



PCHR
المركز الفلسطيني
لحقوق الإنسان

VOICES OF THE GENOCIDE

A REPORT ON ISRAEL'S ONGOING GENOCIDE
ON THE GAZA STRIP

October 2023 – January 2025

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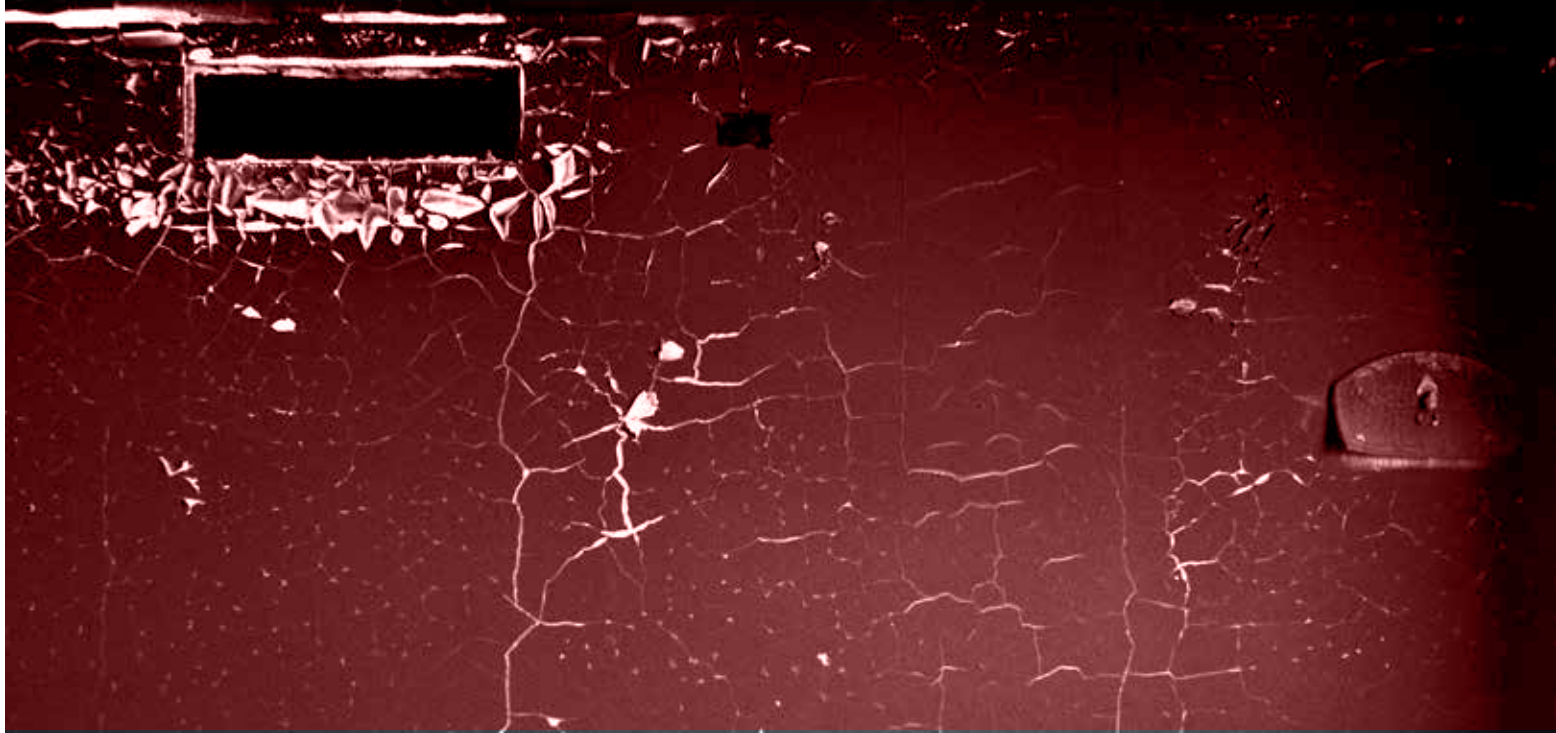
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FAO	» Food and Agriculture Organization
ICJ	» International Court of Justice
ICRC	» International Committee of the Red Cross
ICC	» International Criminal Court
ICTY	» International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IDPs	» Internally Displaced Persons
IHL	» International Humanitarian Law
IPC	» Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IOF	» Israeli Occupation Forces
IRC	» International Rescue Committee
MHPSS	» Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MSF	» Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)
OCHA	» UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PCHR	» Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
PMRS	» Palestine Medical Relief Society
PRCS	» Palestine Red Crescent Society
UN	» United Nations
UNCT	» UN Country Team
UNCTAD	» UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	» UN Environment Programme
UNESCO	» UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCK	» World Central Kitchen
WFP	» World Food Programme
WHO	» World Health Organization



FOREWORD

Nothing can compare to what is happening in Gaza. In the span of 20 months, the Palestinian people have endured atrocities and horrors on a scale unprecedented in their history, and their nightmare continues. Not even the 1948 Nakba, with its brutal killings, forced displacement, and uprooting, nor the 1956 war and the 1967 Israeli occupation of the rest of its territory, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights, can compare to the magnitude of destruction and bloodshed that Gaza is experiencing today. Even the wars waged by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) on Gaza over the past two decades pale in comparison.

From the very first moment of the Israeli military aggression on the Gaza Strip on 7 October 2023, the intent to commit genocide was evident. This intent was not only expressed directly by Israel's top officials, commanders, and decision-makers in their public statements, but was also made clear through the policies and actions of the state and their deliberate immediate and long-term impacts. The mass killing and attacks on civilians, the widespread destruction, the infliction of unbearable harm, and the obliteration of livelihoods, have created a reality in which the very survival of Palestinians as a national group has become impossible.

Words fail to capture the savagery of mass murder, the unfathomable scale of destruction, or the suffering of 2.3 million souls struggling to survive. Tens of thousands of tons of bombs and shells, some weighing up to 1,000 kilograms, have been mercilessly rained on Gaza by the IOF, indiscriminately targeting civilians and buildings across cities, villages, and refugee camps. Palestinians are also being arrested in the thousands and detained in inhumane conditions, subjected to the most heinous forms of torture, degrading treatment, and sexual violence. Dozens have been killed during interrogation or due to deliberate medical neglect, while thousands more have been forcibly disappeared, with no one knowing their fate.

Entire neighbourhoods have been levelled to the ground with their residents buried under the rubble without advance warning by successive strikes launched by warplanes in belt formation. Hundreds of families have been erased from existence, their entire communities wiped out—most of the victims being women and children. Vital public infrastructure has been bombed, including hospitals, universities, schools, roads, and essential utilities such as electricity, water, and sewage networks. Religious sites—mosques and churches—along with sources of food production, such as bakeries, farms, and factories, have not been spared from this devastating campaign of destruction.

Countless victims remain trapped under the rubble of their homes, unreachable by rescue and medical teams, either because the teams themselves have been directly targeted or because of the massive destruction of infrastructure and roads, or because of limited human and financial resources unable to cope with such unprecedented catastrophic conditions. Hundreds of bodies—children, women, young people, and the elderly—lie abandoned in the streets, preyed upon by animals, with their families being denied even the most basic dignity of burying their loved ones.

Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been forced to abandon their homes, leaving everything behind. Evacuation orders have been issued across the entire Gaza Strip, from north to south. Hundreds of civilians have been killed while attempting to flee through what the IOF designated as “safe corridors”, or while sheltering in areas they also claimed were safe. Those who survive are left wandering from one place to another, with no place to call home, in a continuous, desperate search for safety. The situation in shelters is dire, and epidemics and infectious diseases are spreading unchecked across Gaza. Despite the overwhelming need, only minimal efforts have been made to provide vaccines or medication for those suffering from preventable illnesses, especially children and pregnant women.

In the two most densely populated governorates—Gaza City and North Gaza—once home to around

1.2 million people, only about 400,000 remain. They face unimaginable humanitarian conditions, where imminent death, displacement, famine, disease, and a complete lack of life's essentials are a daily reality. Most of the survivors are trapped in shelters, themselves at constant risk of bombardment and death. In southern Gaza, the humanitarian catastrophe has also been intensifying. The majority of the population, alongside nearly a million displaced from the north, have been forced under relentless bombardment and constant evacuation orders to flee to the central Governorate. They were packed into the narrow Al-Mawasi coastal strip, which comprises just 11% of Gaza's total area.

Hospitals, sheltering thousands of civilians, have been besieged, bombed, and stormed, forcing most of them out of service with thousands of wounded crammed into emergency rooms and operating theatres and medical staff struggling to provide the necessary medical care. Amidst these harrowing circumstances, the wounded, sick, as well as premature babies are left to die, and the medical teams trying to save them are slaughtered in their own workplaces.

During the ongoing Israeli military attacks, Gaza has been under complete siege— electricity, fuel, and water supplies have been completely cut off, and humanitarian aid delivery ruthlessly blocked. Starvation has been weaponised as a military strategy, as documented not only by PCHR and other human rights organisations, but also by specialised international bodies. Hundreds of thousands of civilians, including children, are starving with families forced to rely on what remains of birds and animal feed to keep their children alive. Many deaths, especially among children, have been reported due to the famine ravaging them.

Even after a ceasefire agreement was reached in January 2025, Israel unabashedly continued its genocide, flagrantly violating the terms of the ceasefire on multiple occasions. After the temporary pause in violence, the resumption of full-scale operations marked an unequivocal continuation of the systematic campaign to destroy the Palestinian group, further revealing the deliberate and sustained nature of the genocide.

The current scene in Gaza after 20 months of genocidal war is one of unimaginable devastation, unlike anything seen in modern history. According to UN estimates, by mid-July 2024, the rubble from the bombing had surpassed 42 million tons.¹ Rafah, once a thriving city, has been reduced to a ghost town, utterly decimated following the full-scale invasion in May 2024. The majority of Khan Younis and its eastern towns have also been flattened, with their residents forced to flee to the already overcrowded Al-Mawasi area.

The genocide in Gaza is unfolding live, broadcast for the world to see, a scene that shames humanity, supported by the United States of America and numerous Western countries that arm Israel with weapons, military equipment, financial assistance,

¹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2024) *Gaza Strip - Preliminary Debris Management Scenarios - July 2024*. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-strip-preliminary-debris-management-scenarios-july-2024> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

and unwavering political support, making them partners in genocide. The lack of accountability and the impunity enjoyed by Israel have emboldened its blatant disregard for international law. The genocide in Gaza is the bitter harvest and culmination of decades of Western support for Israel's crimes and impunity. It is long overdue for the international community to step up, take responsibility, and put an end to this brazen violation of international law by the occupying state.

Raji Sourani

Director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights



INTRODUCTION

Since 7 October 2023, Israel has been waging one of its most violent and destructive attacks on the Gaza Strip, inflicting devastating consequences on its 2.3 million residents. The ongoing assault has transformed Gaza into what can only be described as “hell on Earth”.

As of 28 May 2025, at least 63,000 Palestinians have been killed or are missing, including over 18,000 children and 12,400 women, with 123,308 others injured.² However, the true toll is undoubtedly far higher³ and continues to rise daily. The destruction has gone far beyond loss of life. Gaza’s vital infrastructure has been systematically dismantled: entire neighbourhoods and cities have been levelled; schools, hospitals, and healthcare facilities obliterated; and basic services such as electricity, water, and sanitation rendered non-functional. Hospitals have become mass graves, while the Israeli

² Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 845. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3664> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

³ A recent study has estimated that up to 64,260 deaths occurred by 30 June 2024. The Lancet (2024) ‘Traumatic injury mortality in the Gaza Strip from October 7, 2023, to June 30, 2024: A capture–recapture analysis’, *The Lancet*. Available at: [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) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

blockade, coupled with the destruction of agricultural, commercial, and industrial sectors, has plunged Gaza into unprecedented economic and humanitarian collapse. Over two million people have been displaced multiple times, some as many as 25 times, forced to flee in search of safety. Much of Gaza's population struggles to survive in overcrowded, unsafe, makeshift shelters without adequate access to food, water, medical care, or sanitation, as famine and disease spread. The IOF has also carried out mass arrests, subjecting thousands of people to inhumane conditions and severe torture, resulting in dozens of deaths in detention facilities.

In light of the scale and intensity of these military attacks and official Israeli statements indicating an intent to destroy Gaza and its population, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), alongside other Palestinian human rights organisations, was among the first to warn of the imminent risk of genocide as early as October 2023, drawing on their direct observations on the ground.⁴

The failure of the international community to intervene prompted South Africa to initiate legal proceedings before the International Court of Justice (ICJ or the Court) on 29 December 2023 accusing Israel of engaging in genocidal acts against Palestinians in Gaza. It requested the ICJ to issue provisional measures to protect against further, severe, and irreparable harm to Palestinians' rights under the Genocide Convention and to ensure Israel's compliance with its obligations under the Convention.⁵ On 26 January 2024, the ICJ determined the plausibility that Israel was carrying out genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza⁶ and imposed six provisional measures on Israel, including ensuring the provision of essential services and humanitarian aid to the Palestinians.⁷

4 Al-Haq (2023). *Urgent Action: Palestinian Human Rights Organisations Call on Third States to Urgently Intervene to Protect the Palestinian People Against Genocide*. 13 October. Available at: <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/21898.html> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

5 United Nations (2023) *South Africa sues Israel at ICJ for genocide in Gaza*. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/icj-southafrica-israel-genocide-29dec2023/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

6 ICJ (2024) *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)* – Order of 26 January 2024, para. 74. Available at: <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/203447> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

7 *Ibid*, para. 86. The six provisional measures were as follow: Israel 1) shall take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II of the Genocide Convention; 2) shall ensure with immediate effect that its military does not commit any acts of genocide; 3) shall take all measures within its power to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide; 4) shall take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip; 5) shall take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of Article II and Article III of the Genocide Convention 6) shall submit a report to the Court on all measures taken to give effect to this Order within one month as from the date of this Order..

Despite this binding order and the consecutive orders issued by the Court,⁸ Israel has deliberately and continuously defied the ICJ. Instead, it has intensified its genocide against the civilian population of Gaza, killing thousands more, increasing its destruction, and blocking the entry of food, medical supplies, and basic necessities, weaponising starvation and famine.

In response, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Karim, Khan, filed an application for arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Israeli Minister of Defence, Yoav Gallant on 20 May 2024.⁹ These warrants were sought in connection with their alleged roles in perpetrating crimes against humanity and war crimes committed from at least 8 October 2023. Six months later, the ICC finally issued the arrest warrants.¹⁰ Yet, the two Israeli officials remain at large and have been able to travel, including to the United States.

On 15 January 2025, Israel finally agreed to a ceasefire, which came into effect four days later. However, despite this agreement, Israel has repeatedly violated its terms, by killing more civilians, delaying its withdrawal from Gaza, and obstructing the entry of essential necessities, maintaining its deadly blockade. It finally resumed its full-scale military attacks in March 2025, during the Holy month of Ramadan, and imposed a complete siege. Such actions have only worsened the already dire humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip caused by its ongoing military attacks, prolonging the suffering of its population and continuing the genocide that began in October 2023.

At the time of writing, Gaza has been pushed to the brink of total collapse. Israel's ongoing siege has cut off all humanitarian access, preventing the delivery of desperately needed food, medicine, fuel, and relief supplies. The population faces extreme levels of hunger, particularly among children, and those trying to desperately get aid are being killed by the Israeli army. The complete breakdown of medical services has left thousands without access to life-saving treatment, while infectious diseases are spreading rapidly due to overcrowded shelters, contaminated water sources, and the collapse of sanitation systems. The vast majority of Gaza's residents remain displaced, trapped in shrinking and unsafe areas under constant threat of renewed bombardment.

This report documents the genocide committed against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip over the course of 15-month between October 2023 and January 2025, contextualising it within its prelude, which is rooted in 75 years of settler-colonialism in Palestine, during which the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people have been systematically

8 ICJ (2024) *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)* – Order of 28 March 2024, para. 21. Available at: <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240328-ord-01-00-en.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025); ICJ (2024) *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)* – Order of 24 May 2024, para. 57 Available at: <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240524-ord-01-00-en.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

9 International Criminal Court (ICC) (2024) *Statement of ICC Prosecutor Karim A.A. Khan KC: Applications for arrest warrants in the Situation in the State of Palestine*. 24 May. Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-applications-arrest-warrants-situation-state> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

10 International Criminal Court (ICC) (2024) *Statement of ICC Prosecutor Karim A.A. Khan KC on the issuance of arrest warrants in the Situation in the State of Palestine*. 21 November. Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-issuance-arrest-warrants-situation-state-palestine> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

denied (Section 1). The report provides a detailed chronology of the military aggression that began on 7 October 2023 (Section 2.A.), as well as of the main patterns of the genocide (Section 2.B.). It further examines the Israeli actions and their characterisation as acts of genocide as defined under Article II of the Genocide Convention and highlights key statements made by Israeli officials that express their intent to commit genocide. The analysis concludes with a legal assessment of these actions, determining that the State of Israel, through its official institutions and any individuals or entities acting under its direction, support, or control, has breached its obligations under the Genocide Convention (Section 3).



REPORT METHODOLOGY

This report is based on the documentation by PCHR of the genocidal acts committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip between October 2023 and January 2025. It integrates the voices of those directly affected and who had survived the genocide at the time of writing, offering a window into the lived experiences of Palestinians in Gaza through their own words. By including direct quotes from survivors, this report aims to ensure that their perspectives are not only represented but are at the heart of the analysis. The title, *Voices of the Genocide*, underscores the importance of these testimonies in the documentation of events, as these firsthand accounts provide invaluable insights into the human cost of Israel's atrocities in Gaza.

For the purpose of this report, PCHR collected testimonial and open-source information. The report is based on 1225 interviews conducted by PCHR with Palestinians from Gaza. Given the scale of the atrocities committed since the onset of the violence in October 2023, PCHR has encountered difficulties in obtaining and presenting up-to-date statistical data and information, due to continuous disruptions in communications, destruction of infrastructure, and the hazardous environment. As a result, the report relies not only on the firsthand documentation gathered by PCHR but also incorporates open-source information to corroborate and complement its findings. These secondary sources include official reports

from local bodies in Gaza, international organisations such as the United Nations (UN), and human rights organisations that have been monitoring the situation. PCHR also collected social media posts, media articles, reports, and webpages. These sources have proven essential in offering a broader picture of the genocide.

The report's legal analysis is based on the provisions of the 1948 Genocide Convention, focusing on the acts defined as genocide under Articles II (a), (b), (c), and (d). This includes the killing of members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm, inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction, and preventing births. The analysis was conducted by a team of Palestinian and international legal experts with extensive experience in documenting international crimes. These experts carefully examined the actions of Israel in Gaza to determine whether the actions meet the threshold of genocide and whether genocidal intent can be established. Through this approach, the report seeks to ensure accountability and to raise global awareness of the atrocities being committed, advocating for international intervention to stop the ongoing genocide.

As the genocide continues, PCHR remains committed to its ongoing efforts to interview survivors and document the atrocities they have endured. The scale and scope of the violations, coupled with the ongoing nature of the conflict, means that it will take years to fully capture and document the extent of Israeli crimes. PCHR's field researchers and legal unit teams continue to work under challenging conditions to ensure that the voices of the survivors are heard and that their testimonies are preserved for future accountability. The information collected during these interviews will be continuously integrated into the analysis of this report, and shared in supplementary releases to keep the international community informed of the unfolding crisis.



BACKGROUND

ISRAEL'S ZIONIST SETTLER-COLONIAL PROJECT IN PALESTINE

The genocide carried out by Israel in the Gaza Strip since October 2023 cannot be fully understood and analysed without considering the 75-year history of its Zionist settler-colonial project in Palestine. The ongoing genocide in Gaza is not an isolated event but rather a continuation of this centuries-old colonial agenda. Zionism, the ideological foundation of the Israeli state, has fundamentally shaped Israel's policies and actions towards Palestinians. From its inception, the political vision of Israel's founding leaders was grounded in the colonisation of Palestine, with a clear objective to establish a Jewish homeland by displacing the indigenous Palestinian population. This ideology justified, and continues to justify, the expulsion, dispossession, and massacre of Palestinians, forming a legacy of ethnic cleansing, apartheid, and the systematic denial of Palestinian self-determination. This legacy continues to this day, with the ongoing genocide in Gaza, serving as

both a continuation and a tool to further the goals of the Zionist settler-colonial agenda to erase the Palestinian people and their right to exist in their land.

This agenda was operationalised through a series of strategic political, military, legal, and social actions, beginning with the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which set the stage for mass Jewish immigration to Palestine. Following World War I and the end of the Ottoman Empire, the British Mandate of Palestine was formally established on 11 September 1922 under the promise of preparing the region for independence in line with the Covenant of the League of Nations.¹¹ However, the United Kingdom had already paved the way for the creation of a “national home for the Jewish people” through the Balfour Declaration.¹² This move facilitated Jewish immigration, land acquisition, foreign occupation and settlement in Palestine, while simultaneously suppressing Palestinian resistance and undermining the rights and sovereignty of the indigenous population.

