ 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>

¹⁹⁴⁴ E.g. <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/Article-1095319>

¹⁹⁴⁵ 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/>

¹⁹⁴⁶ <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-1094819>

¹⁹⁴⁷ <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_3585PmFbxxlxe&_rdr

Zoom-in 3: The ethnic cleansing campaign in northern Gaza, October-December 2024

*Last updated:*¹⁹⁴⁸ 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).¹⁹⁴⁹ Israeli investigations revealed that the plan was designed by other organizations such as "Tzav 9",¹⁹⁵⁰ which was responsible for blocking aid from entering Gaza over the spring and summer of 2024 (and was sanctioned by the US in response).¹⁹⁵¹

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

¹⁹⁴⁸ I would like to thank an anonymous reader who commented on the Nov. 2024 version of this document.

¹⁹⁴⁹ <https://x.com/bokeralmog/status/1831247052828786708> ; see also <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hpsjosnc> for additional supporters

¹⁹⁵⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=430705303386981> ; <https://x.com/omrimaniv/status/1847700434716160328>

¹⁹⁵¹ <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.¹⁹⁵² Already in mid-September, Israeli media noted that IDF generals were considering the Generals' Plan (also described as Eiland's Plan),¹⁹⁵³ while a letter signed by 27 ministers and MKs (Members of the Israeli Knesset) called upon Israel's prime minister to formally accept it.¹⁹⁵⁴ The plan received some support in Israeli academia as well.¹⁹⁵⁵ In late September, the prime minister stated that the plan "made sense and was under consideration".¹⁹⁵⁶ An MK stated in early October that the plan was being executed.¹⁹⁵⁷ 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.¹⁹⁵⁸

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. 6.¹⁹⁵⁹ More Israeli media recognized this by mid-October,¹⁹⁶⁰ with indications that it was neither discussed in detail nor formally decided upon politically.¹⁹⁶¹ Many international voices also became aware of the plan at this point.¹⁹⁶² 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.¹⁹⁶³

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.¹⁹⁶⁴ These voices had no obvious

¹⁹⁵² <https://hamefakdim-bemiluim.org/%d7%aa%d7%95%d7%9b%d7%ao%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/>

¹⁹⁵³ <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/sjcq4surr> ; <https://www.972mag.com/northern-gaza-liquidation-scenario-eiland-rabi/>

¹⁹⁵⁴ <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/politics/article/16463062>

¹⁹⁵⁵ <https://x.com/radio103fm/status/1835207918087483732?s=48>

¹⁹⁵⁶ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/803098/>

¹⁹⁵⁷ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1842878570307219842>

¹⁹⁵⁸ <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-do49-a3db-bf76397e0000> ; for the list of attendees: <https://x.com/nitayp/status/1848282311281766869>

¹⁹⁵⁹ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1842898570673852729>

¹⁹⁶⁰ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1848469118363582692> ;

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/explainers/israel-gaza-palestine-what-generals-plan>

¹⁹⁶¹ <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-a9df-dbad3f940000> ;

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

¹⁹⁶² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-21/ty-article/.premium/00000192-aeaf-da5c-a9b7-febf25980000> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5y5zyivvmlo>

¹⁹⁶³ <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-a9be-fbaf597b0000> ; and in this interview he threatened to maintain control of northern Gaza, and potentially occupy it: <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1857291886014206402>

¹⁹⁶⁴ <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.¹⁹⁶⁵ 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.¹⁹⁶⁶

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.¹⁹⁶⁷ 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.¹⁹⁶⁸ International voices were similarly alarmed. A UN relief official stated that “the entire population of North Gaza is at risk of dying”.¹⁹⁶⁹

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.¹⁹⁷⁰ The *Ha’aretz* editorial stated that the IDF was ethnically cleansing the northern part of the Gaza Strip.¹⁹⁷¹ 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-affb-37f5b2080000> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/2024-11-16/ty-article-opinion/.premium/00000193-2b85-d506-a5d3-2f97180e0000>
¹⁹⁶⁵ <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-fbeef3fco000> ; see also: <https://maki.org.il/en/?p=32171> ;
<https://www.newarab.com/news/3000-israelis-call-every-possible-sanction-israel>
¹⁹⁶⁶ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/11/israeli-justice-minister-calls-for-20-year-prison-sentence-for-citizens-promoting-sanctions-against-the-state/>
¹⁹⁶⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/22/blinken-israel-netanyahu-gaza-aid/>, specifically: <https://x.com/eranetzion/status/184881765115092252>
¹⁹⁶⁸ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-30/ty-article/.premium/00000192-dc99-dbce-a7be-ff9f45a0000>
¹⁹⁶⁹ <https://www.commondreams.org/news/northern-gaza-risk-dying>
¹⁹⁷⁰ <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>
¹⁹⁷¹ <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”.¹⁹⁷² By mid-November, Israel’s Finance Minister said Israel should remain in northern Gaza indefinitely to pressure Hamas to release its hostages.¹⁹⁷³ 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.¹⁹⁷⁴

By late November, Oxfam stated that Israel was in the late stages of ethnically cleansing the North Gaza governorate.¹⁹⁷⁵ 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.¹⁹⁷⁶ 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.¹⁹⁷⁷

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).¹⁹⁷⁸ 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).¹⁹⁷⁹ These numbers correspond to the entire Gaza Strip. They began to be reported in the Israeli media in late October.¹⁹⁸⁰

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

¹⁹⁷² <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-standing-committee/statement-principals-inter-agency-standing-committee-stop-assault-palestinians-gaza-and-those-trying>

¹⁹⁷³ <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>

¹⁹⁷⁴ <https://www.kan.org.il/content/dig/digital/p-11685/s2024/825913/>

¹⁹⁷⁵ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/no-aid-or-access-israel-intensifies-its-ethnic-cleansing-north-gaza-governorate-says>

¹⁹⁷⁶ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/02/middleeast/israel-idf-gaza-moshe-yaalon-palestinians-ethnic-cleansing-intl/index.html>

¹⁹⁷⁷ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sixbixj71g>

¹⁹⁷⁸ 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-si-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>)

¹⁹⁷⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-31/ty-article/.premium/00000192-de68-d6c4-adfe-fcee52230000>

¹⁹⁸⁰ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-31/ty-article/.premium/00000192-de68-d6c4-adfe-fcee52230000> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-afda-fidd75c60000> ; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-humanitarian-aid-military-funding-11bdf4ffd22e0f4c68b2b7boe24bda77>

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.¹⁹⁸¹

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.¹⁹⁸² The IDF soon established another East-West corridor, separating North Gaza from Gaza City.¹⁹⁸³ Evidence from witnesses indicates the absence of food.¹⁹⁸⁴ Video footage showed an IDF tractor destroying humanitarian aid supplies in a warehouse in Jabaliya.¹⁹⁸⁵

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.¹⁹⁸⁶ Israel falsely claimed that there was “no population” left in places like Beit Lahiya, where it continued to bomb civilians for many more days.¹⁹⁸⁷ Only 11 percent of coordinated aid movements to provide humanitarian assistance to the northern Gaza Strip were facilitated by Israel.¹⁹⁸⁸ 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

¹⁹⁸¹ <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>

¹⁹⁸² <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>

¹⁹⁸³ <https://x.com/ForensicArchi/status/1860005331897622954> ; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cp8x324vr0mo>

¹⁹⁸⁴ <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>

¹⁹⁸⁵ <https://x.com/tamerqdh/status/1856423763010584856>

¹⁹⁸⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip>

¹⁹⁸⁷ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-humanitarian-aid-military-funding-11bdf4ffd22e0f4c68b2b7boe24bda77>

¹⁹⁸⁸ <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.¹⁹⁸⁹ One aid truck reached a school in Beit Hanoun, which was raided soon after, reportedly killing over 20 civilians.¹⁹⁹⁰ The tight siege continued in mid-November, with humanitarian assistance to northern Gaza largely denied.¹⁹⁹¹ 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.¹⁹⁹² Winter weather in late November exacerbated the poor conditions displaced people experienced.¹⁹⁹³

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,¹⁹⁹⁴ 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.¹⁹⁹⁵

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”.¹⁹⁹⁶ 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

¹⁹⁸⁹ <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>

¹⁹⁹⁰ <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>

¹⁹⁹¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-239-gaza-strip> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-243-gaza-strip>

¹⁹⁹² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-241-gaza-strip> ; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-243-gaza-strip>

¹⁹⁹³ 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>

¹⁹⁹⁴ <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>

¹⁹⁹⁵ https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_FRC_Alert_Gaza_Nov2024.pdf