Between 1947 and 1948, Zionist militias, and later the Israeli army, deliberately destroyed over 400 Palestinian villages, committing massacres and forcibly displacing nearly one million Palestinians from their homes, during a period tragically known as the *Nakba* (catastrophe). On 14 May 1948, with the termination of the British Mandate, the State of Israel was established on the ruins of Palestinian land and people, with the support of the UN. The UN General Assembly decided to partition Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish, with Jerusalem placed under a special international regime.¹³ Israel declared itself a state over territory exceeding what had been allocated under the 1947 partition plan, in direct violation of the Resolution 181(II).

On 29 November 1948, Israel applied for membership in the UN, and was admitted on 11 May 1949 under the condition that it would respect the implementation of Resolution 181(II). However, to this day, Israel has never honoured this commitment. The creation of the state of Israel, based on the ideology of Zionism, ignored the fundamental rights of Palestinians, including their right to self-determination. In the years that followed, Israel implemented policies to consolidate its control over Palestine, systematically colonising and fragmenting Palestinian land through military occupation, settlement expansion, land theft, as well as killing and brutalising its population.

11 Palestine was designated as a Class ‘A’ Mandate under the Covenant of the League of Nations, placing it under British administration following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. According to the terms of the mandate, such territories were to receive administrative guidance and support from the Mandatory power until they were deemed capable of self-governance.

12 The Balfour Declaration was contained in a letter from the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Lionel Walter Rothschild, a leader of the Zionist Federation on 2 November 1917.

13 United Nations General Assembly (1947) *Resolution 181 (II) Future government of Palestine*.

In 1967, following the Six-Day War, Israel seized all of historic Palestine, including Gaza, and adopted measures to entrench the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. Israel's actions included the alteration of East Jerusalem's legal status by applying its domestic law and the annexation of Jerusalem in 1980. This coincided with the systematic Judaisation of the city, transforming its demographic and cultural fabric while forcing Palestinians to leave. Additionally, Israel began building settlements in East Jerusalem, forcibly transferring Jewish populations to further alter the city's demographic makeup and solidify its control.

Israel continued its policy of fragmentation in the West Bank by seizing public and private lands, constructing settlements, and building a network of roads connecting them. These settlements surrounded and isolated Palestinian cities, villages, and refugee camps, while military checkpoints were established to restrict and control Palestinian movement. Under the pretext of "security," Israel built the Annexation Wall, a structure that further entrenched Israeli annexationist goals, absorbing approximately 60% of the West Bank and deepening the geographic and demographic fragmentation of the Palestinian population.

Despite the 2004 ICJ advisory opinion declaring that the Wall violated international law,¹⁴ Israel continued to expand its settler-colonial project. It continued to build the Annexation Wall and expand settlements, both by constructing new settlements and expanding existing ones horizontally and vertically. By September 2023, the number of Israeli settlers had surged to 700,000, spread across nearly 300 settlements and outposts throughout the West Bank. Of these settlers, approximately 230,000 live in Jerusalem.¹⁵

Gaza, with its high population density and a majority of refugees, has also long been seen by Israel as a demographic barrier to the expansion of the Zionist settler-colonial project. The idea of displacing Palestinians from Gaza is not a new concept born out of the current war or a reaction to the 7 October attack; Israel has long aimed to empty Gaza, a goal dating back to the 1950s.¹⁶ After occupying Gaza in 1967, Israel employed various methods to encourage the expulsion of Palestinians, including promoting migration to Jordan, particularly between 1967 and 1968. It also carried out widespread destruction of refugee camps under the pretext of security and launched housing projects designed to empty camps of their inhabitants.¹⁷ Although the mass displacement plans failed, the dream of relocating the population persisted.

In 2005, Israel withdrew its forces and settlers from the Gaza Strip and dismantled its settlements. However, this move

14 International Court of Justice (ICJ) (2004) *Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, 8 December. Available at: <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/131> (Accessed: 29 May 2025)

15 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2024) *Palestine: March 2024 Report*. p. 1. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/Palestine-March2024.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

16 See Al-Sharif, M. (2023) 'Projects to settle Gazans in Sinai between Yesterday and Today', *Institute for Palestine Studies*, 19 October. Available at: <https://www.alquds.com/en/posts/97168?language=he> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

17 Hazboun, N.N. (1994) *The Resettlement of the Palestinian Refugees in the Gaza Strip*. PhD thesis, University of Leeds. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/42605857.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

did not alter Israel's occupation and *de facto* control over Gaza through air, sea, and land, including controlling border crossings and restricting the movement of people and goods. Since then, Gaza has been subjected to an inhumane and illegal siege, effectively turning Gaza into what has been described as the world's largest open-air prison. Since 2007, Israel has imposed a complete siege on Gaza, which remains in place today, triggering a severe, man-made humanitarian crisis. The closure has devastated every aspect of daily life for Gazans, leading to an unprecedented deterioration in living conditions and creating an environment where life has become increasingly unsustainable for the population. Many UN agencies, including the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), have warned of the dire consequences of the siege, predicting that Gaza would become uninhabitable by 2020.¹⁸

Alongside the illegal and inhuman siege, the IOF has also launched four major wars on the Gaza Strip between 2008 and 2021, resulting in thousands of casualties, mostly civilians, and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities, educational institutions, mosques and churches, residential buildings, as well as industrial and agricultural facilities, roads, electricity and water networks, and sewage system. PCHR investigations have shown that the destruction was not mere collateral damage, but rather part of a deliberate strategy by the IOF to target civilians and civilian objects, acts amounting to war crimes.¹⁹ For example, after the 2008 war, known as "Operation Cast Lead", the UN Human Rights Council's Fact-Finding Mission concluded that contrary to Israel's claims:

18 See for example, UN Country Team (UNCT) (2012) *Gaza in 2020: A livable place?*. Available at: <https://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/file/publications/gaza/Gaza%20in%202020.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025); UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (2015) *Gaza could become uninhabitable in less than five years*. Available at: <https://unctad.org/press-material/gaza-could-become-uninhabitable-less-five-years-wake-2014-conflict-and-ongoing-de> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

19 See for example, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR): *Palestinian Human Rights Organisations Deliver Submission to the International Criminal Court on Alleged Israeli, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity during 2014 Gaza offensive*. Available at: <https://pchrghaza.org/?p=1471> (Accessed: 29 May 2025); Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) PCHR Release New Report 23 Days of War, 928 Days of Closure: Life One Year after Israel's Latest Offensive on the Gaza Strip, 27 December 2008 – 18 January 2009. Available at: <https://pchrghaza.org/?p=1214> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

[...] the operations were in furtherance of an overall policy aimed at punishing the Gaza population for its resilience and for its apparent support for Hamas, and possibly with the intent of forcing a change in such support. [...] . They were also to a large degree aimed at destroying or incapacitating civilian property and the means of subsistence of the civilian population. [...] the destruction of food supply installations, water sanitation systems, concrete factories and residential houses was the result of a deliberate and systematic policy by the Israeli armed forces. It was not carried out because those objects presented a military threat or opportunity, but to make the daily process of living, and dignified living, more difficult for the civilian population.²⁰

Similar findings were reached by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry regarding the 2014 war.²¹

The Great March of Return protests in 2018 marked another significant moment in Israel's campaign to suppress Palestinian rights. Palestinians in Gaza called for the right of return for refugees and an end to the siege. Despite the peaceful nature of these protests, Israel responded with excessive and deadly force, resulting in the deaths of civilians. By the end of the year, according to PCHR's documentation, Israel had killed 180 Palestinians, including 35 children and one woman, and injured 10,000 others, including more than 1,800 children and over 290 women. Many of the injuries were deemed critical, causing hundreds of amputations, especially of lower limbs.

Israel's security establishment viewed the protests as a direct challenge to its settler-colonial project. The sight of tens of thousands of Palestinians along the border demanding their right to return was unprecedented, and unseen in other refugee communities in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, or even the West Bank. This protest was distinctly Gazan, and for Israel, it highlighted the persistence of Palestinian resistance, even 75 years after the Nakba. The only response Israel saw was further displacement, ethnic cleansing, and, ultimately, genocide. In this context, the events of 7 October were used as a pretext to accelerate these efforts and push forward Israel's long-standing plans to empty Gaza of its population.

²⁰ UN Human Rights Council (2009) *Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict*, paras 1884, 1890 and 1891. Available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g09/158/66/pdf/g0915866.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

²¹ UN Human Rights Council (2014) *Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 July. See for example, para. 53. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-185919/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

01

EVIDENCE OF THE GENOCIDE IN THE GAZA STRIP

Over the course of 15 months, Israel has carried out the deadliest and most destructive attack on Gaza, reducing it to rubble and causing the deaths and injuries of thousands. The following section presents direct quotes from six survivors who testify to the horrific conditions they lived during this period and the unbearable loss they suffered. It then offers a comprehensive reconstruction of the main milestones of the genocidal war, detailing its progression from the first day of aggression up until the ceasefire which came into effect on 19 January 2025. Finally, it outlines the primary patterns of the genocide identified by PCHR, based on both its own documentation and open-source information.

A. VOICES FROM GAZA

Eman Tayseer 'Awad Ghabboun (33) shared with PCHR how her life has been shattered by the war. Following the arrest and torture of her husband by Israeli forces, she endured relentless bombardment, the destruction of her home, and the deaths of her children, mother, and other relatives. Forced to flee repeatedly with her surviving children, while pregnant, she faced hunger, illness, and grave injuries amid a collapsing healthcare system. Trapped in besieged hospitals and subjected to inhumane conditions, her story reflects the profound human toll of the conflict and the desperate struggle for survival under siege.

“

I am married to Ibrahim Jamil 'Asi Ghabboun, who was released from Israeli prisons on 4 November 2023 via the Kerem Shalom Crossing in Rafah, south of the Gaza Strip, after being arrested by the IOF from his workplace in Rahat, Israel on 19 October 2023, noting that he had a work permit. While in Israeli prison, my husband suffered torments of detention, torture and insults. I have three children: Jamil (12), Majd (8), and Ameer (4) and gave birth to a beautiful baby girl whom I named Rahma, but she died when I delivered her. I lived at my in-laws' 4-story house, which was later levelled to the ground after being bombed by the IOF. We have been forcibly displaced several times. Following the end of the humanitarian pause on 1 December 2023, the IOF heavily fired teargas canisters and indiscriminate shells in the area, forcing us to leave and seek refuge in my aunt's house near Kamal 'Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia Housing Project. A few days later, the 4-story house of our relatives, the 'Assaf family, located opposite my aunt's house, was bombed and completely destroyed. The targeted house was crammed with many displaced women, children, and men. About 36 people were killed in that bombing, including my relatives, my aunts, and my mother-in-law. Also, my three children sustained various injuries all over their bodies.

On 3 December 2023, the IOF surrounded Kamal 'Adwan Hospital, and we remained trapped there for 15 days. We slept on the floor without blankets or mattresses, and there was no food or water in the hospital, which was overcrowded with displaced people. When we were trapped in Kamal 'Adwan Hospital, I was trying to find treatment for my son Majd (8), who suffers from a rare liver inborn disease. Majd had been receiving treatment at an Israeli hospital since his birth, and his medications, which were unavailable in the Gaza Strip, were provided by the hospital. As hunger and siege intensified, Majd's

health began to deteriorate due to malnutrition and lack of treatment. After 15 days of being trapped inside the hospital, the IOF ordered all men to leave, while women and children were left behind in the hospital without food or water for three days. After we were forced to leave, my children and I went to my family in Jabalia refugee camp. Upon arriving there, I was informed that the IOF had killed my brother Ibrahim after ordering all the men to leave the school. They shot him in his back, killing him immediately. Additionally, my other brother, Mohammed was arrested by the IOF. We stayed at Al-Fouqa School for about 35 days enduring a severe shortage of food and water, as well as the overcrowding of displaced people. Fear and worry engulfed me as I was seeing my sick son Majd's deteriorating health. We left the school in mid-January 2024 and sought refuge at Al-Kuwait School near the Indonesian Hospital. While at school, famine started spreading with only scarce food, water, and flour available amid the high prices of commodities, if they were even available. I started feeling exhausted and ill due to the lack of food, especially since I was eight months pregnant. My children also showed signs of fatigue and paleness due to malnutrition while my son Majd lost more than 5 kilograms. As Majd requires proper nutrition and glucose solutions, which were not available, I decided to go to the southern Gaza Strip to save myself and my children from the famine and poverty striking the northern Gaza Strip. The next morning, I took my children and headed to Al-Rashid Street to cross the military checkpoint established there. It was noon when we reached Al-Nabulsi roundabout near the checkpoint, along with thousands of displaced people like us fleeing for their lives. We found ourselves surrounded by Israeli tanks, which directly fired an artillery shell at us, wounding me and my children. I lost consciousness and woke up three days later in bed at Al-Shifa Medical Complex. I couldn't move my body at all, and the doctors informed me that after the shelling, displaced people had rescued me and my son Jamil and brought us to the complex. More than 50 people were killed in the incident; some were waiting for aid trucks to feed their starving children and families, while others were trying to cross to the south. After I woke up, I was told that my sons Majd and Ameer were killed, and their bodies were torn into pieces. I also learned that I sustained severe fractures in my left foot and needed a bone graft. Additionally, my left hand's joint was completely smashed, and I needed a full joint replacement. I also sustained severe burns in my face, which caused me to lose hearing after my left ear was completely severed. I now need a cochlear implant. Later, I obtained a medical referral for treatment abroad.

On 28 February 2024, I began to feel labour pains. We started searching for a doctor to help me with delivery. However, we could not find a single gynaecologist nor any medications or medical supplies at the hospital. Some nurses, who were not specialised in obstetrics, assisted me in delivering my daughter, Rahma, who was born dead due to the severe bleeding and injuries I sustained from the

bombing. I remained in the hospital for treatment until 19 March 2024 when we were surprised with the IOF besieging the hospital and Israeli tanks advancing under fire from warplanes and quadcopters targeting anyone moving in the hospital's vicinity. We were completely trapped without food, water, or electricity. The following day, the IOF ordered patients' companions to evacuate the hospital and head southwards. My mother, E'atedal Ghabboun (62) was forced to evacuate and leave me behind. My brothers later informed me that she went to her relatives' house in Tel al-Hawa near the Red Cross headquarters and the IOF besieged them in Tel al-Hawa and ordered them to evacuate. However, my mother was unable to move, so the IOF shot her, killing her instantly.

I was left alone, unable to move during the siege on the hospital. We were around 100 patients unable to move in the building, and the IOF ordered nurses to move us from one place to another and shot some of them dead. The number of patients decreased day by day as they died due to the critical injuries and inflammations amid lack of treatment and after being intentionally killed by the IOF. Also, our injuries got infected with worms coming out of our hand and leg injuries with no medical care. For 14 days, we spent all that time without even a sip of water or food. We then began screaming and calling for water and food, and they brought us only a little. The IOF also constantly threatened to kill us. We remained in that situation until the IOF's withdrawal after 14 days.

Afterwards, I called my brother who came and took me from al-Shifa Hospital to be then referred to Al-Maamadani Hospital, staying there only for less than an hour as doctors informed me that my treatment was not available. On 17 April 2024, my brother took me along with the remaining members of my family and headed to the south. I crossed the checkpoint on a worn-out wheelchair. We immediately went to the European Hospital, where I underwent surgery to place an external fixation device in my injured leg. Doctors informed me that it was a preventive procedure until I could travel for treatment abroad. They also informed me that if I wasn't referred abroad soon, my leg might need to be amputated.”

Jawdat Muneer Jawdat Abu Naser shared with PCHR his experience during the genocide. He explained how he was repeatedly forced to evacuate and how he lost 129 members of his family in a single airstrike on his home without warning, despite previous attempts to evacuate.

“*With the beginning of the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip on 7 October 2023, my family and I evacuated our residential building and took refuge in the Abu Naser family building in the Beit Lahia Housing Project. My family and I remained in the building until December 2023. Due to the extremely dangerous security situation in the area, all the residents of the building decided to seek refuge in the Jabalia Schools for Boys in the Jabalia market area. We left the building in the midst of intense bombing and indiscriminate shelling of our area and its surroundings.*

During this period, from the day after the end of the humanitarian pause until the end of December, we endured the worst times due to the intense bombardment throughout the northern Gaza Strip and the IOF's ground invasion into new areas, including the Jabalia refugee camp and the Beit Lahia Housing Project. During my stay in the school, it was bombed almost every day. I remember that just a few days after we arrived, on 4 December, about 15 people were killed when the school was sporadically targeted by drone missiles for days. This ended with the IOF besieging and raiding the school.

As a result, I was forced to flee with all my family members just before the IOF stormed it. They left under intense bombardment, indiscriminate shelling and the relentless and unprecedented hovering sound of quadcopters everywhere. We went to the west of Gaza City. A few days later, I was reunited with my family members who had been separated when we fled the school. At first I thought they had died because of the dangerous situation at the time.

In mid-December 2023, we took refuge in a school, I do not remember its name, but it was used as a shelter in Al-Rimal neighbourhood, west of Gaza City. However, in January 2024, we decided to return to the Beit Lahia Housing Project due to fears of a possible IOF invasion of western Gaza City.

In March 2024, the IOF issued new evacuation orders for some areas in northern Gaza, ordering residents to move to western Gaza City. Beit Lahia Housing Project was one of the areas to be evacuated, so my family and I returned to our neighbourhood in Al-Salateen-al-'Atatra area, west of the Gaza Strip. However, our house was razed to the ground and we had no choice but to seek refuge in the Abu Ja'far school in the Al-'Atatra neighbourhood.

After their withdrawal from the northern Gaza Strip in mid-April, the retreating Israeli military vehicles advanced towards us in the north-western and north-eastern areas of Gaza, where the Abu Ja'far school was located. At that moment we feared an IOF invasion, especially when they bombed a classroom inside the school, killing five people and injuring others. Most of the wounded suffered amputations. After the attack, we were forced to evacuate the school and return to the Abu Naser family building, where we stayed until the massacre of my family.

During our presence in the Abu Naser house, which housed about 200 of my relatives, the security situation was relatively calm. At that time, we believed that the war would end soon, especially since the IOF had already invaded most areas of the Gaza Strip, some of which were invaded several

times, including northern Gaza, which was invaded twice. Other areas that had not been invaded were destroyed by air strikes.

On 5 October 2024, we were surprised when IOF warplanes pounded northern Gaza with heavy bombardment, with artillery shells falling everywhere and quadcopters hovering overhead, firing indiscriminately at various areas in northern Gaza. This was accompanied by the IOF dropping leaflets over our residential area, ordering all residents of northern Gaza to evacuate their homes, claiming that the area was a dangerous combat zone.

All the residents of the Abu Naser building obeyed the IOF's orders. But as we tried to leave the building, the artillery and quadcopter fire intensified, targeting anything moving in the streets. Bullets fell like rain on anyone who moved; the situation was completely different from the previous ones, as the IOF military vehicles had all the northern areas of Gaza under control and blocked all the entrances and exits from the first moments of their invasion. Therefore, we decided to return to the building as the way out was fraught with danger and death, especially as many families who tried to evacuate their homes were shot by the IOF and their bodies were strewn in the streets.

We remained trapped in the northern Gaza Strip from 5 October 2024 until 29 October 2024. During this time, the humanitarian situation worsened and became more difficult as we lacked even the basic necessities of life due to severe shortages of food, water and medicine. By mid-October 2024, we were running out of water, and each of the five of us would share a cup of water. As for food, a loaf of bread was also shared among more than five people.

On 24 October 2024, the IOF sent a quadcopter that played a recording through its loudspeaker, calling all the displaced people in Al-Fakhoura school, which is about 50 metres away from us. We gathered all the people in our building, about 200 people, and tried to leave towards Al-Fakhoura school to join the displaced people. However, the IOF opened indiscriminate fire at us and the quadcopters called on us to go back and not to approach the area. We obeyed the orders and returned to the building.

At approximately 21:30 on 28 October 2024, the 'Odah family building, which is adjacent to our building on the south side, was bombed above its residents. Scattered shrapnel killed Layan Husam Nabil Abu Naser (12), Yaseen Husam Nabil Abu Naser (6), Suha 'Adnan Abu Naser (37) and Ahmed Mohammed Abu Naser (3 months) and injured Suha Shawqi 'Issa Abu Naser and Heba Shawqi 'Issa Abu Naser, both of whom were seriously injured after shrapnel entered their heads. Unfortunately, we were unable to treat them or evacuate the bodies, which we left in the apartment until sunrise to see what we could do. We did our best to give first aid to the injured.

Tired, I went to sleep, as did most of the people in the building. I remember that my family and I were in the east room of

the apartment. At about 04:00 on 29 October 2024, I felt as if I had been thrown into a fireball, or as if I were in a hot oven, as debris rained down on me while I was lying on the sofa. Suddenly dust filled the area and I could see nothing but pitch black. After a few moments I tried to get up, not knowing what was happening, but my head hit the ceiling and I fell to the floor. It was then that I realised that our house had been targeted and completely destroyed above our heads. The ground floor had fallen about two metres and the upper floors had certainly collapsed on top of it. Surviving this crime with those who were in the same room with me was a divine miracle!