¹⁹⁹⁶ <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).¹⁹⁹⁷ Already before the deadline, the US signaled that it would not follow through on its threats.¹⁹⁹⁸ 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.¹⁹⁹⁹ Following these early indications, when the deadline did arrive, the US refrained from action.²⁰⁰⁰ 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.²⁰⁰¹

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.²⁰⁰² Israel continued by planting and detonating explosive barrels in residential areas, which destroyed dozens of homes, many uninhabited.²⁰⁰³ After a few days of siege, Israel began to call upon the local civilian population to evacuate.²⁰⁰⁴ In parallel, orders were issued to evacuate the three remaining hospitals in northern Gaza.²⁰⁰⁵ While some Gazans moved south,²⁰⁰⁶ many of them chose to stay.²⁰⁰⁷ At the same time,

¹⁹⁹⁷ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-11-12/ty-article/.premium/00000193-1f8e-d76d-a7db-5fcf88ea0000>

¹⁹⁹⁸ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1854626313195438140>

¹⁹⁹⁹ <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/10/16/biden-israel-arms-aid-00184028>

²⁰⁰⁰ <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>

²⁰⁰¹ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/no-aid-or-access-israel-intensifies-its-ethnic-cleansing-north-gaza-governorate-says>

²⁰⁰² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/several-killed-israeli-air-strike-gaza-mosque-2024-10-05/>

²⁰⁰³ <https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1846483876014703073>

²⁰⁰⁴ https://x.com/MSF_canada/status/1844751751624413541

²⁰⁰⁵ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/10/inside-israels-ongoing-invasion-of-jabalia-in-northern-gaza/>

²⁰⁰⁶ 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-b047-dace-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>).

²⁰⁰⁷ <https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1852689928695492648> ;

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-fi4c-dec7-afda-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.²⁰⁰⁸ On some occasions, the IDF detained people seeking to evacuate.²⁰⁰⁹ The IDF used some detained Palestinians as human shields, forcing them to knock on people’s doors and tell other Palestinians to evacuate.²⁰¹⁰ By mid-October, the UN condemned the “large number of civilian casualties” in Israel’s operation.²⁰¹¹

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.²⁰¹² The last two bakeries in the north closed in mid-late October.²⁰¹³ 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”.²⁰¹⁴ 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.²⁰¹⁵ 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.²⁰¹⁶ In mid-October Israel also barred six medical NGOs that had operated in Gaza from entering the Strip entirely, providing no explanation.²⁰¹⁷ 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.²⁰¹⁸

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.²⁰¹⁹ Evidence from mid-November indicated that the IDF took over the local desalination plant and was using it as a makeshift base.²⁰²⁰ The humanitarian campaign led by

²⁰⁰⁸ 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>

²⁰⁰⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/24/israel-northern-gaza-humanitarian-collapse/>

²⁰¹⁰ <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/10/inside-israels-ongoing-invasion-of-jabalia-in-northern-gaza/>

²⁰¹¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5y5zyivvmlo>

²⁰¹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkhYMBN17tU&t=2s>

²⁰¹³ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-afda-fidd75c60000>

²⁰¹⁴ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1849182435994427434>;

²⁰¹⁵ For example: <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1858558987513344059> ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1863059618705916244>

²⁰¹⁶ <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>

²⁰¹⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/18/israel-gaza-war-aid-hospitals-doctors/>

²⁰¹⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-241-gaza-strip>

²⁰¹⁹ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1849476686674280529>

²⁰²⁰ <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.²⁰²¹ 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.²⁰²² At the same time, the area experienced “severe disruptions of communications, including internet”.²⁰²³

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.²⁰²⁴ On dozens of occasions, the IDF did not claim that people hit during the

²⁰²¹ <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>

²⁰²² <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>

²⁰²³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip>

²⁰²⁴ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1851832529411588266> ; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-afda-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/mustafabarghouni/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/DmodosCutter/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>)

attacks were affiliated with Hamas.²⁰²⁵ 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.²⁰²⁶ 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.²⁰²⁷ The personal tragic stories of several Palestinians demonstrate the impacts of the attacks on the local population.²⁰²⁸ Video evidence reveals improvised graveyards in the middle of urban areas such as the Beit Lahiya market.²⁰²⁹

²⁰²⁵ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-afda-fidd75c60000>

²⁰²⁶ More than 1,200 on Oct. 31: (<https://archive.md/btqpa>); 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>)