Minutes after the massacre, I heard the voice of my wife, Ayat Shadi Sameer Abu Naser, screaming and calling for me to help her and my mother, Laila Naser Khamis Abu Naser. I quickly removed the stones from their bodies and they began to regain consciousness. I, along with other survivors from the ground, began to rescue the injured through a small hole created by the bombing on the north-eastern side of the ground floor. Through this hole, our only exit from the building, about 15 survivors and injured people and I managed to get out.

After rescuing my injured family members, I rushed to the street to help the wounded and transport the martyrs. The scene was unimaginable! Bodies were strewn everywhere, body parts were found around the flattened building, in its vicinity or on the roofs of nearby houses, like a scene from a horror film. Most of the bodies were torn to pieces.

We recovered about 120 bodies over the course of two days after the massacre. I will never forget the horrific and painful scenes of searching for the bodies, most of which were children and women, torn into charred pieces, some with only half a body. I remember that when we tried to recover the bodies from the rubble, some of them were trapped under the rubble and we had to cut off parts of them in order to get them out. I also remember that, while we were searching for the bodies and the injured, we heard the voices of some family members who were still alive, trapped under the rubble. We could hear them screaming from under the rubble, "Save us, save us! We tried so hard throughout the day to trace their voices and locate them, but to no avail. They remained under the rubble and had not been rescued."

Hadeel Yousef 'Issa al-Dahdouh (24), from Al-Zaytoun neighbourhood in Gaza City, told PCHR how her home was targeted and how she was later arrested, separated from her children and tortured.



On 8 October 2023, we heard our neighbours shouting in the street that the IOF was going to bomb our neighbour's house, the residents of the nearby houses evacuated and ran in the street to stay as far away as possible from the house that had been warned to be bombed. Immediately, my husband and I took our children downstairs to my brother-in-law's house to shelter from the bombing and stay in a relatively safe place. The house was then bombed, which strongly shook our house, and fortunately none of us were injured.

For four days after the war broke out, I stayed in my apartment on the 4th floor and witnessed all the bombing and shelling that hit the Shuja'iyya neighbourhood. We were very frightened by the heavy shelling and my children were screaming with fear. The bombing and shelling intensified dramatically and came closer to our house. We were scared to death and nervous all the time. All I did was sit and hug my children who were screaming with fear.

At about 07:00 on 16 October 2023, my children and I were in our apartment looking out the window. I was holding my 9-month-old baby in my hands, while my other child was next to me, when suddenly the IOF fired a missile at our house, severely damaging half of it. Thank God I was not in the other part of the house, but the intensity of the bombardment pushed me inside as if a ball of fire had exploded in my face and knocked me to the ground. I thought my children were dead as shattered glass flew over our heads. Small pieces of glass were stuck in my hands and feet after the windows were shattered, and the security bars and frames of the windows were blown out. I carried my children and ran down to the ground floor in fear, looking for my husband. I went down barefoot with my 4-year-old and the stairs were full of debris and glass. I found my brother-in-law badly injured in the abdomen, with his organs protruding from his body, while his wife, who was nine months pregnant and in her bedroom, had shrapnel wounds in her back, face and waist. She was covered in blood and said, "I can't feel my body. My mother-in-law was also injured in the head by flying glass.

I cannot describe how difficult the situation was and the palpable fear that gripped us. My children were screaming loudly, and I was crying and shaking with fear. I screamed and looked for my husband, who I later found also wounded, with a hairline fracture in his hand.

After our house was bombed, we evacuated to my aunt in law's house in Al-Sham'a area in the old city of Gaza, where we stayed for 20 days. Then the IOF threatened a house next to ours, forcing us to evacuate again. We went to my father's house, which was a few metres away from my house in the Al-Zaytoun neighbourhood, but it was overcrowded with displaced people. I stayed there until the day before the ceasefire was announced on 23 November 2023, when we decided to return to our house. We stayed on the ground floor with my in-laws, who also returned to their house after the ceasefire. At that time, the IOF was stationed in Tel Al-Hawa, near the Omar Ibn al-'Aas Mosque, and we received text messages calling for evacuation, which had been going on since the first day of the war on Gaza. [...]



As she was searching for food in her old home, Hadeel described how they were targeted by sniper fire. Her brother-in-law was killed, and another was injured while trying to help. The Israeli snipers continued shooting as they screamed and cried over the victims. Fearing further danger, they fled to safety, and her husband managed to carry his injured brother to a nearby hospital while under fire from a quadcopter. Throughout this ordeal, Hadeel spoke of the profound fear, loss, and distress they experienced. A few weeks later, she and her husband were arrested by the IOF, forced to abandon their children, and subjected to torture.

Mohammed Ibrahim Mohammed 'Awad Qaddourah (15) survived a devastating airstrike on 19 November 2023. While gathered with his family for evening prayer, their home was suddenly bombed, burying him under rubble for eight terrifying hours. He was eventually rescued and taken to the overcrowded Indonesian Hospital, where he learned he was the sole survivor of his immediate family.

“

I am a 9th grade student. On Sunday, 19 November 2023, while we were all standing together for the Maghrib prayer, a sudden explosion occurred, and I felt like a fire heightening my face. It felt like I was flying and then fainted. I opened my eyes to find myself buried under the rubble. It was all pitch-dark, and I felt heavy weight pressing on my body. That's when I realised the house had been bombed. I remained under the rubble for eight hours, feeling terrified and cold. I could still hear the sound of bombing around me. Later, I heard ambulances so I started calling out so they would save me. It turned out the ceiling of the house had fallen on me. Paramedics pulled me out from under the rubble and took me to the Indonesian Hospital. As the hospital was overcrowded with the injured, they left me on the floor, feeling severe pains all over my body. I could not walk, my left eye was swollen shut and I could not see with it, and I had burns on various parts of my body. I heard one of the medics assisting the doctor say: 'This child is the only survivor from his family.' The situation at the Indonesian hospital was catastrophic as it was besieged and raided by IOF, forcing the evacuation of the injured in two buses to the European Hospital. I lost consciousness on the way, and then woke up there, where some told me that my uncle's wife, Mariam 'Abdel Men'em 'Abed Raboh (30) was in the nearby room. When I asked about my family, they told me they were all injured and remained in the north. At that moment, I realised he was lying, and they had all been killed, and their bodies were not recovered due to the siege. I went to my uncle's wife—her condition was critical; she was badly burned. As soon as she saw me, she began to cry and scream. She said, "Your uncle Raed, and his children Ahmed (10), Huda (8), and the twin girls Sama and Lama (20), were all killed. They left me alone." She was later transferred abroad for medical treatment due to

the severity of her injuries. I learnt later that all my family members had been killed: my father Ibrahim “Mohammad Awad” Qaddoura (48), my mother Hanadi Mohammad Yahya Suleiman (47), and my only twin brother Awad (15). I lost my whole family in one moment. I have no father to protect me, no mother to embrace me, no twin brother to share life with. They are all gone, leaving behind a vast void and unbearable pain.”

Fatima Anwar Lutfi Al-Jukhleb (35) describes how he was trapped with his family in their home under siege by Israeli forces in December 2023. Unable to evacuate due to the vulnerability of family members, his family endured relentless carpet bombing followed by a ten-day siege, until Israeli tanks eventually stormed their home, killing multiple family members. The surviving family members were then forced to stay in the house for 44 days.

“Around 15:00 on 4 December 2023, without any prior warning, the IOF launched a massive carpet bombing in our area, shaking the entire region. The sounds of tanks, gunfire, shells, and flares accompanied this event. It was an experience that cannot be described or forgotten. At that time, I was at home with my mother (Basma, 60), my father (Anwar, 69), my aunt (Najwa), my brother (Ahmad, 27) and his wife (Nagham, 22), my sister (Maha, 34), who was nine months pregnant, and her son (Ahmad, two and a half years old), and my younger brother (Mohammad, 15). Due to the intensity of the bombardment, we couldn’t evacuate the house. My father is in a wheelchair, my mother is elderly, and my sister was pregnant with a small child. It would have been impossible for them to run to the streets in order to escape. The shelling and carpet bombing continued for more than four hours. During this time, we attempted to contact the Red Cross for help, but they informed us that they could not reach us due to the dangerous situation in the area.

However, events were rapidly unfolding. Before midnight, the tanks had already positioned themselves in front of our house, marking the beginning of our siege. At this point, the Israeli military tanks were firing indiscriminately at all the homes in the area. To avoid alerting the soldiers to our presence inside the house, we remained perfectly still, careful not to make any noise that might attract attention. We feared that if the soldiers detected us, they might destroy the house with us inside. We remained as quiet as possible in the house, taking refuge in a room next to the bathroom. Whenever we needed to use the bathroom, we crawled slowly to avoid making any sound. As for water, we still had a supply of drinking and utility water in the house. For food, we relied on canned goods that require no cooking, so as not to emit any smell that might alert the Israeli forces. We maintained this routine for ten days.

On 15 December 2023, the Israeli tanks attacked our house, raiding the kitchen under a hail of bullets and shelling, resulting in injuries to all of us present as the grenades got inside. Amidst the continued gunfire, my father, Anwar, who was seated directly behind the door, was killed instantly, followed by my aunt, Najwa, who also was killed. My sister,

Maha, and her unborn child, in her final month of pregnancy, also tragically lost their lives. The rest of us sustained injuries across our bodies. The soldiers then yelled at us to open the door after several unsuccessful attempts to force it open themselves. During this time, my brother, Ahmad, suffered a shrapnel wound, causing severe bleeding. Ahmad moved to open the kitchen door, but as soon as he did, he was shot in the head and died instantly. I, along with other members of my family, sustained wounds.

The soldiers ordered us to go outside and stay in the garden, where they interrogated us at gunpoint. Once they finished the interrogation, they left us outside for nearly an hour. After that, they ordered us to raise a white flag and leave the house. However, just as we were about to leave, they reversed their decision and ordered us to return to the house, close the door behind us, and not move inside. We returned to the house, only to find the bodies of my killed family members lying in the kitchen. We entered the house and began disinfecting our wounds with cotton and antiseptic. My nephew Ahmad's condition worsened significantly, and the bleeding would not stop. After some time, he passed away, joining his mother. At this point, only my mother, my younger brother, my brother's wife, and I remained in the house. After tending to our injuries, we closed the kitchen door on the bodies of the martyrs and took refuge in a room near the bathroom. We couldn't sleep. How could we sleep when we had lost our family?

As for the Israeli military, there were two patrols—one in the morning and one in the evening. When each patrol took over its shift, it would immediately begin firing directly at our house, causing harm and destruction to both us and the building. In addition, there were the constant sounds of dogs standing outside our door, barking incessantly. The soldiers would also enter our garden to harvest the fruits we had planted—such as oranges, lemons, and apples— while we starved inside the house. When night fell, the soldiers would intentionally shine their flashlights onto the windows of our house. They would also throw flares into the garden, causing them to glow with a red light, making us feel as though the house was on fire. This harassment continued for 44 days.”

Samir 'Abdel Latif 'Abdel Ghafour (48) recounts his experience during the Israeli military operations in Khan Younis, Gaza. In addition to repeated evacuations to so-called “safe zones” and worsening conditions, he suffered devastating losses, including the deaths of two sons and multiple other relatives in targeted shelling. His testimony highlights the severe humanitarian consequences of

the war, including the direct targeting of civilians, lack of safe shelter, and denial of emergency medical access amid relentless attacks.



Due to the war and because I lived in a border area that was too dangerous due to the relentless bombardment, my family and I decided to evacuate to a 4-story house belonging to my father and uncle, 'Abdullah 'Abdel Ghaffar 'Abdel Ghafour, on Shubair Street in central Khan Younis. In the beginning of December 2024, my sister, Samiah, her husband, Monir Mahmoud 'Abdel Ghafour and their 7 kids, including 5 children, as well as my sister, Samirah, married to Yasser Ahmed 'Abdel Ghafour, and her 4 kids, including 3 children, evacuated from Al-Satar al-Gharbi area after the IOF published their block's number among the areas that must be evacuated. On 7 December 2023, we learnt that houses of cousins, sons of my deceased aunt Mariam Zaki 'Abdel Ghafour, were bombed as they refused to evacuate and stayed in their houses in Al-Satar al-Gharbi. As a result, 36 persons, mostly children and women, were killed and there are still bodies missing under the rubble.

On 11 December 2023, the IOF expanded their evacuation orders to include the family house we were staying in on Shubair Street, so we had to evacuate again and were separated. I went with my father, sister and her kids, my aunt, Fatimah Zaki 'Abdel Ghafour, her husband and 12 of her kids and grandsons, to a poultry farm belonging to a family member namely Ziad 'Abdel Ghafour in the Al-Mawasi area, northwestern Khan Younis, as it was declared by the IOF as a safe area. We were many families living under extremely harsh and primitive conditions. Meanwhile, my wife went with my sons and her family to southern Khan Younis.

While I was in the farm, I learnt that on 25 December 2023, my 21-year-old son, Mohammed, a college student, was killed with three others from his mother's family, Abu Shaqrah, in the Al-Sheikh Naser area, central Khan Younis. As a result, my wife and sons came to stay with me in Al-Mawasi, where families were displaced in the farm and nearby tents.

At around 04:30 on Sunday, 10 March 2024, the IOF stationed in western Hamad Housing Project, western Khan Younis, fired several artillery shells at our area. The shells were insanely and terrifyingly showering the area; the first shell hit Monir Mahmoud 'Abdel Ghafour, my sister, Samia's, husband, and his kids, Afnan (16), Shaimaa' (15), Doha (13) and Mahmoud (10), and killed all of them.

We then tried to get out of the area and just on our way out, IOF fired another shell, seriously wounding me with shrapnel that entered my back and exited the chest. As a result, I sustained lung laceration, rib fractures and shrapnel wounds in different parts of my body. We were left to bleed until 06:30 when we were evacuated by civilian cars as ambulances were not able to enter the area due to the relentless bombardment.

- *We were taken to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah, where I was admitted to the Intensive*
- *Care Unit (ICU) for three days. I knew later that my 20-year-old son, Mahmoud, a university student,*
- *was killed as well in that attack. I have lost two of my sons in this war while my wife sustained*
- *shrapnel wounds in her foot and received medical treatment at Gaza European Hospital. We are*
- *civilians, yet we were deliberately targeted, with the apparent intent of causing the highest number of*
- *casualties. This is especially alarming given that the area we had fled to—Al-Mawasi, Khan Younis—*
- *was designated by the IOF themselves as a “safe zone” and we were instructed to evacuate there.*”

B. RECONSTRUCTING THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

I. THE FIRST WEEK

At approximately 06:00 on Saturday, 7 October 2023, the population of the Gaza Strip woke up to the sound of intensive rocket fire. It was later identified that Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigade, the military wing of the Hamas movement, along with other Palestinian resistance groups, had infiltrated Israeli military sites and communities adjacent to the borders of the Gaza Strip. The attack lasted several hours and was met with an intense response from the IOF. It resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Israeli soldiers and civilians, while 251 people, including foreign nationals, were taken captive inside Gaza.

Within two hours, the IOF declared a 'state of readiness for war', launching *Operation Swords of Iron*,²² calling up large numbers of troops to southern Israel, in addition to tens of thousands of reservists.²³ In a televised speech hours later, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared: "Citizens of Israel, we are at war. Not an operation, at war!"²⁴

IOF warplanes immediately launched airstrikes all over the Gaza Strip, while clashes and bombings continued in the border area. At noon on the same Saturday, Israeli bombardment from the air, land, and sea intensified in an extensive and unprecedented manner across the Gaza Strip, making it clear from the outset that the war was against civilians.

During an Israeli Cabinet meeting on Saturday evening, Flora May Bedra-Golan, Minister for Women's Empowerment, said: "All of Gaza's infrastructures must be destroyed to its foundation and their electricity cut off immediately. The war is not against Hamas but against the state of Gaza."²⁵

22 Avichay Adraee (2023) *Official statement on Platform X*, 7 October.

Available at: <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1710523100511535506> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

23 Avichay Adraee (2023) *Official Telegram Channel*, 7 October. Available at: <https://t.me/IDFSpokespersonArabic/898> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

24 Guardian News (2023) "We are at war": Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu makes statement on Hamas attack'. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAm2RABAc-Y> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

25 Channel 13 Israel (2023) *Israeli Minister's statement*, 7 October. Available at: <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/politics/k6d6k-903737400/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025). Her statement:

Later in the evening, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu declared: “I say to the residents of Gaza: get out of there now, because we will act everywhere and with all the strength.”²⁶ On the same evening, Israeli Foreign Minister Yisrael Katz, stated: “I have signed an order instructing (Israel) Electric Company to stop the electricity supply to Gaza, what was will no longer be.”²⁷

In the first hours of the attack by Palestinian resistance groups and the subsequent widespread Israeli bombardment, tens of thousands of Palestinian residents were forced to evacuate their homes in cities and neighbourhoods adjacent to the security border fence, especially as the Israeli bombardment intensified. The displaced started flooding deep into Palestinian cities and refugee camps, with most seeking shelter in UNRWA schools. At least 123,538 Palestinians were internally displaced in the Gaza Strip on the first day of the Israeli war.²⁸ Thousands more sought refuge in the homes of relatives or others, according to PCHR’s investigation.

At the beginning of the Israeli military attack against the Gaza Strip, the IOF conducted a mass arrest campaign targeting thousands of Palestinian workers who were legally inside Israel on 7 October. These workers were arrested at their workplaces, in the West Bank, or while attempting to reach the West Bank. Testimonies obtained by PCHR from released detainees also revealed that some of them went to the nearest police station to inquire about their situation and were immediately arrested. Some of them reported being subjected to torture and inhumane treatment.²⁹

On 8 October, Israel’s Security Cabinet approved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s decision to declare a state of war against Gaza.³⁰ Under this declaration, Israel, its citizens, and civilian facilities were placed under a state of emergency, and the Home Front Command was instructed to act according to wartime requirements. Reservists were also called up, and restrictions were imposed on media coverage.

26 Netanyahu, B. (2023) *Statement on Platform X*, 8 October. Available at: <https://x.com/netanyahu/status/1710828720041119818> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

27 Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2023) *Statement on Platform X*, 7 October. Available at: https://x.com/Israel_katz/status/1710695021769265450?s=20 (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

28 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2023) *Escalation in Gaza Strip and Israel – Flash Update #2*, 8 October. Available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/escalation-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-2> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

29 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2025) *Torture and Genocide: The Shattered Futures of Former Palestinian Detainees in Gaza*. May. Available at: <https://pchr-gaza.org/pchr-releases-report-on-torture-and-genocide-against-palestinians-from-gaza/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025). See also Human Rights Watch (2024) *Israel: Gaza Workers Held Incommunicado for Weeks*, 3 January. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/01/03/israel-gaza-workers-held-incommunicado-weeks> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

30 Times of Israel (2023) *Security Cabinet confirms Israel at war*, 8 October. Available at: https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/security-cabinet-confirms-israel-at-war-can-undertake-significant-military-activities/ (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

The first major displacement occurred on the same day, with hundreds of thousands of residents from areas including Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza, Al-Maqousi area west of Gaza City, Al-Shuja'iyya neighbourhood east of Gaza City, eastern parts of Al-Bureij and Al-Maghazi refugee camps in central Gaza, Abasan Al-Kabira and Abasan Al-Jadida towns east of Khan Younis, and eastern parts of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip being forced to evacuate immediately.³¹ The number of residents affected by these orders was estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands.

On Sunday 9 October, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant ordered a complete siege of the Gaza Strip, depriving it of the necessities of life: "I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed. We are fighting human animals, and we are acting accordingly."³² As a result, Israel tightened its siege of the Gaza Strip by completely closing the crossings with Gaza, preventing the entry of goods, and cutting off electricity, water, and fuel supplies. The Gaza Electricity Distribution Company reported that power lines from Israel had been cut off since Saturday morning, and that only 60 megawatts of electricity were available from the Gaza Power Plant, which was enough for less than four hours of electricity a day, before being completely shut down after two days.³³ Furthermore, the Israeli authorities cut off water supplies from the Israeli Water Company to Gaza, depriving 50% of the population in the central Gaza Strip of their water needs. The power cut further complicated the supply of water from local tanks and wells.³⁴

The same day, the IOF also issued evacuation orders to residents of border areas such as 'Abasan al-Kabira, Abasan al-Saghira, and Khuza'a, in order to move to the centre of Khan Younis.³⁵ Displacement orders were also issued for the Al-Rimal area in central Gaza City.³⁶

31 Some of the orders can be found here: Gaza Maps. *IDF Displacement Map: 7 October 2023*. Available at: <https://gazamaps.com/displacement/16>. Orders were also shared on COGAT's Facebook page. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/15QYP5F7nx/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025). See also Avichay Adraee (2023) *Official statement on Platform X*, 8 October. Available at: <https://x.com/avichayadraee/status/1710776997230620908> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

32 Channel 14 (2023) *Youtube video*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLXjx9C3Fgs> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

33 Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (2023) *Facebook statement on electricity*, 7 October. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=705857091575913&id=100064548857697&mibextid=Nif5oz (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

34 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2023) 'After Cutting Off Water and Electricity and Calling for Evacuation of Residential Areas, Israeli Occupation Collectively Punishes Gaza Strip Population', 8 October. Available at: <https://pchr.org/after-cutting-off-water-and-electricity-and-calling-for-evacuation-of-residential-areas-israeli-occupation-collectively-punishes-gaza-strip-population/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

35 Adraee, A. (2023) Head of the Arab Media Division of the IOF Spokesperson's Unit, Platform X, 09 October. Available at: <https://x.com/avichayadraee/status/1711283082022527062?s=46>

36 Spokesperson for the Israeli Army (2023) Telegram statement on military operations, 9 October. Available at: <https://t.me/IDFSpokespersonArabic/953> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

II. DISPLACEMENT OF NORTHERN GAZA RESIDENTS

On Friday morning, 13 October 2023, the IOF disseminated evacuation orders through its official social media channels, by dropping leaflets from warplanes to the population of northern Wadi Gaza (Gaza and North Gaza governorates). Around 1.2 million people were given 24 hours to evacuate south of Wadi Gaza to areas then classified as “safe”,³⁷ after which the Israeli military would “continue to operate significantly in Gaza City”.³⁸ Consequently, tens of thousands of Gaza residents started packing their belongings and heading south under bombardment and threats, with many of the displaced being bombed and targeted. Not only did the IOF continue to threaten Gaza residents through official statements and phone calls, but it also ordered Gaza hospitals to evacuate under bombardment.³⁹

On 21 October, the Rafah crossing with Egypt opened for the first time since 8 October 2023, allowing the entry of 20 trucks carrying food, water, and medical supplies; the volume of goods that entered was equivalent to about 4% of the daily average of imports into Gaza prior to the war.⁴⁰ In the following days, the crossing was partially opened for the entry of a limited number of aid trucks, which failed to address the significant increase in the Strip’s needs.⁴¹

On the same day, IOF warplanes dropped warning leaflets on the far northern areas of the Gaza Strip, stating: “Urgent warning, to residents of the Gaza Strip. Your presence in the northern Gaza Valley puts your life in danger. Anyone who chooses not to leave the north of Gaza to the southern Gaza Valley may be determined as an accomplice in a terrorist organisation.”⁴²

The IOF targeted Gaza residents several times on their way to evacuate to the southern Gaza Valley,

37 Some of the orders can be found here: Gaza Maps. *IDF Displacement Map: 13 October 2023*. Available at: <https://gazamaps.com/displacement/102>. Orders were shared on COGAT’s Facebook page. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/COGAT.ARABIC?locale> (Accessed: 29 May 2025). See also Avichay Adraee (2023) *Official statement on Platform X*, 13 October. Available at: <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1712846493747495223> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

38 Israel Defence Forces (2023) *Official statement on Platform X*, 13 October. Available at: <https://x.com/IDF/status/1712707301369434398> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

39 Palestinian Center for Human Rights (2023) *Report on the comprehensive Israeli Occupation Forces’ continued aggression on the Gaza Strip from October 7–28, 2023*, 29 October. Available at: <https://pchr.org/ar/?p=26065> (Arabic, Accessed: 29 May 2025).

40 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2023) *Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel, Update #15*, 21 October. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-15> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

41 See for example, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2023) *Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel, Updates #16 and 17*, 22 and 23 October. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-16> and <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-17> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

42 Copy of a leaflet dropped by IOF’s warplanes which was obtained by PCHR’s field researchers.

despite the former ordering them to evacuate to that area.⁴³ Additionally, the IOF repeatedly bombed shelters and dozens of houses, sheltering displaced people who had sought refuge in their relatives or friends' homes, destroying them over their heads.⁴⁴ These attacks resulted in the killing of dozens and the injury of hundreds, exposing the falsehood of Israel's claims about "safe zones" and emphasising that nowhere in Gaza is safe.⁴⁵

Hundreds of thousands of residents from northern Gaza moved to the south, particularly to Khan Younis and Rafah, significantly increasing the burden on the almost completely disrupted services in the southern area. For the first time, UNRWA set up tents to shelter displaced people in western Khan Younis, recalling scenes of the Palestinian Nakba. This scene repeated itself in the months that followed, as tents provided shelter for hundreds of thousands of displaced people but without the basic necessities of life. They received limited supplies of water and food, while unprecedented overcrowding and a lack of minimum standards of hygiene and healthcare led to reports of disease and epidemics.

III. BEGINNING OF THE GROUND INVASION IN NORTHERN GAZA

In an unprecedented move, on the evening of Friday, 27 October 2023, the IOF completely cut off telecommunications and internet access across the Gaza Strip for two days.⁴⁶ This blackout coincided with intense IOF bombardments from air, land, and sea that lasted for hours. The following day, on 28 October, the IOF launched a large-scale ground invasion on Beit Hanoun, north of the Gaza Strip, and in eastern Juhor al-Deek area, southeast of Gaza City.

The telecommunications and internet shutdown crippled the healthcare system, ambulances, and medical teams, preventing citizens from sending distress signals or reporting from the affected areas.⁴⁷ Ambulances and Civil Defence teams were also prevented from arriving in time for rescue operations, as they have been targeted at their headquarters or while on duty. As a result, victims were observed arriving at hospitals on donkey or horse carts due to the lack of transport and alternative means of communication.⁴⁸ The disruption of communications also prevented national and international human rights and humanitarian organisations from obtaining information about the situation on the ground.

43 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *Palestinian human rights organizations demand an end to Israel's deliberate attacks on internally displaced persons*, 5 January. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/palestinian-human-rights-organizations-demand-an-end-to-israels-deliberate-attacks-on-internally-displaced-persons/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

44 *Idem*.

45 *Idem*.

46 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2023) *Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel, Update #21*. 27 October. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-21> (Accessed: 29 May 2025)

47 Al-Haq Organization (2023) *Initial reporting on the ongoing Israeli retaliatory attacks on Gaza (reporting period, 7–28 October 2023)*, 29 October. Available at: <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/22044.html> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

48 *Idem*.

On Saturday, 28 October, Israeli authorities issued new evacuation orders for residents of northern Gaza and Gaza City. The Israeli military spokesperson instructed all residents of these areas to evacuate immediately to the south.⁴⁹ IOF warplanes also dropped warning leaflets ordering residents of northern Gaza to move south immediately.⁵⁰ Later that day, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Galant announced an “expansion” of the ground operations in Gaza, while Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that “the second phase of the war has begun.”⁵¹

On Monday, 30 October, the IOF reached Salah al-Deen Street near Al-Shuhada intersection and cut the main road connecting the central and southern Gaza Strip with northern Gaza and Gaza City amid intense bombardment. Meanwhile, the IOF advanced into northern Gaza starting from Beit Hanoun and nearby neighbourhoods and up to the Al-Karama area, northwest of Gaza City. Israeli tanks advanced into the southern Al-Zaytoun neighbourhood from the Al-Shuhada intersection until they reached Al-Rashid Street on Saturday, 4 November.⁵²

On 1 November, the Rafah Crossing was opened for the first time since the start of the aggression allowing the travel of approximately 81 critically wounded Palestinians for treatment at an Egyptian field hospital and 345 dual nationals.⁵³ Then, a limited number of wounded and patients travelled daily after obtaining approval from the Israeli authorities, while the travel of dual nationals continued.

On 4 November, the IOF once again ordered residents of northern Gaza and Gaza City to evacuate to the south via a designated corridor along Salah al-Deen Street.⁵⁴ Authorities announced that safe passage would be permitted between 13:00 and 16:00. This directive was repeated in the days that followed.

49 Israel Defence Forces (2023) *Official statement on Platform X*, 28 October. Available at: <https://x.com/IDF/status/1718240244129059167> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

50 Head of Arab Media Division of the IDF Spokesperson Unit (2023) *Statement on Platform X*, 28 October. Available at: <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1718238080291713174> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

51 CNN (2023) *Netanyahu says second stage of the war has begun, with goal of destroying Hamas*, 28 October. Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-10-28-23> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

52 During this period, the IOF repeatedly cut off communication and internet services often coupled with air bombardment and further ground invasion. This communication blackout intended to severely limit internal communication, isolate Gaza from the outside world, and hinder rescue operations.

53 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2023) *Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #26*, 1 November. Available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-26> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

54 Orders were shared on COGAT’s Facebook page. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/COGAT.ARABIC/posts/666718655568832?ref=embed_post (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

In the evening of Sunday, 5 November, the IOF announced a complete siege on the Gaza Strip, dividing it into north and south. The IOF also established two checkpoints: one on Salah al-Deen Street near Al-Shuhada intersection and the other on Al-Rashid Coastal Street, far southwest of Gaza City. IDPs were checked as they passed through these checkpoints, and dozens were arrested, including women and children.⁵⁵ Many were also targeted while evacuating to the south, with some IDPs reported seeing dead bodies scattered along the so-called safe corridor in a harrowing scene, and that the IOF repeatedly and unjustifiably opened fire at them.

During that period and in the days that followed, the IOF employed a scorched-earth policy by dropping hundreds of tons of bombs and missiles to destroy houses and other civilian objects, including schools, infrastructure, and service centres. The IOF also continued their advance into northern Gaza and Gaza City amid a barrage of heavy airstrikes and artillery fire, almost completely erasing areas they invaded.

On 10 November, IOF warplanes bombed several hospitals in Gaza City, including Al-Rantisi and Al-Nasr Children's Hospitals. As a result, the oxygen stations in these hospitals stopped working. The IOF also besieged Al-Shifa Medical Complex, which sheltered tens of thousands of displaced people.

IOF attacks on hospitals in Gaza City and northern Gaza continued as they stormed the remaining hospitals and arrested many medical staff members. All the hospitals went out of service, except for the Al-Ahli (Al-Maamadani) hospital and some small clinics in shelters.

As a result of the Israeli siege and the destruction of warehouses, shops, and agricultural lands, the markets ran out of goods, causing people to starve. On 15 November, IOF warplanes bombed Gaza's last operational wheat mill. As a result, the World Food Programme (WFP) warned of widespread hunger and the imminent possibility of starvation.⁵⁶ Since then, starvation has spread, and the majority of the Gaza population started losing weight, according to testimonies collected by PCHR.

⁵⁵ PCHR interviewed several persons who were arrested at these checkpoints and tortured during their detention.

⁵⁶ World Food Programme (2023) *Gaza faces widespread hunger as food systems collapse, warns WFP*, 16 November. Available at: <https://www.wfp.org/news/gaza-faces-widespread-hunger-food-systems-collapse-warns-wfp> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

IV. HUMANITARIAN PAUSE AND EXCHANGE OF CAPTIVES

On 23 November 2023, a humanitarian pause between Israel and the Hamas movement was declared, brokered by the United States, Qatar, and Egypt to take effect the following day. The truce included a cessation of hostilities, as well as the release of captives in Gaza and Palestinians from Israeli prisons.⁵⁷ The following day, at 07:00, the ceasefire entered into force, allowing many residents to return to their destroyed homes, particularly in the eastern, southern, and central areas of the Gaza Strip, as well as some neighbourhoods in Gaza City.

The truce exposed the extensive destruction caused by Israeli attacks across the Gaza Strip. Despite the ceasefire, the IOF barred residents who had previously evacuated to the southern Gaza Valley from returning to the north—and reportedly opened fire on those attempting to do so. Two people were killed and seven others injured as a result.⁵⁸ The IOF later resumed fire, violating the ceasefire agreement and killed ten civilians, most of whom were trying to return to their homes.⁵⁹

The number of aid trucks entering Gaza increased during the truce, but only a limited amount of humanitarian assistance reached northern Gaza. These supplies remained insufficient to address the growing needs of the population, who had endured nearly two months of siege and ongoing military assaults.

57 Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2023) *Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Humanitarian pause in Gaza starts on Friday morning*, 16 November. Available at: <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/1445/05/09/official-spokesperson-for-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-humanitarian-pause-in-gaza-starts-on-friday-morning> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

58 For more details: Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2023) *Human rights organizations demand a comprehensive ceasefire, an international investigation into war crimes, and the unconditional entry of humanitarian aid*, 25 November. Available at: <https://pchrghaza.org/ar/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A8-%D9%88%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84-%D9%84%D8%A5/> (Accessed: 29 May 2023).

59 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR). (2023) *Palestinian human rights organizations condemn the renewed Israeli military attacks on Gaza and warn of a second Nakba*. 1 December. Available at: <https://pchrghaza.org/ar/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%AA/> (Accessed: 29 May 2023).

V. RESUMPTION OF MILITARY ATTACKS

On Friday morning, 1 December 2023, as the humanitarian pause came to an end, the IOF resumed its military attacks on the Gaza Strip in a more brutal and bloody manner, launching dozens of air strikes, bombing houses, and dropping leaflets ordering the forced displacement of the people of Gaza.⁶⁰

On the same day, the IOF published a map on their official website dividing the Gaza Strip into numbered blocks, allegedly intended to direct residents on evacuating specific areas.⁶¹ Israeli military spokesperson Avichay Adraee stated: “This map will help you in the later stages of the war to understand our instructions and move (from residential areas) when necessary, if you are asked to do so.”⁶² On 2 December, the IOF issued new evacuation orders, forcibly displacing the residents of many blocks in Khan Younis towards “shelters in Rafah or to the humanitarian zone in Al-Mawasi area.”⁶³ IOF warplanes also bombed several towers in the Hamad Residential Compound, northwest of Khan Younis, which sheltered tens of thousands of residents and displaced people.

The IOF issued similar evacuation orders for the residents of Jabalia, Al-Shuja'iyya, Al-Zaytoun and Gaza's Old City with several blocks intended to be targeted. The orders instructed people to head to shelters and schools in Al-Daraj, Al-Tuffah, and western Gaza City.⁶⁴ During this time and due to the mass displacement, Rafah was turned into a city of tents, housing an estimated 1.5 million displaced people.⁶⁵

The IOF intensified its airstrikes and carried out more mass killings, using so-called “heavy fire belts” to bomb and wipe out entire residential areas. Additionally, the IOF expanded their ground invasion into Gaza City and northern Gaza and conducted mass arrest operations against the residents of these areas, arresting them from their homes,

60 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2023) *Palestinian human rights organizations condemn the renewed Israeli military attacks on Gaza and warn of a second Nakba*, 1 December. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/palestinian-human-rights-organizations-condemn-the-renewed-israeli-military-attacks-on-gaza-and-warn-of-a-second-nakba> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

61 IDF Official website (2023) *The IDF is publishing a list of area numbers to guide Gazan residents in evacuating high risk areas*, 1 December. Available at: <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/israel-at-war/all-articles/the-idf-is-publishing-a-list-of-area-numbers-to-guide-gazan-residents-in-evacuating-high-risk-areas/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

62 Avichay Adraee (2023) *Official statement on Telegram channel*, 1 December. Available at: <https://t.me/IDFSpokespersonArabic/1312> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

63 Avichay Adraee (2023) *Official statement on Telegram channel*, 2 December. Available at: <https://t.me/IDFSpokespersonArabic/1324> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

64 Some of the orders can be found here: Gaza Maps. *IDF Displacement Map: 2 December 2023*. Available at: <https://gazamaps.com/displacement/18>. See also Avichay Adraee (2023) *Official statement on Platform X*, 2 December. Available at: <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1730849868447436881> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

65 Before the war, Rafah was home to an estimated 275,000 people, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).

hospitals, and shelters.⁶⁶ Videos and pictures captured by Israeli soldiers went viral showing degrading and humiliating scenes of those detainees stripped to their underwear and kneeling on the street while blindfolded and handcuffed.⁶⁷

VI. EXPANSION OF THE GROUND INVASION INTO SOUTHERN GAZA

On 3 December 2023, the IOF expanded its ground invasion into the southern Gaza Strip, the area to which the residents of Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip were ordered to evacuate. At that time, Israeli tanks advanced into eastern Khan Younis, and the IOF stated that their military attacks in the southern Gaza Strip “will be of no less strength” than the operations in the north.⁶⁸ Palestinians were continuously requested to evacuate.⁶⁹

On 4 December, IOF warplanes and artillery launched a massive attack that continued until the next morning, relentlessly targeting neighbourhoods in Khan Younis with fire belts bombardments, amidst communications and internet blackouts throughout the Gaza Strip. Using heavy shelling, the IOF expanded its ground invasion to the eastern neighbourhoods of Khan Younis and Al-Satar al-Gharbi area, extending its attacks to all towns, villages, and refugee camps in Khan Younis, destroying houses and infrastructure and burying a sheer number of victims under the rubble.

66 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *After receiving harrowing testimonies from released Palestinian detainees: Our organizations condemn Israel's acts of torture and abuse against hundreds of arbitrarily detained Palestinians from Gaza*. Available at: <https://pchrghaza.org/after-receiving-harrowing-testimonies-from-released-palestinian-detainees-our-organizations-condemn-israels-acts-of-torture-and-abuse-against-hundreds-of-arbitrarily-detained-palestinians-fr/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025); Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2023) *As the genocide continues in Gaza for the 58th consecutive day, mass killings, forced displacement, and widespread destruction persist*, 3 December. Available at: <https://pchrghaza.org/as-israels-genocidal-campaign-continues-in-gaza-for-the-58th-consecutive-day-mass-killings-forced-displacement-and-widespread-destruction-persist/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

67 See for example, Reuters (2023) *Hamas condemns Israel over images showing semi-naked Palestinian prisoners*, 8 December. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hamas-condemns-israel-over-images-showing-semi-naked-palestinian-prisoners-2023-12-08/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025); Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2023) *For 63 consecutive days, Israel has continued its attacks on Gaza, arresting Palestinians, forcing them to strip naked, and using other degrading methods*, 8 December. Available at: <https://pchrghaza.org/for-63-consecutive-days-israel-has-continued-its-attacks-on-gaza-arresting-palestinians-forcing-them-to-strip-naked-and-using-other-degrading-methods/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

68 BBC (2023) *Israel orders evacuations from city in south Gaza as offensive widens*, 5 December. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67614711> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

69 See for example, Avichay Adraee (2023) *Official statements on Platform X*, 4 December. Available at: <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1731539367368241265>; 8 December. Available at: <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1733036333352767914>; 9 December. Available at: <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1733036333352767914>; 14 December. Available at: <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1733036333352767914> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

The IOF also established a military checkpoint equipped with cameras and surveillance devices near Al-Aqsa University, west of Khan Younis, forcing displaced people to pass through the checkpoint and arresting hundreds of them.

The ground invasion into Khan Younis continued until early April 2024; during which, the IOF stormed Nasser Hospital, the second-largest government hospital in the Gaza Strip, Al-Amal Hospital, run by the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), and Al-Salam and Al-Khair Special Hospitals, in addition to many primary healthcare centres. As a result, these hospitals and healthcare centres were put out of service and sustained severe destruction.

In northern Gaza, with the end of the humanitarian truce and the IOF's ban on the entry of goods and aid, the spectre of famine loomed over the residents,⁷⁰ where they faced high levels of acute food insecurity.⁷¹

The remaining residents of Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip, enduring extreme hunger, were forced to gather, in the thousands near the Kuwait Roundabout on Salah al-Deen Street and south of the Al-Nabulsi Roundabout on Ál-Rashid Street where they hoped to receive incoming aid convoys. Instead, they were repeatedly targeted by the IOF, resulting in the murder and injuries of hundreds over the course of more than three months, in a series of brutal and sustained attacks.⁷²

On 22 December, the IOF issued evacuation orders for the residents of Al-Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, indicating as targets Al-Maghazi refugee camp, the Al-Zawaida area, and some neighbourhoods in Al-Nuseirat refugee camp.⁷³ In the following days, the IOF, under heavy airstrikes, launched a ground invasion into Al-Maghazi and Al-Bureij refugee camps and into eastern Deir al-Balah. The IOF's ground invasion lasted a few days; during which, they launched dozens of airstrikes, destroying buildings and civilian objects, and arresting Palestinians from homes and shelters.