²⁰²⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-243-gaza-strip>

²⁰²⁸ 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. 24.²⁰³⁰ Details of the attack were lacking as the IDF did not allow health professionals and civil defense teams to reach the area.²⁰³¹ 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.²⁰³² Eventually about 137 were identified as dead.²⁰³³ 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> ;
²⁰²⁹ <https://x.com/muhammadshehad2/status/1858951043029106973> ;
²⁰³⁰ <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%9999l-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> ;
²⁰³¹ <https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1849732808333287510> ;
²⁰³² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-30/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-degd-d7b5-af97-ff9d2d0d0000> ;
²⁰³³ 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.²⁰³⁴ Anecdotal visual evidence from northern Gaza shows many individuals crushed under buildings,²⁰³⁵ as well as other explicit imagery.²⁰³⁶ Another attack on 17 November targeted a five-story building in Beit Lahiya, reportedly killing at least 50 or 72 Palestinians.²⁰³⁷ An attack near Kamal Adwan hospital on 20 November reportedly killed 66 Palestinians.²⁰³⁸ 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.²⁰³⁹ 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.²⁰⁴⁰

Attacks on schools – as centers in which hundreds of displaced Palestinians were sheltering after their houses had been destroyed – were common.²⁰⁴¹ 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.²⁰⁴² An NGO found dozens of attacks on schools in northern Gaza in October 2024.²⁰⁴³ A substantial

²⁰³⁴ <https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1852805823157723314>

²⁰³⁵ https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1859704352124043709 ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1859440967381569931

²⁰³⁶ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1862908453913555096> ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1864382818396057979>

²⁰³⁷ <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>

²⁰³⁸ <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>

²⁰³⁹ <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>

²⁰⁴⁰ <https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-10/19/0042-73-palestinians-martyred-following-israeli-massacre-in-C2%Aobeit-lahia-in-northern-gaza-strip> ;

<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1858819672201691574> ;

<https://x.com/PalinfoAr/status/1847955843234373719>

²⁰⁴¹ For examples: <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1857812218475163850>;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1857822501830598710> ;

<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1857799491266449519> ;

²⁰⁴² <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/regular-attacks-put-gaza-schools-turned-shelters-frontlines-war>

²⁰⁴³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/less-month-israeli-army-attacks-shelter-centres-39-times-displace-palestinians-and-empty-gaza-enar>

amount of evidence from November indicates that the pattern continued.²⁰⁴⁴ One local journalist noted that he witnessed a new school bombing almost every day.²⁰⁴⁵ These attacks were also covered in Israeli media.²⁰⁴⁶

In parallel to the above, field executions of Palestinians were reported,²⁰⁴⁷ including of Palestinians who were detained.²⁰⁴⁸ Some civilians were killed after lining up to get water.²⁰⁴⁹ Others died of exposure or exhaustion as they were evacuating.²⁰⁵⁰ Survivors expressed their despair towards their reality, amidst airstrikes, destruction and lack of supplies.²⁰⁵¹ 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”.²⁰⁵²

Already in mid-October, many IDF soldiers uploaded photos showing their burning of various buildings in Jabalia.²⁰⁵³ At least twice over two days in mid-November, soldiers set afire UN schools that housed displaced Palestinians.²⁰⁵⁴ Other IDF soldiers spoke about establishing Jewish settlements.²⁰⁵⁵ Anecdotal evidence starting from late October – for example of soldiers placing a *mezuzah* on a door in a building they resided in²⁰⁵⁶ or printing a Jewish philosophical

²⁰⁴⁴ 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>

²⁰⁴⁵ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1857838004619919468>

²⁰⁴⁶ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-24/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000193-4db6-d68e-a1db-edb69fb0000>

²⁰⁴⁷ <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1849373431801753885> ;

<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1847600787901337728> ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1854229496401932557> ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1856287070907502972>.

²⁰⁴⁸ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1853882898744553879> ;

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1854229496401932557>

²⁰⁴⁹ <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1853760310743531716>

²⁰⁵⁰ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1853876427902640403>

²⁰⁵¹ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1857096991961985095>

²⁰⁵² <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip>

²⁰⁵³ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1847980759262384246>

²⁰⁵⁴ <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>

²⁰⁵⁵ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1854641685961326597>

²⁰⁵⁶ <https://x.com/adinitay/status/1852721404082360614>

book²⁰⁵⁷ – 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.²⁰⁵⁸ By late November, satellite imagery revealed Jabaliya was “almost completely destroyed”.²⁰⁵⁹

Most Israeli media paid little attention to the events on the ground.²⁰⁶⁰ 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.²⁰⁶¹ 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.²⁰⁶²

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.²⁰⁶³ Locations where Palestinian refugees were sheltering, such as schools, were burned, while the refugees sheltering in them were displaced again.²⁰⁶⁴ Anecdotal evidence shows the destitution of the refugees.²⁰⁶⁵ 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.²⁰⁶⁶ 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”.²⁰⁶⁷ In early

²⁰⁵⁷ <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

²⁰⁵⁸ <https://x.com/BenTzionMacales/status/1857875008602636546> ; for an example of destruction, see: <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1859332541913637040>

²⁰⁵⁹ <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/security/2024-11-24/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000193-3eab-d5cd-a3bf-7eff92f00000>

²⁰⁶⁰ See for example: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/6FuOTRIFTyIP5EwoYJqf86>

²⁰⁶¹ <https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1857172750940447136>;

<https://x.com/ireallyhateyou/status/1857208151507976566>

²⁰⁶² <https://www.ynet.co.il/environment-science/article/r1s9f1qfkl>

²⁰⁶³ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/10/29/middleeast/gaza-jabalya-palestinians-strip-photo-intl/index.html>

²⁰⁶⁴ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1856413482129748306> ;

<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1856405376079421656> ;

<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1856287070907502972> ;

<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1856324650180968737>

²⁰⁶⁵ <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1856280401074888779>

²⁰⁶⁶ <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.

²⁰⁶⁷ <https://www.972mag.com/beit-lahiya-gaza-rubble-corpses/>

December, both Israeli and Palestinian sources reported that Gazan civilians were displaced from the last school shelters in North Gaza, specifically Beit Lahia and Jabaliya.²⁰⁶⁸ There were also indications of an Israeli private company operating bulldozers in Jabaliya, as well as reports of non-military individuals entering the area.²⁰⁶⁹

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.²⁰⁷⁰ In mid-late October, humanitarian attempts to bring in food, fuel, blood and medicine were denied.²⁰⁷¹ The IDF called upon doctors to evacuate hospitals because their lives were in danger, as the IDF was planning to blow up the hospitals.²⁰⁷² Soon after the warnings, the IDF surrounded the hospitals,²⁰⁷³ and then raided them.²⁰⁷⁴ 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.²⁰⁷⁵ 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)²⁰⁷⁶. The raid at this hospital also damaged the

²⁰⁶⁸ <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> .

²⁰⁶⁹ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1863201179041218608> ;
<https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1864038176987201623>

²⁰⁷⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/22/blinken-israel-netanyahu-gaza-aid/>

²⁰⁷¹ <https://x.com/UNOCHA/status/1849072683725525242> ;
<https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-fi4c-dec7-affa-fidd75c60000> ; for a testimony of the conditions see

<https://x.com/AMokhallalati/status/1849082736402632878>

²⁰⁷² https://x.com/Ahmad_tibi/status/1848647941617057834

²⁰⁷³ <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/b1ohgghxjg> ;
<https://x.com/SMohyeddin/status/1849491903034572923> (longer version at:

<https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1849484027478044985>) ;

<https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1849567005633884650>

²⁰⁷⁴ <https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1849682158387974236>

²⁰⁷⁵ <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.972mag.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>

²⁰⁷⁶ <https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1853130631250669814>

oxygen station, causing the deaths of at least two infants.²⁰⁷⁷ In this context, the WHO noted that accessing hospitals across Gaza “is getting unbelievably harder” and that it lost connection with Kamal Adwan.²⁰⁷⁸ Subsequent videos show the destruction in the area of the hospital.²⁰⁷⁹

The key voice narrating the deterioration of the healthcare system in northern Gaza was Kamal Adwan’s Director, Dr. Hossam Abu Safieh.²⁰⁸⁰ Already in early October, Abu Safieh declared that he would not leave the hospital as long as there were patients in it,²⁰⁸¹ 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.²⁰⁸² 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.²⁰⁸³ 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.²⁰⁸⁴

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.²⁰⁸⁵ Abu Safieh asserted that “the healthcare system is now completely collapsed”, although the hospital continued to operate at a reduced level.²⁰⁸⁶ Video evidence suggested