70 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2023) *Widespread hunger in the Gaza Strip, and families are becoming increasingly desperate in their search for food*. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/widespread-hunger-in-the-gaza-strip-and-families-are-becoming-increasingly-desperate-in-their-search-for-food/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

71 For more details, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *Palestinian human rights organizations warn of food insecurity and widespread hunger in the Gaza Strip*, 25 January. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/palestinian-human-rights-organizations-warn-of-food-insecurity-and-widespread-hunger-in-the-gaza-strip/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025). See also Integrated Food Security Classification (2023) *Gaza Strip: Hostilities leave the entire population highly food insecure and at risk of Famine*, 21 December. Available at: <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/alerts-archive/issue-94/en/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

72 For more details, see Section 1.c.i.. See also, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *'Flour Massacre': Impunity persists as Israeli forces open fire on starving Palestinians seeking vital aid*, 29 February. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/flour-massacre-impunity-persists-as-israeli-forces-open-fire-on-starving-palestinians-seeking-vital-aid/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

73 Avichay Adraee (2023) *Official statements on Platform X*, 22 December. Available at: <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1738093349666431399> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

VII. LARGE-SCALE GROUND INVASION INTO WESTERN GAZA CITY

In March 2024, the IOF launched a new large-scale invasion into western Gaza City and forced its residents to evacuate, once more. On 18 March, the IOF stormed Al-Shifa Medical Complex, which had partially resumed operations in its remaining buildings, and arrested hundreds of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the complex and its surroundings. As a result, dozens of people were killed, and others were injured.⁷⁴

Similar operations took place in many neighbourhoods in Gaza City and northern Gaza, where the IOF carried out further killings and mass destruction of the remaining buildings and facilities

VIII. START OF THE GROUND INVASION OF RAFAH AND CLOSURE OF THE CROSSING

Amid repeated Israeli declarations of a full-scale assault on Rafah—and despite widespread warnings from both local and international actors about the grave consequences of launching such an operation in an area sheltering over 1.7 million people⁷⁵—the IOF began its military attack on 6 May 2024. They issued evacuation orders for more than 250,000 residents in eastern Rafah, instructing them to move west.⁷⁶ This escalation came just a week after the IOF had intensified airstrikes on residential homes, resulting in dozens of casualties, mostly women and children.

74 For more details, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *IOF's raid of Al-Shifa Medical Complex and emptying Gaza of its residents evidence Israel's persistence to commit genocide in the Gaza Strip*, 18 March. Available at: <https://pchr.org/ar/%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%87%d8%ac%d9%88%d9%85-%d8%b9%d9%84%d9%89-%d9%85%d8%ac%d9%85%d8%b9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b4%d9%81%d8%a7%d8%a1-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b7%d8%a8%d9%8a-%d9%88%d8%aa%d9%81%d8%b1%d9%8a%d8%ba-%d8%ba%d8%b2/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

75 See for example, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *Palestinian human rights organizations warn of attack on Rafah and call for action to prevent ongoing acts of genocide and a new Nakba before it is too late*, 3 February. Available at: <https://pchr.org/palestinian-human-rights-organizations-warn-of-attack-on-rafah-and-calls-for-action-to-prevent-ongoing-acts-of-genocide-and-new-nakba-before-it-is-too-late/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025); UN News (2024) *Gazans 'anxious and living in fear' of Israeli assault on Rafah, warns top UN aid official*, 18 February. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/02/1146482> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

76 Avichay Adraee (2024) *Official statement on Platform X*, 6 May. Available at: <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1787344298943365560> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

As the military campaign expanded across Rafah, forced displacement surged. Entire neighbourhoods were emptied, with some residents pushed toward Al-Mawasi in Khan Younis, while the vast majority fled to central Gaza—particularly Deir al-Balah, which became severely overcrowded, hosting nearly one million displaced individuals.

At dawn on 7 May, under heavy aerial and artillery bombardment, Israeli tanks entered the Palestinian side of the Rafah crossing and raised the Israeli flag on it, forcing the crossing to be closed and travel to be suspended.⁷⁷ The IOF also destroyed facilities and the hall inside the crossing, preventing any future attempts to reopen it. In addition, the IOF advanced deeper into the neighbourhoods of Rafah and continued to destroy homes and infrastructure, including water tanks and civilian objects. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people were again forcibly displaced and forced to seek refuge in the neighbourhoods of Khan Younis, from which the IOF withdrew on 7 April 2024.

The IOF's ground invasion of Rafah cut off the already limited flow of aid into Gaza, while many humanitarian organisations were forced to suspend their operations after relocating to Al-Mawasi Khan Younis or Deir al-Balah. Later, the Israeli authorities allowed some aid and trucks to enter through the Kerem Shalom Crossing.

In parallel, the IOF continued its military attacks across the Gaza Strip, as warplanes and tanks targeted hundreds of homes and shelters. On 11 May 2024, the IOF launched a large-scale ground attack on the town of Jabalia and its camp, just hours after issuing orders for the forced displacement of residents and internally displaced persons. The attack was accompanied by intense shelling and the use of fire belts, targeting civilian homes and the crowded streets of the camp.⁷⁸ The attack lasted for twenty consecutive days, ending with the withdrawal of the IOF on 31 May 2024, after committing killings, massive destruction, and causing forced displacement.⁷⁹

On 8 June, the IOF conducted a military attack backed by intensive land and air strikes on Nuseirat refugee camp and across the areas of the central Gaza Strip. As a result, 274 Palestinians, including 64 children, were killed and at least 698 more were injured, mostly children and women.⁸⁰ The military attack, which lasted around 75 minutes, featured the use of deadly force and heavy firing in a densely populated area, primarily inhabited by IDPs. Later, the IOF announced that the military attack led to the release of four Israeli captives.

77 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2023) *The occupation's storming of the Rafah crossing and preventing the entry of aid trucks deepens the humanitarian catastrophe and the crime of genocide*, 7 October. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/ar/?p=22405> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

78 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *Israeli escalation in committing the crime of genocide requires urgent measures to stop it and hold it accountable*, 12 May. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/ar/?p=25822> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

79 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *Israel continues mass killings and deliberately destroys the essentials of life in the Gaza Strip, consecrating genocide*, 1 June. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/ar/?p=25804> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

80 For more details, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *Genocidal massacre in Central Gaza: Israeli forces kill 274 Palestinians and injure 698 in attack lasting 75 minutes*, 9 June. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/genocidal-massacre-in-central-gaza-israeli-forces-kill-274-palestinians-and-injure-698-in-attack-lasting-75-minutes/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

Despite the IOF's declaration of the Al-Mawasi area as a humanitarian zone for hundreds of thousands of IDPs, it has been repeatedly targeted. On 21 June, Israeli tanks stationed on sand berms overlooking the Al-Mawasi area fired several shells at the tents of the displaced persons. As a result, the tents were damaged and burnt, 25 Palestinians were killed, and 45 others were injured, including women and children. The bloodiest attack took place on 13 July when IOF warplanes launched intense airstrikes on the tents, killing 90 Palestinians and injuring more than 300 others.⁸¹

On 25 July, the IOF blew up the water reservoir known as the "Canada Well" in western Rafah, as they planted explosives inside and detonated it remotely.⁸²

IX. GROUND INVASION OF THE EASTERN AREAS OF THE CENTRAL GAZA STRIP

On 24 and 25 August 2024, the IOF issued evacuation orders to residents in the eastern areas of the central Gaza Strip, including some densely populated neighbourhoods in Deir al-Balah, home to approximately one million residents and IDPs.⁸³ Orders were issued to evacuate the eastern areas of the city, which were later extended to include the western areas, affecting around 250,000 people.⁸⁴ As a result, the IOF reduced the so-called "humanitarian zone" and began a ground invasion of the city.

After causing widespread destruction to homes and infrastructure, the IOF withdrew from Deir al-Balah on 29 August. It was the first time that a return to an evacuated area was officially allowed, seemingly as an attempt to refute and counter accusations of forced displacement.⁸⁵

81 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *Israel continues its genocide in Gaza, bombing displaced persons and worshippers*, 14 July. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/ar/?p=22076> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

82 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (2024) *The occupation continues its mass killing and forced displacement in the Gaza Strip, intensifying the crime of genocide*, 29 July. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/ar/?p=25645> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

83 Avichay Adraee (2024) *Official statements on Platform X*, 24 and 24 May. Available at: <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1827292746140299572> and <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1827715577940750418> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

84 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2024) *Mass evacuations in Gaza choke survival and severely constrain aid operations*, 22 August. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/mass-evacuations-in-gaza-22aug24/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

85 Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) (2024) Facebook post, 29 August. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/COGAT.ARABIC/posts/pfbid02BnE3V3M6uFuy6jN9ujsyDWnPP6dAfajZA8aF6DVhY4rg2i66A2Jvdihur9EugWsPLI> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

On 9 September, the new school year began in Palestine while Israel deprived 800,000 students in Gaza of their fundamental right to education for the second year in a row.⁸⁶

The IOF continued its ground attacks into areas where it had previously invaded, committing more killings, destruction, and displacement. This was repeated in neighbourhoods in central, southern, and eastern Gaza City, in addition to northern Gaza, particularly Jabalia refugee camp, resulting in further destruction of homes, civilian buildings, and infrastructure.

X. THIRD GROUND INVASION ON NORTHERN GAZA

Since early October 2024, the northern Gaza Strip has endured an unprecedented phase of systematic violence and destruction. This period marked the gradual implementation of what came to be known as the “Generals’ Plan”—a strategy aimed at forcing the evacuation of residents within weeks and imposing a complete blockade on the area, with the goal of compelling militants in Gaza City to surrender or starve.⁸⁷

During this phase, the IOF enforced a severe blockade, preventing the entry of humanitarian aid and fuel, cutting off water and electricity supplies, and closing all roads and crossings. These measures sought to reshape the reality on the ground through military force, amid near-total international silence. At the same time, residents were issued mass evacuation orders, warning that anyone remaining in their homes would be treated as a ‘legitimate military target’.

Despite these threats, hundreds of thousands of civilians chose to stay—either because there were no safe places to flee to or out of fear of being targeted during displacement. As a result, they were subjected to relentless bombardment and the systematic destruction of residential neighbourhoods, critical infrastructure, and essential services—including hospitals, shelters, water, and sanitation networks.

The humanitarian situation quickly deteriorated to catastrophic levels. Hunger and thirst became widespread, and the healthcare system completely collapsed. Hospitals in the northern Gaza Strip were directly and repeatedly targeted. Following attacks on the Indonesian Hospital and Al-Awda Hospital, Israeli forces stormed Kamal ‘Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia on 26 October, bombing its oxygen station and killing patients—including children in intensive care. Medical

86 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *800,000 students deprived of their right to education amid ongoing destruction of schools and universities*, 9 September. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/800000-students-deprived-of-their-right-to-education-amid-ongoing-destruction-of-schools-and-universities/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

87 BBC News (2024) *Gaza War: Will Netanyahu Implement the “Generals’ Plan” in Northern Gaza?* 13 October. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/c8j72rx8pdo> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

personnel, including hospital director Dr. Hussam Abu Safia, were arrested, and ambulances and solar generators were destroyed, rendering the hospital permanently inoperable.⁸⁸

With health and rescue services shut down, the area was unable to manage the scale of devastation or care for the injured. Bodies lay unburied in the streets and hospital corridors, and the few remaining medical staff were overwhelmed. Schools and public centres, repurposed as shelters for the displaced, were repeatedly bombed, resulting in massacres of civilians who had sought refuge there.

Eyewitness accounts from inside northern Gaza describe conditions of total siege—severe hunger, no access to clean drinking water, and complete communication blackouts. There were no functioning humanitarian corridors, and international action was largely absent.⁸⁹

This months-long phase left behind massive destruction and a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. The operation has been widely condemned, with growing international accusations that Israel committed acts amounting to ethnic cleansing and genocide.⁹⁰

According to the Gaza Government Media Office, these Israeli attacks—which continued for 100 days until the ceasefire—resulted in the killing and disappearance of approximately 5,000 Palestinians, the injury of 9,500, and the arrest of 2,600, including women and children. In addition, most homes, buildings, and essential infrastructure in the area were destroyed or set ablaze.⁹¹ It stands as one of the bloodiest and most tragic chapters in the ongoing conflict.

88 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *Israel perpetuates genocidal acts against North Gaza, leaving its population without hospitals and lifesaving services*, 27 October. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/israel-perpetuates-genocidal-acts-against-north-gaza-leaving-its-population-without-hospitals-and-lifesaving-services/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025). *Idem*.

89 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *Between forced displacement and death with no hospitals: Israel continues its ethnic cleansing of North Gaza*, 28 December. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/between-forced-displacement-and-death-with-no-hospitals-israel-continues-its-ethnic-cleansing-of-north-gaza-2/>.

90 The Guardian (2024) *António Guterres warns Israel could carry out ethnic cleansing of Gaza*, 30 October. Available at: www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/30/antonio-guterres-warns-israel-could-carry-out-ethnic-cleansing-of-gaza (Accessed: 31 May 2025); United Nations (2024) *CEIRPP Chair's statement at the Security Council*, 29 October. Available at: www.un.org/unispal/document/ceirpp-chairs-statement-security-council-29oct2024/ (Accessed: 31 May 2025).

91 For more details, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (2024) *Israel perpetuates genocidal acts against North Gaza, leaving its population without hospitals and lifesaving services*. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/israel-perpetuates-genocidal-acts-against-north-gaza-leaving-its-population-without-hospitals-and-lifesaving-services/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025); Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (2024) *Between forced displacement and death: With no hospitals, Israel continues its ethnic cleansing of North Gaza*. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/between-forced-displacement-and-death-with-no-hospitals-israel-continues-its-ethnic-cleansing-of-north-gaza-2/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025). Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 724. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3410> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

XI. THE CEASEFIRE

On 19 January 2025, a ceasefire brokered by Egypt, Qatar, and the United States came into effect in the Gaza Strip. The agreement, structured in three stages of 42 days each, outlined several key commitments, including the release of Israeli captives in exchange for the release of Palestinians, Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, the entry of humanitarian aid, and a process for reconstruction.

However, despite the ceasefire and the release of Israeli captives, Israel's military actions continued to claim Palestinian lives, and the humanitarian crisis deepened. Israel continuously violated the terms of the agreement by continuing to kill civilians, delaying its withdrawal from Gaza, and obstructing the entry of vital supplies—particularly mobile homes and goods essential for rebuilding homes. The IOF continued to operate in Gaza, with ongoing firing near stationed areas and drone and quadcopter attacks. Between 19 January and 2 March 2025, at least 116 Palestinians were killed and over 490 injured, according to the Ministry of Health.⁹²

On 2 March, the first stage of the ceasefire agreement ended, but Israel refused to move to the second phase. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that, as of that morning, the entry of all goods and supplies into Gaza would be halted.⁹³

On 18 March, Israel resumed intense airstrikes on Gaza and the killings and destruction of Gaza have not stopped since.⁹⁴ The IOF also continues to impose a strangulating siege on the Gaza Strip, closing the crossings, banning travel, blocking humanitarian aid entry and distribution.

As of the writing of this report, the Gaza Strip population is enduring harsh humanitarian conditions due to the devastating consequences of the Israeli genocidal war. The Israeli military aggression has killed and injured more than 157,000 Palestinians, around 7% of Gaza's population. Moreover, thousands remain trapped under the rubble or in areas the Israeli forces had invaded; most bodies decomposed. Meanwhile, more than 2 million Palestinians, 87% of the Gaza population, have been forcibly displaced and crammed into tents and shelters lacking the bare essentials. Although hundreds of thousands of Gaza and north Gaza residents, who had been displaced to the southern and central Gaza Strip, started to return to their homes, they have not found any adequate shelter, forcing them to live in tents or in the ruins of their destroyed houses with severely limited access to essential services.

92 Ministry of Health in Gaza (2025) Official Telegram channel post, 2 March. Available at: <https://t.me/MOHMediaGaza/6324> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

93 Al Jazeera. (2025) *Israel reneges on ceasefire deal, warns Hamas of consequences*, 2 March. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/2/israel-reneges-on-ceasefire-deal-warns-hamas-of-consequences> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

94 Al Jazeera. (2025) *World reaction to Israel's wave of deadly attacks on Gaza*, 18 March. Available at: www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/18/world-reaction-to-israels-wave-of-deadly-attacks-on-gaza (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

People in Gaza also suffer from hunger, malnutrition, spread of epidemics and lack of healthcare in addition to the acute shortage of clean water and electricity due to the destruction of Gaza's infrastructure. These actions have exacerbated the already dire humanitarian conditions in Gaza.

C. PATTERNS OF THE GENOCIDE

This section examines the key patterns of the genocide carried out by Israel in the Gaza Strip, focusing on the systematic actions aimed at eradicating the Palestinian group. These patterns identified by PCHR encompass a wide range of atrocities, including the deliberate targeting of civilians and their shelters, mass displacement, the systematic torture of detainees, and the destruction of entire cities, villages, and refugee camps, as well as essential infrastructure and cultural property. PCHR's investigation also shows that specific groups, such as women, children, journalists, medical personnel, and humanitarian workers, have been particularly targeted, with these attacks designed to dismantle Gaza's social fabric and critical support systems.

In addition to the widespread physical destruction, Israel's military attack and siege have created a dire humanitarian crisis, through the use of starvation as a weapon of war, the deprivation of basic necessities, and the obstruction to accessing healthcare, especially for pregnant women and newborns.

I. DELIBERATE TARGETING OF CIVILIANS

The Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip has resulted in an extraordinarily high civilian death toll, when compared with other conflicts in the last decades.⁹⁵ A defining feature of the attack on Gaza has been the deliberate targeting of entire families, especially children and women. By January 2025, 46,960 Palestinians had been killed—almost half of them women and children—and 14,222 were still missing.⁹⁶ Among the child victims were 808 infants under the age of one, including 214 newborns who were born and killed during the ongoing genocidal war.⁹⁷ Additionally, around 110,725 Palestinians have been injured by the IOF, including 15,000 individuals in need of long-term rehabilitation and 4,500 amputees, 18% of whom are children.⁹⁸

Civilians were primarily targeted in their homes and shelters without prior warning. The IOF struck hundreds of locations

95 Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory (2025) *"More than a human can bear": Report on sexual violence*, 13 March, para. 21. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/report-of-the-commission-of-inquiry-israel-gender-based-violence-13march2025/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

96 Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

97 *Idem.*

98 *Idem.*

sheltering thousands of forcibly displaced people, including hospitals, schools, universities, tents, and churches. Even food distribution points—where desperate, starving Palestinians had gathered in hopes of receiving aid—were attacked, resulting in mass casualties and scenes of devastation.

• **Attacks on Entire Families, Especially Children and Women**

One of the most harrowing aspects of the IOF's attack in Gaza has been the systematic targeting of entire families—particularly children and women—leading to the complete erasure of family lines and the destruction of entire generations. Israeli attacks, indiscriminate and without warning, have left families shattered, with parents, children, and extended relatives killed in a single strike.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the IOF has completely eradicated 2,092 Palestinian families, removing them entirely from the civil registry.⁹⁹ An additional 4,889 families have been nearly annihilated, with only a single surviving member in each case.¹⁰⁰ As of 21 January 2025, 38,495 children had lost one or both parents and many were separated from their families, creating deep feelings of loss, fear, and insecurity.¹⁰¹ A UN report found that around 87% of verified deaths occurred in incidents involving five or more casualties, and over 60% took place in attacks that killed ten or more people.¹⁰²

Osama Mohammed Ammar (47) told PCHR:

“My brother Muhammad (45) was displaced with his wife and six children, along with my mother and brother Khaled, to my cousin Ahmad Ammar's land in the Al-Buraq area of Khan Yunis. On 22 January 2024, IOF tanks and bulldozers advanced into the area, opening fire and shelling. My brother Muhammad called my daughter Saba (19) and told her that they were hearing gunfire and explosions, and asked her to tell me to check on them in the morning. The next day, I tried to contact my brother but couldn't, so I thought he had been displaced to Deir al-Balah, as had happened with his neighbours. On the fourth day, my brother Bilal told me that the neighbours heard my brother

99 *Idem.*

100 *Idem.*

101 *Idem.*

102 OHCHR (2024) *Thematic report – Indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks during the conflict in Gaza (October–December 2023)*, 19 June, p. 4. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/thematic-report-indiscriminate-and-disproportionate-attacks-during-conflict-gaza> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).



- Jannat Ma'rouf (20) was injured in an Israeli airstrike on displaced people's tents in
- Hamad Residential City in Khan Yunis, resulting in the amputation of her leg.

and his family screaming inside the house, saying, 'Shame on you, we're inside.' Then the bulldozer levelled the house and placed a pile of sand and stones on top of them, after which the sound completely stopped. Several days later, I tried to go to the land but couldn't because of the danger of the place. On 6 March 2024, after the Israeli withdrawal, I went with my brother Bilal to the land, and we found the body of my nephew Osama (15) and buried him. On 8 April 2024, after the occupation withdrew from Khan Younis, I went with my brothers Bilal and Amjad, and we found the bodies of my brother Muhammad's family under the sand and stones. The bodies were in the beginning of decomposition. Among them was the body of my brother Muhammad, his head separated from his body. We found my brother Khaled, and we found my brother Muhammad's wife, Majdoleen Nayef Ammar, 40 years old, who was holding her two-year-old son Anas, and we separated them. They were transferred to the Red Crescent to document their killing. Then we buried them in a mass grave in the Turkish cemetery west of Khan Younis. The martyrs are: my mother, Fathia Al-Abd Hassan Ammar (67), my brother, Khaled Abdel Halim Mohammed Ammar (40), my brother, Mohammed Abdel Halim Mohammed Ammar (45), his wife, Majdoleen Nayef Ali Ammar (40), and their children: Malak (17), Osama (15), Sarah (16), Aya (10), Rafeef (8), and Anas (2).”