²⁰⁷⁷ <https://x.com/EuroMedHR/status/1850132619066855815> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1849793452768125336 ; <https://www.972mag.com/kamal-adwan-hospital-hussam-abu-safia/>

²⁰⁷⁸ <https://x.com/DrTedros/status/1849765533559746576>

²⁰⁷⁹ <https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1850159665188835814>

²⁰⁸⁰ 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>

²⁰⁸¹ <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/northern-gaza-kamal-adwan-hospital-director-defies-israeli-order>

²⁰⁸² <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1862595635129528515>

²⁰⁸³ https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1850110968249930157 ;

<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

²⁰⁸⁴ https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1850561278948884816 ;

<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1850891173298106456>

²⁰⁸⁵ <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.

²⁰⁸⁶ 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.²⁰⁸⁷

By early November, only one surgeon remained among the three hospitals in northern Gaza.²⁰⁸⁸ Again, on multiple occasions in early November, the IDF attacked Kamal Adwan, causing direct injuries to pediatric patients.²⁰⁸⁹ One attack caused a fire that destroyed the hospital's water tanks, obliterating the water supply.²⁰⁹⁰ The hospitals were partially evacuated in early November, as some severely injured patients were transferred to hospitals in southern Gaza.²⁰⁹¹ 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.²⁰⁹² Other attempts to deliver supplies failed.²⁰⁹³

Abu Safieh's subsequent updates referred to the deaths of injured patients due to the lack of supplies,²⁰⁹⁴ the death of people trapped under the rubble as there was no way to dig them out without the Civil Defense units,²⁰⁹⁵ and the deaths of more doctors in North Gaza.²⁰⁹⁶ On several occasions he noted that those who could reach the hospital may survive, and those that could not were left to die.²⁰⁹⁷ Abu Safieh also spoke about attacks on the hospital itself, which injured staff members, and recounted how quadcopters would drop "sound bombs" and

²⁰⁸⁷ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1851260276001148957> ;

<https://x.com/gazanotice/status/1851262527893622978> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1857523662435287545

²⁰⁸⁸ <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1852434690600235131>

²⁰⁸⁹ <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/israel-tells-un-cutting-ties-093606959.html> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/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_Muneeri/status/1853420267965468995 ;

<https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1853119264066351514> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1853830231259263091>

²⁰⁹⁰ <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1854479721876074814> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1852018347073818847 ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1853830231259263091>

²⁰⁹¹ <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>

²⁰⁹² <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2024-11-04/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000192-f14c-dec7-afda-fidd75c60000>

²⁰⁹³ For example: <https://www.unocha.org/news/todays-top-news-occupied-palestinian-territory-lebanon-haiti-philippines-ukraine> ; https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1857850411601858948

²⁰⁹⁴ <https://x.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1855611844456501489> ;

<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1856007165791580237>

²⁰⁹⁵ <https://x.com/KhaledYousry22/status/1855611844456501489> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1855860121982615882 ;

<https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1856359137212240103> ; see also:

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1855905476795306453 (6:00) ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1857523662435287545

²⁰⁹⁶ <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1856359137212240103>

²⁰⁹⁷ https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1855860121982615882

other bombs on the hospital courtyards.²⁰⁹⁸ Several attempts to bring specialist doctors to the hospital were denied.²⁰⁹⁹

By mid-November, Abu Safieh began reporting on Gazans with malnutrition who arrived at the hospital.²¹⁰⁰ 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.²¹⁰¹ 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.²¹⁰² Very few resources remained, so that the hospital called local Gazans with access to any medications to bring them to the hospital.²¹⁰³ Anecdotal evidence, reportedly from the hospital, affirms the absence of doctors and resources, as well as the suffering of patients.²¹⁰⁴ 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.²¹⁰⁵ 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.²¹⁰⁶ The hospital continued to be attacked – including injured people right outside the gate or Abu Safieh’s office.²¹⁰⁷ Late November attacks injured several medical staff, disabled the hospital’s power and oxygen supply, and targeted its water supply.²¹⁰⁸ The

²⁰⁹⁸ <https://x.com/translatingpal/status/1856007165791580237>

²⁰⁹⁹ https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1857850411601858948

²¹⁰⁰ https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1857523662435287545 ;
https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1857850411601858948 . See also:
https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1857825220653994421 ;
https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1858528590297706553 .