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- *Mona al-Sa'oudi (18) was injured in an Israeli airstrike on a shelter in al-Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza Strip, resulting in the amputation of her leg.*
-

According to testimonies from Israeli soldiers, the IOF used artificial intelligence (AI) to generate lists of tens of thousands of human targets and then bombed the designated target within 20 seconds of identification without warning.¹⁰³

Children and women have borne the brunt of the war's violence. Investigations conducted by PCHR into both individual and mass killings provide compelling evidence that the IOF intended to inflict maximum harm on children and their families. They were frequently killed, without warning, with their entire family in airstrikes on homes or shelters, during targeted assassinations, or while

¹⁰³ Davies, H., McKernan, B. and Sabbagh, D. (2024) "The machine did it coldly": Israel used AI to identify 37,000 Hamas targets', *The Guardian*, 3 April. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/03/israel-gaza-ai-database-hamas-airstrikes> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

engaged in everyday activities, such as playing on rooftops or in yards. They were also among the casualties in strikes on public buildings, including schools, mosques, and other civilian infrastructure. Several others were summarily executed in cold blood by soldiers, snipers, drones, or quadcopters, in some cases with victims lined up and shot one by one. Thousands were injured and exposed to toxic gas (for more details, see Section 1.c.v.). Pregnant women were also left particularly vulnerable (for more details, see Section 1.c.xiv.). According to Save the Children, during the first three months of the Israeli war, an average of more than 10 children per day lost one or both legs.¹⁰⁴ OCHA stated that Gaza is now “home to the largest group of child amputees in modern history”, highlighting the unprecedented scale of suffering endured by Gaza’s youngest generation.¹⁰⁵

One of the most well-known incidents is the murder of 6-year-old Hind Rajab and her family, documented by PCHR. On the evening of 29 January 2024, Bashar Hamada, along with his wife and children - Lian (14), Raghd (13), Mohammed (11) - and his brother’s granddaughter, Hind Rajab (6), fled their home after the IOF ordered the evacuation of western Gaza City during a ground incursion. As they sought shelter, they came under Israeli fire. That same evening, an Israeli tank positioned near the “Maliya Roundabout” in the Tal al-Hawa neighbourhood, southwest of Gaza City, fired at their car as they tried to seek shelter at a nearby petrol station. Bashar, his wife and their son Mohammed were killed instantly, followed shortly by Raghd after another round of gunfire hit the car. The two remaining children, Hind and Lian, were trapped inside the vehicle. Lian managed to call the PRCS for help. A recording released by the PRCS captured Lian’s desperate plea for help: “We need your help... they’re firing at us... we’re inside the car, and the tank is nearby.”¹⁰⁶ Shortly after, the sound of heavy gunfire and Lian’s terrified screams filled the recording before the call was abruptly cut off. Soon after, Hind, the only survivor, managed to use the phone to call her mother. She told her that she had been injured in her hand, back, and leg, and that everyone around her was dead. The mother immediately contacted PRCS. Hind was left stranded in the vehicle for hours, surrounded by the IOF, during a widely publicised call.¹⁰⁷ The next day, an ambulance with paramedics Yousef Zino and Ahmed Al-Madhoun was dispatched to the area, where Hind was trapped. However, contact with the ambulance was soon lost.¹⁰⁸ On 10 February, 12 days after the attack, the IOF withdrew from the area, allowing rescue teams to reach the scene. They found the body of Hind in the family’s car, along with the remains of the five other family members. The ambulance was also found, destroyed by shelling, with the burnt bodies of the two paramedics inside.

104 Save the Children (2024) *Gaza: More than 10 children a day lose a limb in three months of brutal conflict*, 7 January. Available at:

<https://www.savethechildren.net/news/gaza-more-10-children-day-lose-limb-three-months-brutal-conflict> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

105 United Nations. (2024) *Gaza has become home to the largest group of child amputees in modern history*. 9 October [Arabic]. Available at: <https://news.un.org/ar/story/2024/10/1135541> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

106 Palestine Red Crescent Society (2024) *Statement of PRCS X account*, 30 January. Available at: <https://x.com/PalestineRCS/status/1752277801590276397> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

107 Middle East Eye. (2024) *New recording of child Hind’s last moments released*, 19 February. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGh9fqcty0g> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

108 Palestine Red Crescent Society (2024) *Statement of PRCS X account*, 30 January. Available at: <https://x.com/PalestineRCS/status/1752277801590276397> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

Hind and her cousins, sadly, were not the only ones to suffer such a tragic fate. The 'Ammar family, including their six children, were buried alive in Khan Younis. At 22:00 on 22 January 2024, the IOF invaded Al-Buraq neighbourhood, opened fire and shelled the area, while bulldozers demolished parts of the neighbourhood. The IOF then executed the 'Ammar family, who were on a plot of land owned by Mr Ahmed Ammar, by burying them alive, despite the soldiers' full knowledge that people were present. Family members called out to the army, pleading for their lives, but were ignored. This resulted in the deaths of ten family members, including six children and two women. One eyewitness to the crime, Emad Abdulrahman Abd Al-Ati Al-Jabri (48) and a resident of Tiba Tower in the Al-Buraq neighbourhood, stated that:

“ On that evening, I realised that the Israeli army had invaded the area, so I looked out the north window and saw a large bulldozer with four big spotlights levelling in the neighbourhood. After a while, I heard voices from inside Ammar's land calling and screaming that they were present in the place. The bulldozer, however, kept pushing sand and stones onto them while they were still alive. It then bulldozed them and placed them next to the wall of Dr Iyad Al-Jabri's house, then brought another pile of sand and stones and placed it on top of the first pile. After that, the bulldozer backed off only to let a tank come and climb onto the pile of sand, remaining there for about an hour before demolishing the western wall of the land. The tank then returned to the pile of sand, where 'Ammar family were buried.”

Another family, the Abu Safia family, was also killed along with their children. On 12 June 2024, Israeli warplanes targeted a three-story residential building belonging to the Saeed Abu Safia family in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood, west of Gaza City. The incident destroyed an apartment on the third floor, killing six, including three children, and injuring three others, two of whom were children. Saeed Sami Abu Safia (51) and the owner of the targeted apartment explained that the building was home to several families, including his siblings, their children, and displaced individuals they had taken in. He lived in the eastern apartment on the third floor with his wife, Mariam Ali Awda Abu Safia, and their children: Emad (31), Mohammed (21), Ibrahim (17), Yazan (14), Lina (23), Alaa (24), and Adam Mohammed Hani Abu Awad (2). In the western apartment lived his nephew, Alaa Al-Din Bakr Sami Abu Safia (35) along with his wife, Ansam Abu Safia, and their three children: Bakr (3), Lian (8), and Tala (6).

“

Suddenly at around 23:00 on Tuesday, 12 June 2024, I heard a strong blast inside the building that lifted me up to the ceiling and then dust and smoke filled the place. I did not know what happened. Then, I saw my brother, Mohammed, in the apartment, which was on fire. I was burning as flames engulfed my whole body. Luckily, an ambulance was on Al-Jalaa' Street by coincidence, and the rescue began. When the bombing occurred, I was sleeping in the middle of the apartment in the corridor while my son Mohammed was sleeping right in front of me in the living room. My sons, 'Emad (31), Ibrahim (17) and Yazan (14) were sleeping in the eastern side overlooking Al-Jalaa' Street; I repaired that part temporarily after it had been destroyed. Meanwhile, my wife and my daughter, Lina (23), were asleep in the bedroom overlooking the southern side of Al-Sheikh Redwan Street, and my married daughter was sleeping with her child in the bedroom overlooking the northern side. I could hear my daughter Alaa' (24) screaming as most of her body was stuck and hanging from the wall to the north, where Al-Ghorani Family house is located. Alaa' was rescued, but my son Mohammed's body was found totally burnt and stuck between our apartment and Al-Ghorani family house in the north. Meanwhile, 'Emad was thrown onto Al-Jalaa' Street with his bed, and Ibrahim and Yazan's bodies were found under the rubble. For my daughter Lina, we found her dead body totally burnt and thrown into her cousin 'Alaa's house to the west of the house. I sustained second-degree burns all over my body, wounds in my head and fractures in the skull. Also, my wife sustained fractures in her spine, a fracture in her foot set with platinum fixator and another fracture in her left hand in addition to liver and spleen bleeding and fracture in 3 ribs. Meanwhile, my daughter Alaa' sustained burns in her right foot and a critical injury in her left eye. Moreover, my brother 'Alaa's daughters, Layan (8) and Tala (6), were injured.”

The story of the Madi family is also a vivid example. On 23 February 2024, the IOF raided the Japanese neighbourhood in Khan Younis at approximately 07:30 and withdrew from the area at around 16:30. Immediately after their withdrawal, Anwar Abu Madi returned to check his house, only to find it engulfed in flames, and the intense heat prevented him from entering. When he returned a day later, he discovered four piles of burnt bones and small fragments scattered around the rooms of the house. Anwar believes the remains belonged to the female family members who were in the house: his brother Khaled's wife, Fida, and their daughters Hanin and Yasmin, and his daughter Malak.

“

My brother Khalid, his wife Fedda and their daughters Haneen and Yasmeen, as well as my son Yousuf and my daughter Malak, were at my house. The Israeli army withdrew at around 16:30 after turning the neighbourhood into ruins. When I returned home with my brother-in-law Ibrahim to check on my family, we found the house on fire. We could only enter one room because of extreme heat and heavy smoke. As it got darker, we decided to leave and come back later. On 25 February 2024, we returned and found burned bones in the southeastern corner of the southern room, which is located next to the bathroom, where my sister-in-law Fedda used to sleep. And when I entered my bedroom, which is the eastern room of the house, I saw three spots of burned bone remains: two near the western wall and the other in the

- southeast corner of the room. We were too shocked and overwhelmed as I and Ibrahim left and
- returned to the school where we sought refuge in. On 29 February 2024, I, my wife, my brother-in-
- law brother Ibrahim, and my son Adham, returned home, gathered the burned bones, and headed
- to the PRCS-run centre in Al-Mawasi, then to the European Hospital to hand them over. Ibrahim and
- Adham went to the Hospital's morgue where the doctor confirmed that these are human bones, but
- did not accept to take them because there was no DNA test and asked to bury them.”

PCHR also found evidence of civilians, including children, directly executed by the IOF. On 19 December 2023, the IOF committed a massacre against the 'Anan family, their relatives, and dozens of IDPs in a seven-story building near the Dabit junction in central Gaza City. In the evening, after the Israeli soldiers surrounded the building, they stormed the floors, forced the residents to line up and executed them. After the execution and the withdrawal of the IOF from the building, Israeli tanks fired dozens of shells at the building, causing further civilian casualties. 12 persons were killed by fire, including a person with disability, while a 3-year-old girl was killed by the shelling. Eyewitness, Mohammed Ahmed Mohammed Anan (35), who was hiding on the seventh floor when the IOF and its tanks approached the targeted building, stated that the Israeli soldiers stormed the building at around 15:30, and shot people on each floor. He heard his relatives screaming, and at 18:30, the shooting intensified until 19:00. Shortly after, artillery shells began to rain down on the building. When the IOF withdrew by morning, Mohammed saw what happened to his relatives:

- “ Reaching the 6th floor apartments' entrance, I encountered my first shock: my brother Amin Anan's
- body lay at the entrance of the southeastern apartment, my nephew Hamdi 'Emad Al-Ghalayini's
- body in the middle of the entrance, and my nephew Homam Iyad Al-Ghalayini's body at the entrance
- of the northeastern apartment, covered by the apartment door, as the bodies were bleeding and
- the place was full of blood. I entered the apartment where the family was before the incident (my
- northeastern apartment on the 6th floor). I was shocked when I saw bullets scattered everywhere,
- and the apartment completely destroyed by an artillery shell that fell in its eastern façade. Reaching
- the living room, I found my brother-in-law Imad Hamdi Al-Ghalayini's body bleeding on the couch.
- I searched for the rest of the family members but found no one. I went down to the 5th floor that
- housed two apartments but found no one. I then went downstairs to the 4th floor that housed three
- apartments. I could not bear what I saw: dead bodies scattered next to each other at the entrance
- between the 2nd and 3rd apartments. I could not recognize them as they were covered with a

blanket, expecting that one of the women covered them. I took off the cover and saw the bodies of my uncle Bassam and his son Abdul-Malik, my nephews 'Abdulrahman and Ahmad 'Emad Al-Ghalayini, my nephew 'Abdullah lyad Al-Ghalayini, and my brother-in-law Mohammed Fayez Al-'Ashi, along with other displaced peoples' bodies. While inspecting the bodies, I heard someone crying in the northeastern apartment. I knocked on the door, and a young man named 'Oday Salem, one of the displaced in the building, opened it. He was among the young men lined up for execution but survived when the bodies fell on him, as the soldiers believed he was dead. He and my brother Yahya were the only survivors. I entered the apartment and found the rest of the family members, women, and children in the apartment's living room. They were all injured by the shell that fell on them while they were in the southeastern apartment where the soldiers had placed them. After the shell fell, my mother, 'Enaya, helped them move to the adjacent northeastern apartment, where they remained hidden until they were rescued. There was a little girl from Salem family among them, but she succumbed to her injuries after being hit with shell shrapnel.”

Child Hanan sustained critical injuries in an Israeli airstrike on her family house, leading to the amputation of her legs and the killing of her parents.



Similarly, on 18 March 2024, after the second invasion of Al-Shifa Medical Complex, Israeli soldiers stormed the Abu Haseera family home near the hospital at around 11:00. Amid heavy, indiscriminate gunfire inside the house, the soldiers went down to the second floor and executed Bushra Sa'eed Mohammed Abu Haseera (55), along with her daughters Rozan (25) and Rania (19), and her son Seif (21). The only survivor Hiba Raafat Abu Haseera (24), told PCHR:

“ A soldier stormed into the room where we were all huddled under a blanket in a corner. He pointed his gun at us and kept firing, and every time we moved, he shot us again. My mother and siblings were killed, while I survived. I screamed, telling him we were all civilians. He stopped firing, approached me, raised the gun to my head, then lowered it and dragged me out of the room. When I begged to stay with my family, he shouted, “Shut up,” and another soldier arrived and dragged me out of the house, telling me, “Go, go!” I begged to see my family, but he refused. I walked out barefoot and saw tanks surrounding the area, positioned at both ends of the street, with many military SUVs and armoured carriers. As I stood there, they opened fire at me, wounding my left hand with a bullet. I ran barefoot over shattered glass and stones, with a nail piercing my foot. Although my hand and foot were bleeding, I kept running until I reached a friend’s house, which was relatively far from besieged western Gaza.”

In another incident, Muhammad Adel Barbakh shared with PCHR how he witnessed the murder of his two children:

“ The quadcopter began calling out to the people of the Al-Amal neighbourhood, west of Khan Yunis, where we live, through loudspeakers, ordering them to leave and head west to the Mawasi area of Khan Yunis. My son, Nahed (13), came out of the door of the house carrying a white bag of flour in his hand, to use as a white flag. He moved south, 4 meters forward on the sidewalk, waving the empty bag of flour he was using, to head west to the Mawasi area, as ordered by the Israeli occupation army. Suddenly, the sound of a bullet fired from the eastern side, where the occupation soldiers were stationed, rang out. The bullet penetrated Nahed’s left foot, and he fell face down on the ground, his feet facing east and his head facing west. He tried to get up, leaning on his hands and knees, but only moments later I heard the sound of two consecutive gunshots, also coming from the direction where the occupation soldiers were stationed. I saw with my own eyes one of the bullets hit him in the back of his left side, and the second penetrated his neck from the same side.

• Nahed fell on the ground, dead and motionless. I shouted at the top of my lungs: “Nahedh! Nahedh!” and tried to run to him, but my brother Nael, who was behind me, grabbed me, trying to prevent me from getting closer. At that moment, my other son, Ramez (20), rushed towards his brother to save him, but a treacherous bullet was fired at him by the soldiers, hitting him in the left chest. He fell dead on top of Nahedh's body, covered in blood. I collapsed and started screaming my sons' names frantically, while my wife rushed from inside the house towards the southern window overlooking the street. She started waving her hands and screaming: “Ambulance! Ambulance!” hoping someone could save them. However, one of the occupation soldiers pointed his weapon at her and fired a hail of bullets. She sustained a minor injury in her left hand, and we were unable to rescue them at the time.”

• Attacks on Homes

Bombing residential neighbourhoods, including homes and entire buildings, and demolishing them on top of their residents, without prior warning, was one of the most heinous crimes committed by the IOF during the war on Gaza.

Among the family homes targeted were the Al-Ghifari's home. On 8 December 2023 at 21:00, Israeli warplanes carried out heavy airstrikes on six residential buildings and a warehouse, on Yemen Street in Al-Daraj neighbourhood, east of Gaza City—most of which belonged to the Al-Ghifari family, completely destroying them. An eyewitness, Hameed Abdel Nasser Rajab Al-Ghifari stated that the fire belt targeted several homes without any prior warning or alert, including artillery shelling and heavy quadcopter gunfire.

“ At around 20:30, the bombardment in our area intensified with terrifying and massive explosions shaking our houses. The Al-Shobaki family house was targeted on top of its residents. Around 21:00, as I was heading to my apartment on the 2nd floor, everything went pitch black. All I could see in front of me was white smoke and raging fires—turning night into day. I could not even hear the explosions, though we were directly hit. All I could remember was falling to the ground and remaining like that for more than 10 minutes. Smoke filled the place while my uncles' homes were on fire as if they were volcanoes. After more than 15 minutes, I could stand up and get out of the house seeing what I did not expect. The Israeli warplanes had launched a fire belt on our neighbourhood, completely levelling the homes to the ground. It felt like an earthquake had hit the area. The homes of my cousins Mohammed, Mostafa Youssef Al-Ghifari, Majed and Rizk Fathi Al-Ghifari, and the water trucks warehouse of Al-Sahaba Charitable Organisation were all completely destroyed on top of my family members. Immediately, with the help of neighbours and relatives still in the area, we began rescuing survivors. The scene was so horrific that I became sure everyone had been killed. For over two hours, we dug into the rubble searching for my family members. We started at my cousin Majed Fathi Al-Ghifari's 2-story home, where 27 family members were

- *inside; 24 of them were killed, and only three survivors were pulled wounded from the rubble. Then,*
- *we moved to the 3-story home of my cousins Mostafa and Mohammed Youssef Al-Ghifari, which*
- *consisted of 3 floors and 7 apartments with around 90 family members inside. Eighty of them were*
- *killed, and we managed to rescue only five injured.”*

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- *An aerial photo showing the destruction caused by the IOF's attacks in Rafah.*
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This attack resulted in the killing of 104 people, including 56 children and 30 women, and injuring seven others, including one child and two women. Only 85 bodies were pulled from under the rubble, while 19 remain trapped because the Civil Defence teams could not retrieve them.

Similarly, the Abu Nasser family's home was targeted in October 2024. On 5 October, Israeli aircraft dropped leaflets over northern Gaza urging residents to evacuate without providing a safe destination. This coincided with tank incursions and indiscriminate aerial bombardment. Residents of the area, including 80 members of the Abu Nasser family, were forced to seek refuge in their cousin's building in the Beit Lahia housing project in Jabalia camp, where more than 250 people had gathered. Due to overcrowding, they split into two groups, one of which, comprising approximately 200 people, remained in the building that would later be targeted. The family repeatedly attempted to leave northern Gaza for Gaza City, but aircraft fired on them, forcing them to return to the building. On 24 October, when the displaced from Al-Fakhoura School were ordered to evacuate, the family attempted to follow them, but aircraft again threatened to fire, forcing them to return to the building where the massacre had occurred. At 04:10, on 29 October 2024, Israeli forces fired a guided missile at the Abu Nasser family, completely destroying the top four floors of the building. Moein Abu Nasser, a survivor of the massacre told PCHR:

“That night was horrific in every sense of the word. I was lying on a couch in our room when I suddenly felt as if a ball of fire surrounded me, or as if I were inside a burning oven. The rubble fell on top of me, and the room was filled with dust and smoke. I could no longer see anything in the thick darkness. I tried to get up unconsciously, but the ceiling collapsed over my head, and I fell to the ground. Then I realised that the entire building had been targeted. Amidst the chaos, I heard my wife and mother screaming and calling for help. I crawled towards the sound despite the pain, until I found them lying under the rubble, a few meters away from me. With the help of those who were still alive, we began removing the rubble and found a small hole caused by the bombing in the ground-floor wall. We crawled through it and got out. After rescuing the rest of my family, I rushed to the street to help the wounded and retrieve the bodies of the martyrs. The scene was beyond human endurance; torn bodies were strewn everywhere: around the building, in the streets, and even on the roofs of neighbouring houses. Over the course of two full days, we—the survivors and neighbours—recovered the bodies of around 120 martyrs, including 57 children and 73 women, using our hands or donkey carts, without any support or assistance. We shrouded them in shrouds in the street and buried them in a mass grave, amidst indescribable pain. That night, and its tragic details, will remain etched in my memory forever.”

• Attacks on Shelters

As the bombing forced tens of thousands of Palestinians to flee their homes, many sought refuge in hospitals, schools, and university buildings—many of them UN-run—as well as in tents and religious buildings, believing they were protected under international law. However, these shelters quickly proved to be dangerous, as the IOF repeatedly targeted and bombed these locations.

The Israeli army bombed all hospitals in Gaza and approximately 220 shelters, completely destroying 137 schools and universities and partially damaging another 357 educational institutions.¹⁰⁹ The attacks destroyed the shelters, killed those inside, and forcibly displaced the other IDPs further into the southern Gaza Valley, continuing to kill and injure them even in these areas.

PCHR documented attacks on six hospitals and medical facilities¹¹⁰ and received testimony from several people who testified to the killing of several civilians inside and outside hospitals, and how they no longer provided safety and became focal points of IOF violence (for more details, see Section 1.c.viii.).

Sa'eed 'Abed Al-Rahman Ma'rouf (57), paediatrician at Kamal 'Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia testified about the attack on the hospital:

“After the Israeli aggression escalated amid relentless bombardment that destroyed houses over their residents' heads and inflicted a large number of casualties, my son Diaa' and I were no longer able to stay in our house, so we decided to seek refuge in the Hospital where I work. This was in mid-November 2023 when IOF besieged Kamal 'Adwan Hospital and the situation there got worse amid only few medical staff remaining on duty and fear and anxiety prevailing among the medical staff, patients, the wounded and their companions, and the displaced. Moreover, it had become extremely difficult to access medicines, medical supplies, food, and water. In light of those dire circumstances, the medical staff at the paediatrics department were treating a large number of children infected with Intestinal infectious diseases, pneumonia and meningitis given the chronic shortage of medicine and medical supplies.

109 Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

110 Al-Shifa Medical Complex – Gaza City; Al-Ahli Arab Al-Maamadani Hospital - Gaza City; Kamal 'Adwan Hospital - Beit Lahia; Al-Amal Hospital – Khan Younis; Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis; UNRWA clinic in Al-Sabra neighbourhood.

I was also an eyewitness to the Israeli bombardment on the hospital's paediatric inpatient department, killing a child and wounding his mother and another bombing that targeted the hospital's western gate and destroyed several cars in addition to a third one targeting the hospital's northern gate, killing 4 to 6 persons inside a car not to mention the scattering shrapnel that was hitting the hospital buildings' roofs.

In the last week of November 2023, upon a coordination that I did not know any of its details, a doctor, 3 nurses, my son Diao' and I left the Kamal 'Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia, north of the Gaza Strip, after the IOF tried several times to evacuate it. An ambulance, which was parked 300 meters away from the hospital, drove us to the Anglican Al-Ahly Al-Arabi Hospital in Gaza City.”

IOF's targeting of
displaced people's
tents in al-Aqsa
Martyrs Hospital's
yard in Deir al-Balah.



PCHR also documented the attack of ten educational buildings, including three UNRWA schools and Al-Aqsa University in Gaza City.¹¹¹ Among them was the bombing of Al-Tabi'in School for Sharia Sciences in Gaza City, which sheltered thousands of IDPs. At dawn on Saturday, 10 August 2024, Israeli warplanes launched three missiles at a building within the school compound, housing a prayer hall on the ground floor and a shelter for women and children on the first floor, completely destroying it. At the time of the attack, dozens of people were performing the Fajr prayer (dawn prayer). PCHR's lawyer visited the school after the bombing to document the attack and reported that the airstrike killed 97 IDPs and worshippers, including entire families, the majority of whom were women and children, pursuant to medical sources. Some were transported to the Al-Ahli (Al-Maamadani) Hospital, while others were buried at the school. It was difficult to identify the bodies, as many were torn apart, burned beyond recognition or severely mutilated. Many victims sustained severe injuries, including burns and amputations.

Yousuf Jamil Al-Safadi (19) described how he was injured during the attack on a school shelter while he was praying:

“ I was doing ablution, Wudu, near the prayer room, and the imam was reciting Surah Al-Fatiha during the first rak'ah of Fajr prayer when I suddenly saw the walls of the ablution area collapsing on us. I felt something burning all over my body, and I began to lose consciousness. I could not open my eyes due to the thick ash and dust. The debris and wall stones were raining on, along with the intense flames coming from the prayer hall. Screams echoed all over the place. I saw one of the worshippers coming toward us in the ablution area with flames engulfing him. The imam was saying, 'Recite Al-Shahada, recite Al-Shahada.' I tried to stand up, and when the horrific scene became clearer, I saw dozens of bodies and injured people lying in the ablution area and the entrance corridor. I entered the prayer hall, which had its walls destroyed and the floor burned by the flames. I exited from the eastern side, where people had come to help. I asked about my brother, Hussein (15), who was in the prayer hall, and later I learned that he had been killed.”

111 Two UNRWA schools in Gaza City ; Al-Aas School in Sheikh Radwan - Gaza City; Al-Tabi'in School for Sharia Sciences - Gaza City; Al-Ayoubiyia School in Jabalia - Gaza City ; Al-Rimal Mixed school for Refugees - Gaza City; Al-Aqsa University in Al-Zaitoun - Gaza City; Abu Helou School shelter - Al-Bureij refugee camp; Harun Al-Rashid School - Khan Younis; Al-Shawwa UNRWA School - Beit Hanoun; Tel Al-Za'atar - North Gaza.

Dr Fadel Naeem, who was on duty at Al-Ahli Hospital the day of the attack, described to PCHR how the hospital was overwhelmed with patients arriving from the school:

“Due to the ongoing Israeli suffocating siege on the northern Gaza Strip since the onset of the war, and restrictions on the flow of essential medical supplies and life-saving medicines into the Strip, there has been a chronic shortage of medical personnel in critical specialties such as burn treatment, not to mention the targeted attacks and destruction of health centres and hospitals have exacerbated the situation. Al-Maamadani Hospital has become the only fully functioning hospital in Gaza City, placing an enormous burden on the medical staff as they try to manage this dire and tragic situation. As cases started flowing into the hospital in the early morning hours, following the targeting of Al-Tabi'in building, the medical team split between the emergency reception department and the operating room. I worked in the operating room, supervising surgeries for the injured. Most of the cases we received were complex and critical, with overwhelming numbers, requiring more than one doctor at a time, such as vascular surgeons, orthopaedic doctors, and burn specialists. As a team, we were already suffering from a shortage of medical staff, especially in these specific specialties. We did our utmost to control the injuries and treat what we could, even though we knew that some of the injuries were incurable. The nature of the injuries we received was predominantly severe burns, covering 60% to 70% of the victims' bodies. These injuries could result in the amputation of large parts of their bodies. Medically, these injuries are not survivable, and in fact, most of these patients later succumb to their wounds. This posed an additional challenge, as we found ourselves dealing with cases where we knew that the inevitable outcome was death, with no hope of survival. However, our humanitarian duty and professional conscience compelled us to provide the necessary care and effort, even though we knew the inevitable result was death.”

PCHR also documented numerous attacks on IDPs tents in areas designated as “humanitarian” or “safe” by the IOF, including the bombing of tents in Al-Mawasi. At dawn on 10 March 2024, IOF forces, stationed west of Hamad city, west of Khan Younis, fired several artillery shells at IDPs tents in Al- Mawasi. The incident killed 11 people, including six children and two women, one of whom was hearing impaired, and injured ten others, including one with Down's syndrome.

Religious buildings, used to shelter IDPs, were also targeted. For example, the church adjacent to Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City became a refuge for dozens of displaced individuals. On 19 October 2023, Israeli

warplanes bombed the churchwardens' building with two missiles, killing 18 people, including eight children and five women. The ground floor of the building was the headquarters of the Arab Orthodox Scouts Group, while the first floor housed meeting rooms for the church council and sheltered several IDPs. The deliberate targeting of such buildings, which had no military value, highlights the indiscriminate nature of the attacks on civilian shelters.

Bishop Alexios, head of St. Porphyrius Church in Gaza, told Sputnik:

“ I was in the church courtyard just five minutes before the bombing, checking on the families, and everything seemed calm and fine. Moments later, a large explosion occurred. I mean, what is the reason behind bombing a church that was sheltering children and women, mostly pregnant and about to give birth? Now, they are under the rubble. Why did this happen? ”

Mrs. Lily Samir Hanna Tarazi (26) who got injured and lost her husband during the incident shared with PCHR:

“ I was on the ground floor of churchwardens' Building with 11 other people, including my father-in-law Jameel Suleiman Tarazi, my mother-in-law Nagham Farah, my sister-in-law Maryan Jameel Tarazi, her husband Majed Saba, and their children Maher (7) and Ameer (5). The space was primarily used for storing essential supplies and aid for the displaced within the church. Most of the displaced people, around 80-85, were on the first floor, which had many rooms and large halls. Suddenly, I heard a very loud strong explosion. I did not know exactly where it was. Everyone asserted that it was a warning missile near the church. Within minutes, the stones began collapsing on us from all directions. The ceiling of the ground floor, which was about 6 meters high, fell, and became only one and a half meters above us, while we were trapped underneath, surrounded by walls and stones. At the moment of the bombing, my husband Suleiman and my child were close to each other. With the force of the explosion, my husband shielded our child from shrapnel. I was trapped under the rubble with a concrete pillar on top of me. I was hardly pulled from under the rubble, as I sustained bruises, a broken jaw, and my body and ears were bleeding. While trapped, I saw my husband lying unconscious under a concrete pillar, realising he had died. I was pulled from the incident site after about an hour, fully conscious. I saw many dead bodies and injured people, including the body of child Joel 'Atallah Al-'Amash, whose head was empty. I also saw another injured person named Rania Saba. ”

• **Attacks on Food Distribution Locations**

PCHR documented several instances where the IOF deliberately targeted starving Palestinians seeking food in Northern Gaza. After imposing a crippling siege, the IOF committed several massacres against civilians, in areas where they maintained full military control and enforced a complete ban on movement in and out of them. PCHR documented two of these massacres: at Al-Nabulsi Roundabout and Al-Kuwait Roundabout.

• • • *The IOF's attack on vehicles belonging to the World Central Kitchen.*



Al-Nabulsi Massacre West of Gaza City, “Flour Massacre”

According to investigations by human rights organisations and eyewitness testimonies collected by PCHR, on the night of Wednesday, 28 February 2024, thousands of starving and exhausted Palestinians, gathered at the Nabulsi and Sheikh Ajlin roundabouts, braving freezing temperatures, darkness, and pouring rain. They clung to the hope that aid trucks rumoured to be carrying life-saving supplies—especially flour—would finally arrive as the Israeli war entered its 146th consecutive day and after days of crippling hunger and famine that had ravaged northern Gaza. As they waited, Israeli drones hovered overhead, intermittently opening fire on the civilians, turning the night into a terror-filled nightmare. Despite the constant threat of violence, the desperate crowd remained, driven by the need to secure even a single bag of flour or can of food.

At 04:00, the following day, the aid trucks finally arrived from the southern Gaza Strip. When the trucks stopped at the Al-Nabulsi roundabout and people rushed to grab food, Israeli tanks opened fire, claiming they were “securing the convoy”. One of the tanks advanced northwards, reaching beyond the area near the Khalil Al-Wazir Mosque (Sheikh Ajlin Mosque), while firing shells and bullets indiscriminately at civilians gathered near the Roundabout on Al-Rashid Street, waiting for the aid, effectively trapping them. Many tried to flee towards the beach, but only a few managed to escape the massacre.

The IOF fired intensely for almost an hour and a half, killing 118 Palestinians and wounding 760 others, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health. The scene was brutal, with victims falling either on the trucks or while carrying flour bags and food parcels. The continued gunfire also caused more casualties as it prevented paramedics and survivors from helping the wounded.¹¹²

In a statement made three days after the massacre, Israeli army spokesperson Daniel Hagari claimed that a preliminary review of the incident confirmed that most of the deaths were caused by pushing and trampling as Gazans surrounded the trucks. He added that the Israeli soldiers only fired to disperse the mob with a few warning shots, noting that an independent investigation into the incident had been opened, but provided no further details.¹¹³ Eyewitness testimonies, however, confirm that the IOF and their tanks heavily fired at civilians and contradicts claims disseminated by the IOF that most of the Palestinians killed in the incident died as a result of stampedes. For example, eyewitnesses told PCHR how Israeli soldiers deliberately killed civilians who posed no threat to them. Bilal Imad Zara'i Al-Fayri (34)

112 PCHR (29 February 2024), ‘Flour Massacre’: Impunity Persists as Israeli Forces Open Fire On Starving Palestinians Seeking Vital Aid available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/flour-massacre-impunity-persists-as-israeli-forces-open-fire-on-starving-palestinians-seeking-vital-aid/>

113 BBC News (2024) ‘Israel-Gaza war: More than 100 reported killed in crowd near Gaza aid convoy’, 1 March. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68434443> (Accessed: 29 May 2025); Reuters (2024) ‘Israeli military promises thorough investigation into aid convoy deaths’, 2 March. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-military-promises-thorough-investigation-into-aid-convoy-deaths-2024-03-02/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

stated that:

“On 28 February 2024, around 18:00, I walked alone to Nabulsi Roundabout, having heard that humanitarian aid trucks would be arriving that day. At 22:00, I was there along with many people who were there too, all the way from 17 Roundabout to the last checkpoint near Nabulsi Roundabout. I sat by the seashore, near the last checkpoint at Nabulsi Roundabout, with a group of young men I met. Two of them, Ashraf Khamis Al-Shobaki and Mohamed Mostafa Al-Shobaki, were killed that day. I waited in the cold dark night for the aid, as more and more people began to gather. Every now and then, we heard gunfire from vehicles stationed beyond Nabulsi Roundabout, targeting areas like Al-Zahra and Al-Baydar. At 04:00 on 29 February, we saw lights coming from the south beyond Nabulsi Roundabout, indicating the approach of the trucks. When they stopped at the checkpoint, one of the tanks advanced north, reaching Sheikh Ajlin Mosque, firing indiscriminately at everything in its path. At that moment, I was by the sea, and I quickly ran towards the trucks. I managed to climb onto truck no. 3 and grabbed a bag of flour. With the crowd surging, I moved to the eastern side of the truck, only to see the tank changing direction and heading toward us. I jumped on the ground and hid under the truck. A few minutes later, the shooting stopped, and I ascended again to the truck and carried a bag of flour. The sight of people being shot and flying through the air in front of the trucks was unforgettable. I could not leave the area due to the chaos and the sheer number of bodies and injured people lying on the ground. It was not until later that I managed to walk away, carrying the bag of flour on my shoulder, stepping over the corpses scattered on the ground.”

Mahmoud Ibrahim Abdulsalam 'Ubaid (30) added:

“We were so hungry that I went to get aid for the first time in my life. I did not see anyone approaching the tank stationed near Al-Rashid Street. After taking food from the first truck, I turned around and was shot in the back and hand by gunfire from the tank.”

'Atiya 'Abdul-Fattah Lafi (34) also testified:

“The first two trucks crossed, and I saw people taking aid, then the third and fourth trucks arrived, and that's when IOF's gunfire began. I managed to take my share of aid and started heading home. That's when I was shot in the back, about 700 meters from where the Israeli tanks were stationed.”

Khaled 'Allam Mushtaha (26) stated:

“We were living indescribable cruel days. Our food was limited to a small amount of rice, legumes, and ground corn, and we shared bread so that each of us would get only half a loaf. We were nine, and with the price of flour rising to 3,000 shekels—if available—we couldn’t afford to buy it. We were forced to go out on a cold night, heading to Al-Nabulsi roundabout to secure flour. We set out at 22:00, while people were burning wood for warmth. The crowd was enormous, and it was impossible to move through the masses. We stayed there until dawn, and when the trucks appeared on the horizon, everyone rushed towards them as if racing against time and hunger. Suddenly, the tanks advanced, and heavy random gunfire erupted. I saw the bullets flying as I was with my cousins, but we got separated when the shelling intensified, and each of us ran in a different direction engulfed by fear. People were falling around us, injured and dead. I saw a young man get shot in the waist and die while holding a sack of flour—a scene I will never forget. The next day, we returned to find dozens of dead bodies piled on top of each other, with the injured being transported in any way possible, whether by trucks, buses, or even wooden carts due to their overwhelming numbers. The horrific scene stretched along Al-Rashid Street, where dead bodies and the injured were stacked, as if life had come to a halt at that terrifying moment. It was then that I learned my cousin, Abdul Karim Ahed Mushtaha, had been killed. He had been shot in the face to the extent that I didn’t recognize him at first. When they told me at the hospital that it was my cousin, the pain was indescribable.”

• ***Al-Kuwait Roundabout Massacre, East Gaza City***

On the evening of Thursday, 14 March 2024, Israeli tanks stationed at the Al-Kuwait roundabout, east of Gaza City, fired shells at hundreds of Palestinians who were waiting for humanitarian aid to arrive from the southern Gaza Valley to the besieged northern Gaza Strip. The attack killed 24 people and wounded 50 others. The dead and wounded were left to bleed for hours as the IOF refused to allow medical personnel to evacuate them.

The eyewitness Mohammed 'Abdul-Razeq Taleb Al-Dahdar (29), who lost his brother in the massacre, said that he and his four brothers—Taleb (35), Mostafa (27), Ahmed (26), and Misbah (21)—were sitting that evening near Al-Yazji Bakery on Salah Al-Deen Street, about 300-400 meters from the Al-Kuwait Roundabout, waiting for aid convoys to come from the south amid crowds of people flooding to the roundabout. He added:

“As everyone gathered at around 22:00, IOF suddenly began firing shells at the civilians, followed by heavy gunfire from Quadcopters. I saw one flying just two meters in front of me. I quickly ran north and managed to find shelter beyond the

-
- *petrol station, while my brother Ahmed sheltered in a shopfront of a destroyed house along with others. The shelling and gunfire continued for about 20 minutes consecutively.*”
-

After the shooting stopped, Mohammed found his two brothers, except for his younger brother, Ahmed, who went missing. During the search, Mohammed came across a crater filled with bodies, but his brother was not among them.

- “
- *I entered a destroyed shopfront and was shocked by the horrific scene, there were more than*
- *30 dead bodies inside and surrounded by a pool of blood. I found my brother sitting in one of the*
- *corners of the shopfront and putting his hands on his head as if he was hiding from something. I*
- *lifted his body, and he was bleeding, as he sustained a shrapnel injury in his abdomen below the*
- *left kidney. I called my brother Taleb to tell him, and he came right away and brought a cart with*
- *him. I carried Ahmed's body and headed towards Dola intersection, where I met Taleb, and we took*
- *Ahmed by cart to Al-Shifa Medical Complex. my brother Taleb to tell.*”

Yousef Majdi Al-Kharbishi (26) also testified about his experience trying to get flour at the Al-Kuwait Roundabout:

- “
- *On 13 March 2024, as the famine intensified north of Wadi Gaza, I headed with my uncle Amjad*
- *to Kuwait Roundabout, east of Gaza, to wait for aid trucks to enter. At 21:00, the first truck arrived,*
- *and people rushed towards it. Quadcopters randomly fired at civilians. I was separated from my*
- *uncle in the chaos and managed with difficulty to obtain a bag of flour. I searched for him in vain,*
- *so I returned to the agreed-upon meeting point and waited until midnight, but he did not appear.*
- *I carried an empty bag of flour as a white flag and headed towards Kuwait Roundabout. Upon*
- *arriving, I was shocked by the sight of twenty martyrs lying on the ground. I turned on my phone's*
- *flashlight to identify faces, but I did not find my uncle among them. The IOF shone their flashlight*
- *on me and then turned it off a few minutes later. I left the area after contacting my father, who*
- *confirmed that my uncle had not returned to his tent. At dawn, when I returned to my displaced*
- *school in Sheikh Zayed, we learned that my uncle's body had arrived at the Baptist Hospital. He had*
- *been killed by a gunshot to the head.*”

II.SYSTEMATIC TARGETING OF SPECIFIC GROUPS OF PEOPLE

PCHR's investigations revealed that journalists, academics, medical staff, paramedics, Civil Defence teams, municipal workers, and humanitarian personnel have been deliberately and systematically targeted in the ongoing violence. These individuals—protected under international law—have been killed while carrying out their professional and/or life-saving duties, highlighting a clear pattern of attacks against those serving vital civilian functions.

• *Attacks on Journalists*

Journalists have been deliberately targeted by Israeli forces, in blatant disregard of their civilian status and the protections granted to them under international law.¹¹⁴ Journalists face constant and imminent threats to their lives as their work requires them to enter dangerous areas to report and document events, placing them in the front line of danger. The Israeli military offensive on Gaza resulted in some of the most brutal and deadly attacks against journalists and media outlets operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

During the course of the 15-month military aggression, 205 journalists were killed and 400 injured.¹¹⁵ Several journalists were killed while performing their duty, despite wearing vests and helmets marked 'PRESS', while others were targeted while at home with their families, or were killed in indiscriminate bombings across Gaza. These journalists were either freelancers or working for local and international news agencies.