²¹⁰¹ <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1859179872297382300> ;
<https://x.com/AbujomaaGaza/status/1859190079702405379>

²¹⁰² https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1858944607624835210 ; geolocation:
<https://x.com/AbuLocation/status/1858843252469772678>

²¹⁰³ <https://x.com/ezzingaza/status/1857175646641762675>

²¹⁰⁴ https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1857803828101361766 ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1857624250414182465 ;

<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1858995226855309622>

²¹⁰⁵ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1858905688652570662> ;

<https://x.com/AbubakerAbedW/status/1858502758946455815> ;

<https://x.com/ezzingaza/status/1858599026511540389> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1858548788476137917

²¹⁰⁶ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-239-gaza-strip>

²¹⁰⁷ <https://x.com/ezzingaza/status/1857175646641762675> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1858905688652570662> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1858787051639820359 ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1858548788476137917

²¹⁰⁸ <https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1859716133093507365> ;

<https://x.com/DropSiteNews/status/1859718365360656672> ;

<https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1859730966820028489> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1859985594039849426 ;

<https://x.com/RamAbdu/status/1859845890212503727> ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/status/1860165191184384398 ;

https://x.com/Dr_Muneeri/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.²¹⁰⁹ Abu Safieh himself was seriously injured together with his two daughters in another.²¹¹⁰ 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.²¹¹¹ Attacks on the hospital, sometimes as often as five times a day, continued into early December.²¹¹² An international Emergency Medical Team was deployed to the hospital for the first time in 60 days on Dec. 1.²¹¹³

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.²¹¹⁴ 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.²¹¹⁵ The hospital was attacked again in late November.²¹¹⁶ Hospitals in Gaza City experienced many shortages as well.²¹¹⁷

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.²¹¹⁸ 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

²¹⁰⁹ 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>

²¹¹⁰ <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/1861113833542332843 ; <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>

²¹¹¹ <https://x.com/SaulStaniforth/status/1861063612640420287> ; <https://x.com/MosabAbuToha/status/1860719715242398140> ; https://x.com/Dr_Muneer1/status/1860773982770716878

²¹¹² <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1864042273261977890>

²¹¹³ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-243-gaza-strip>

²¹¹⁴ 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-00000192eebfd414a79fffbf88cc0000>

²¹¹⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-239-gaza-strip> .

²¹¹⁶ <https://x.com/AnasAlSharifo/status/1859730966820028489>

²¹¹⁷ 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>

²¹¹⁸ <https://apnews.com/world-news/still-wrecked-from-past-israeli-raids-hospitals-in-northern-gaza-come-under-attack-again-00000192eebfd414a79fffbf88cc0000>

found in the facility.²¹¹⁹ 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).²¹²⁰

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.

²¹¹⁹ See <https://apnews.com/world-news/still-wrecked-from-past-israeli-raids-hospitals-in-northern-gaza-come-under-attack-again-00000192eebfd414a79fffbf88cc0000>

²¹²⁰ According to AP: <https://apnews.com/world-news/still-wrecked-from-past-israeli-raids-hospitals-in-northern-gaza-come-under-attack-again-00000192eebfd414a79fffbf88cc0000>

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 NGOs²¹²¹ and now widely by international officials and lawyers²¹²² – 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 unwilling²¹²³ (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.²¹²⁴ 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 in 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”.²¹²⁵ A sapper added “the only limit to the number of buildings we blew up was the time we had inside Gaza”.²¹²⁶ 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

²¹²¹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/18/israel-starvation-used-weapon-war-gaza>

²¹²² See ICC’s expert panel report, paragraphs 28-33: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2024-05/240520-panel-report-eng.pdf>

²¹²³ The general public support that the IDF must maintain plays a significant role – reining in commanders and soldiers would easily lose this support.

²¹²⁴ <https://twitter.com/justfp/status/177561311711465554>

²¹²⁵ <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>

²¹²⁶ <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.²¹²⁷

²¹²⁷ <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:²¹²⁸ 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.

²¹²⁸ I would like to thank an anonymous reader and Hanoch 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 this²¹²⁹ or this²¹³⁰) - 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

²¹²⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/technology/israel-campaign-gaza-social-media.html>

²¹³⁰ <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 here²¹³¹).

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.

²¹³¹ 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.