According to PCHR's investigation into four incidents, these journalists were following all necessary safety protocols, including providing their coordinates during armed clashes between Palestinian resistance groups and the IOF, or while travelling to specific locations to report and live-stream the atrocities committed against Palestinian civilians.¹¹⁶

One such incident occurred on 10 October 2023, when three journalists—Said Al-Tawil, director of Al Khamsa Agency; Mohammad Subh Abu Rizq, a photographer with Khabar Agency; and Hisham Al-Nawajha, a journalist with Khabar Agency—were preparing to cover the Israeli bombing of the Al-Haji Tower, which housed several media agencies in western Gaza City. The journalists, along with others wearing 'PRESS' vests, had taken shelter in the nearby Babel Tower

¹¹⁴ For more information, please see Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) Report on the targeting of journalists and media institutions in Gaza during the 2023-2024 conflict, October, pp. 34-38. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Report-on-the-Targeting-of-Journalists.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

¹¹⁵ Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

¹¹⁶ For more information, please see Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) Report on the targeting of journalists and media institutions in Gaza during the 2023-2024 conflict, October, pp. 6-15. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Report-on-the-Targeting-of-Journalists.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).



- A live broadcast vehicle damaged by an Israeli airstrike on Al-Nusirat refugee camp,
- center of the Gaza Strip.

and were positioning their cameras to capture the strike. However, without warning, a rocket hit the Babel Tower where they were hiding, killing all three journalists.

On 15 December 2023, Al Jazeera cameraman Samer Abu Daqqa was also killed, and reporter Wael Al-Dahdouh was injured when an Israeli drone fired a missile as they accompanied a Civil Defence team attempting to evacuate a family trapped in a house that was targeted near Farhana School in central Khan Younis. Wael Al-Dahdouh told PCHR:

“

I, along with my colleague the photographer Samer Abu Daqa, accompanied the Civil Defence after they received coordination to reach a trapped family in their home near Farhana School in Khan Younis after an Israeli attack. We photographed the areas and documented the extensive destruction, reaching a point where no camera had yet reached. We tried to convey these scenes to the world through coordination and finished filming. While we were returning from the mission and walking several meters, something suddenly happened. I felt something significant had happened, and I fell on the ground with my helmet and microphone falling off. I tried to gather my strength and barely managed to stand, feeling dizzy and unsteady. I expected a second strike and estimated that staying in the area would prevent anyone from reaching me. So, despite my unsteady state and severe bleeding from my arm, I decided to leave the area. I pressed my hand against one of the wounds and began walking until I reached the end of the street where a first aid team treated me on-site. I informed them that we needed to return to our colleague Samer Abu Daqa, whom I heard screaming and clearly injured. I estimated that his injury was in the lower part of his body. The field crews stopped the bleeding and told me to leave now and that another crew would come back to get Samer and the others out.

”

On 7 January 2024, Hamza Wael Al-Dahdouh, Al Jazeera journalist, and Mustafa Thuraya, AFP photojournalist, were killed by an Israeli drone while they were working in Rafah. Amer Abu Amro, a photographer for Al Jazeera Mubasher and Palestine Today TV, who witnessed the incident told PCHR:

“

I saw several journalists at the chalet, including Hamza Wael Al-Dahdouh and Mustafa Thuraya, and I spoke with Mustafa for a few minutes to coordinate a joint effort and benefit from his expertise in photography. After our conversation, as I was heading towards my colleague Ahmed Al-Barsh to finalize our report, I heard an explosion nearby, which I estimated to be caused by an Israeli drone strike. This resulted in injuries to me and my colleague Ahmed Al-Barsh from shrapnel. Despite my injury, I continued filming as if I did not feel it at the time, while Ahmed was in considerable pain. I then boarded an ambulance from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, which was parked at the chalet with at least one martyr's body recovered from the destroyed chalet. The ambulance took us south via a street connecting Rafah and Khan Yunis towards Al-Najjar Hospital in Rafah.

At around 11:15, I heard an explosion near Al-Yasmeen Mall and saw a civilian vehicle behind us that appeared to have been hit by at least one missile. The ambulance stopped, and I ran towards the vehicle, filming as I went. It turned out to be a Skoda, which had stopped due to the attack and contained five injured civilians. I was not sure if Hamza Al-Dahdouh and Mustafa Thuraya were inside. I returned to the ambulance, and we continued to the hospital. Shortly after, other ambulances arrived with casualties from the vehicle hit behind us, including the martyrs Hamza Wael Al-Dahdouh, Mustafa Thuraya, and a third martyr named Qusai Salem, whose profession I do not know, along with two other injured

- individuals. After that, doctors examined me, found my injuries to be minor, and then I went to
- check on my colleague Ahmed Al-Barsh, who had shrapnel in his abdomen and was described as
- being in moderate condition.”

On 31 July 2024, the IOF killed Al Jazeera journalist Ismail Al-Ghoul and cameraman Rami Al-Rifi as they were driving an Al Jazeera car on Aidiya Street, west of Gaza City. Their car was directly and deliberately targeted after they had finished a live broadcast earlier in the day outside the home of Ismail Haniyeh, the Chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau.

Journalists were also subject to arrests and torture while in detention. The Committee to Protect Journalists has documented the arrest of 86 journalists.¹¹⁷ PCHR also documented the arrest of several journalists by the IOF.¹¹⁸ Among them was Daa Al-Kahlout (42), Director and Reporter of the New Arab News Website in Gaza, who was arrested from his home, detained for 43 days and interrogated about his journalistic work.

- “ [After my arrest], I was interrogated by an Israeli military intelligence investigator calling himself
- “Captain Abu Ali”, while kneeling on the sand. He was standing right in front of me, he questioned
- me about my work, and I told him I was a journalist in the New Arab news website. The investigator
- then searched in a device linked to the internet about my data and work, so he found a report
- written by me on Al-Araby Al-Jadeed website back in 2017 about the IOF’s commonly known “Sayeret
- Matkal” unit when one of its officers was discovered and killed by the Palestinian resistance groups
- in Bani Suhailah village, east of Khan Younis. They also found other reports that I previously wrote
- when I used to work with Al-Jazeera website about Hamas and its historical slogans and other
- reports on As-Safeer Lebanese website. The investigator noticed how exhausted I was and that the
- ties were hurting me, and the fold was too tight on my eyes. I asked him to loosen the ties and fold,
- but he refused and pushed me to the ground, so the sand got into my mouth.
-
- After questioning me for 20 minutes, the soldiers took me to where they gathered the detainees
- and mocked me and my journalistic work. One of them talked to me in English and then closed my
- mouth with a tape taking me and the rest of detainees with our hands tied behind our backs and
- blindfolded to a higher place, where there were trucks parked. They were insulting and beating us.

117 Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) (2025) *Journalist casualties in the Israel-Gaza conflict*. May. Available at: <https://cpj.org/2023/10/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

118 For more information, please see Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (2024) Report on the targeting of journalists and media institutions in Gaza during the 2023-2024 conflict, October, pp. 29-31. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Report-on-the-Targeting-of-Journalists.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

They forced us into the trucks and threw light blankets on us, but the weather was very cold. The truck moved for a few minutes. I think they entered the nearby Zikim Base. [...] For 25 consecutive days, we were forced to stay in the kneeling position from approximately 4:00 am to 11:00 pm and they counted us several times. We were given very little food, some toast slices, jam, creamy cheese, tuna and little water, and we were only allowed once a day to go the bathroom. Being forced to sit on my knees for a long time has caused me skin irritations and cysts in my thighs and the soldiers refused to provide me with any medical treatment.

[...] Few days later, I was interrogated again for around 30 minutes by an investigator wearing a military uniform. He asked me about my journalistic work with Al-Jazeera Net between 2007 and 2014 and in Al-Araby Al Jadeed website, where I still work, as well as my press sources. [...] On the 25th day of my arrest, I was taken in a military vehicle that drove around 15 minutes and then stopped. [...] The soldiers brought me into a room and ordered me to take off all my clothes. One of them gave me a diaper so I put it on and then wore my clothes thinking they were preparing me for interrogation with an investigator from the Shin Bet. The soldiers put me in the corner of a corridor and tied my feet and hands behind my back with iron handcuffs. The soldiers then hung me in the “Shabh” position with the sun above my head. [...] I was left hanging in the shabh position for six hours, causing me terrible pain, especially in the shoulders and back since I suffer from a herniated disk.”

Finally, the IOF systematically targeted and destroyed media offices and institutions across Gaza, levelling to the ground the few remaining entities and locations capable of reporting the truth about its military attacks and ongoing acts of genocide. Throughout the course of the military aggression, both international and local media organisations reported the widespread destruction of all operational media outlets in Gaza, leaving the region with almost no ability to document or share the reality of the situation.¹¹⁹

The killing and injuring of journalists, along with their arbitrary arrests, torture, and the complete obliteration of media facilities, has severely crippled the press in Gaza. This targeted assault on journalists and media institutions has resulted in only a handful of reporters remaining in Gaza, struggling not only to cover the atrocities being committed but also to survive amidst the ongoing violence.

119 For more information, please see Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) Report on the targeting of journalists and media institutions in Gaza during the 2023-2024 conflict, October, pp. 20-26. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Report-on-the-Targeting-of-Journalists.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

• Attacks on Academics

The IOF has also systematically targeted academics, researchers, and university professors during its military attacks in Gaza. Israel killed 150 academics, professors and researchers, including university presidents, deans, lecturers, graduates and prominent researchers in various fields, some of whom held senior positions in the Ministry of Education.¹²⁰

“My husband, Rifaat Al-Ara’ir, was a university professor, writer, translator, and poet,” Nusaybah Saqr Abu Al-Hin (43) told PCHR.

“

He worked as a lecturer at the Islamic University. In addition to his work at the Islamic University Incubator and University College, he was also an employee at the AMIDEAST Center. He co-edited and wrote several books and articles, including “Gaza Writes Back,” which includes stories by young Palestinians recounting their suffering under the occupation and siege in Gaza. His poem “If I Must Die,” which spread globally after his martyrdom, is also famous. He wrote articles that were published on the Electronic Intifada website and in the New York Times. He always emphasised that “telling stories as Palestinians under occupation goes beyond educational value to the necessity of owning our own narrative, which restores power to the community rather than the elite.” My husband was also one of the founders of the “We Are Not Numbers” project, which aims to tell the stories of Palestinian victims who are mentioned as “numbers” in the news. During the war launched by the IOF on the Gaza Strip, Rifaat received calls from international satellite channels such as Al Jazeera English and CNN asking for interviews about the situation. On 17 October 2023, the Israeli bombing and fire belts intensified in Gaza City. IOF aircraft bombed the upper apartment of our building, killing several of its occupants. We were extremely afraid and decided to leave. We were displaced several times until we reached his sister’s house in the Daraj neighbourhood, despite my refusal because the house was too small and overcrowded with displaced people. When the truce began on 24 November 2023, my children and I went to Fahd Al-Sabah School in the Daraj neighbourhood to visit my family, and we stayed there. I asked my husband to come and live with us at the school as a safe zone, but he refused. We maintained constant contact, and he came to visit us. After the week-long truce ended, the bombing by air, artillery shells, and fire belts intensified on Gaza City. At approximately 18:00 on 6 December 2023, while Rifaat and his displaced siblings were staying with him in his sister’s apartment, his mobile phone rang. He answered the line and

¹²⁰ Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

- said, "Peace be upon you." Following that, the apartment was bombed. The bombing resulted in the martyrdom of Rifaat
- Tawfiq Saeed Al-Ara'ir (45), his brother Salah (34), and his wife Alaa Khaled Rajab (28) - who told us before dying that the
- missile fell after Rifaat answered his phone-, and their son Muhammad (9), his sister Asmaa Rafiq Al-Ara'ir (33), and her
- children Alaa Ahmed Al-Mamlouk (14), Muhammad (13), Yahya (11), and Nada (9).”

According to PCHR's own investigation, the IOF killed at least three university presidents. Among them was Dr Sufian Tayeh, President of the Islamic University of Gaza, who was killed along with his family in an Israeli airstrike on his home in Jabalia refugee camp on 2 December 2023. The IOF also killed the former President of the Islamic University, Dr Mohammed Shubair (77), and four members of his family in an Israeli airstrike on their home in the Al-Mina area, west of Gaza City, on 11 November 2023. Furthermore, the IOF killed Dr Saeed Al-Zebda, President of the University College of Applied Sciences in Gaza, along with his family, in an Israeli airstrike on his home in the Al-Zaytoun neighbourhood of Gaza City on 31 December 2023.

Widespread
destruction at
Al-Aqsa University
in Gaza as a
result of an Israeli
airstrike.



• *Attacks on Medical Personnel*

Since the start of the war on Gaza, medical personnel, including doctors and paramedics, have been deliberately targeted by the IOF, despite the protection afforded to them under international law. A total of 1,155 health workers were killed,¹²¹ the highest number in any region of the world that has experienced similar warfare, including more than 146 doctors and 260 nurses.¹²²

360 health professionals were also arrested by the IOF and three were reported dead while in Israeli custody.¹²³ Among them, Dr Adnan Al-Bursh, the head of the orthopaedic department at Al-Shifa Medical Complex in Gaza City, who was arrested in December 2023 in Al-Awda Hospital, located in the northern part of Gaza. On 19 April 2024, he was announced to have died in Ofer prison. Several sources from prisoners' and detainees' organisations confirmed that Dr Al-Bursh had been subjected to brutal torture during his detention, including beatings and deprivation of food, which ultimately led to his tragic death.¹²⁴

Additionally, World Health Organization (WHO) reports indicate that 39 physiotherapists have been killed as of 10 May 2024.¹²⁵ According to the PRCS, at least 13 paramedics were killed while performing their humanitarian duties,¹²⁶ as well as 84 members of the Civil Defence, which provides ambulance and emergency services.¹²⁷

PCHR documented the attack of several medical personnel. Four doctors were executed during one of the sieges of Al-Shifa Medical Complex that lasted between 18 March and 1 April 2024. Dr Mo'tasem Salah, Head of the Emergency Committee at the Ministry of Health in Gaza, told PCHR that the IOF executed four medical personnel during the raid on the hospital:

121 Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

122 Palestinian Ministry of Health (2024) *Detailed Report of the Health Sector Martyrs up to 31 July 2024*, August.

123 Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

124 Al Jazeera (2024). *Dying in hell: Palestinian medics jailed by Israel*. 24 November. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/24/dying-in-hell-palestinian-medics-jailed-by-israel> (Accessed 29 May 2025).

125 World Health Organization (WHO) (2024) Estimating trauma rehabilitation needs in Gaza using injury data from emergency medical teams, September, p. 10. Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/estimating-trauma-rehabilitation-needs-in-gaza-using-injury-data-from-emergency-medical-teams> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

126 Information obtained by PCHR from Mr. Mohammed Abu Musabah, Director of the Ambulance and Emergency Department at the Palestine Red Crescent Society, on 25 August 2024.

127 Palestinian Civil Defence (2024) Official Telegram channel post, 19 September. Available at: <https://t.me/dcdgaza/8025> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

An ambulance belonging to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) was bombed.



- » **Dr Ahmad Al-Maqadma**, a specialist in plastic surgery, who was allowed to leave the complex but was executed at the hospital roundabout along with his mother, **Dr Yusra Al-Maqadma**;
- » **Dr Mohammed Zaher Al-Nounou**, Director of the Pharmacy Department, who was also allowed to leave the complex but was also killed at the same roundabout;
- » **Engineer Bahaa Al-Kilani**, Director of the Engineering and Maintenance Department, who was executed in the courtyard of the complex;
- » **Engineer Khalil Salah**, laboratory supervisor, who was also executed in the courtyard of the complex.

PCHR also documented the killing of four PRCS medics while transporting two injured people. The investigation revealed that they were clearly identifiable by their uniforms and insignia, as well as by the distinctive red crescent and red cross markings on the ambulances. On 10 January 2024, the IOF fired shells at a PRCS ambulance on Salah Al-Deen Street near the Al-Awda factory in Deir Al-Balah. The attack killed all four members of the ambulance crew: paramedic officer Youssef Abu Ma'mar, paramedic Fadi Al-Ma'ani, volunteers Islam Abu Rayala and Fouad Abu Khamash. The two injured in the ambulance were also killed. This incident highlights the heavy price paid by these teams for their

humanitarian work. It also serves as evidence of Israel's policy of deliberate killing and summary execution of health professionals.

Anwar Abu Huli, Director of the PRCS Ambulance Service in Deir Al-Balah, gave his testimony to PCHR, stating that upon receiving the signal of the ambulance being targeted, he rushed to the scene and saw the following:

“
The vehicle on the asphalt beside the curb on the western side was destroyed while on the driver's seat was paramedic officer Youssef Abu Ma'mar and next to him volunteer journalist Fouad Abu Khamash. Their bodies were torn apart, both inside and outside the vehicle. In the rear cabin, paramedics Fadi Al-Mana'i and Islam Abu Rayala were dead, having succumbed to their injuries, with several wounds across their bodies. On the stretcher there were the bodies of 2 patients they had been transported completely torn into pieces.”

Finally, PCHR documented the arrest and torture of ten health professionals (three doctors, five paramedics, including three senior paramedics, one hospital staff member, and one physiotherapist). Among them, Walid Anwar Yousif Al-Khalili (35), a Palestine Medical Relief Society (PMRS) Paramedic from Gaza City, arrested while on duty:

“
I work as a paramedic at PMRS next to Al-Quds Hospital in Tal al-Hawa neighbourhood in Gaza City. At 10:00 on Monday, 13 November 2023, I met by coincidence Dr. Marwan Al-Refati, the owner of Family Pharmacy in Gaza. I was wearing the PMRS paramedic uniform (a white coat with yellow lines bearing the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems) and carrying a first aid kit. I was on my way to check on 3 persons injured in Abu Jalal Dughmash's house, so Dr. Marwan accompanied me. After checking on them, we left the house together and walked on Al-Mughrabi Street towards Barcelona Stadium in Tal al-Hawa neighbourhood, southern Gaza City. At around 11:00 when we arrived at Al-Sena'ah Street, east of the stadium, I heard a gunshot that hit Dr Marwan in his abdomen. I looked to the west from where the bullet was fired, and saw Israeli soldiers in a residential building right to the west of the Barcelona Stadium. Only a few seconds later, the Israeli soldiers, particularly snipers, fired another bullet at Dr. Marwan's forehead, so he fell on the ground and left to bleed to death. The Israeli snipers continued shooting at me, so I hid behind a truck parked in the area and luckily did not get injured. At the time, I was hearing the Israeli tanks opening fire and firing artillery

- shells. All of this happened at the beginning of the Israeli forces' ground invasion into southern Gaza City. I stayed behind
- the truck until 01:00 on Tuesday, 14 November 2023, when I managed to crawl towards Al-Sena'ah Street and entered
- an apartment on the second floor in an empty residential building. [...] [I] got out through the window to a nearby villa,
- which was empty as well. [...] At around 15:30 on Wednesday, 15 November 2023, the Israeli soldiers raided the villa amid
- shooting and I saw laser lights, so I shouted at them to stop and help me in Hebrew. The soldiers stopped shooting and
- one of them ordered me to take off my clothes, except for my boxer, and sit with his head down on knees. I was then
- handcuffed behind my bank and blindfolded, and they then walked me out to another house. They removed the blindfold,
- and I saw 20 soldiers in green uniforms bearing the American flag. Suddenly, they started punching me and continued for
- a long time, fracturing some of my breast bones.”

Overworked and overwhelmed healthcare workers, including Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) providers, also experience deep trauma, with no time to process their own traumatic experiences and leaving a deep impact on their mental health. The constant fighting and a complete lack of resources force healthcare workers to make decisions that pose significant emotional and ethical challenges. Such challenges include rationing limited medications and medical supplies by deprioritising patients in need; operating on patients without anaesthesia; and leaving patients behind when evacuating health facilities under attack. Also, frequent attacks on health facilities and the death of coworkers create feelings of both grief and fear, making going to work a terrifying experience. In response, many healthcare workers have developed symptoms of anxiety, burnout, guilt, insomnia, depression, and other mental disorders.

Dr 'Abdullah Al-Jamal, psychiatrist consultant and director of the Psychiatric Hospital in Gaza, told PCHR:

- “After the only psychiatric hospital was destroyed, I had to work at several medical points. I can't count the psychological
- cases I receive daily, as I am the only psychiatrist left in the northern Gaza Valley. These cases include trauma, depression,
- and severe anxiety resulting from the Israeli war on Gaza. After 14 years of working as a psychiatrist, I can confidently say
- that the symptoms I have observed during this war are unprecedented, resembling symptoms of delirium, schizophrenia,
- and mania. Some patients even attempted suicide. Many of these symptoms will persist with the patient for the rest of
- their life, negatively impacting both their lives and the lives of their families. I am among those who are suffering, as we
- are forced to treat these cases and listen to the patients, but a significant portion of the staff is no longer able to do so.
- Caregivers themselves need psychological support, which is a complex challenge. After the war, it will be challenging to
- deal with this sheer number of affected persons, considering the shortage of psychiatrists, as almost every home in Gaza
- was affected by this war.”

• *Attacks on Civil Defence and Municipal Crews*

Mahmoud Saber Tafesh Basal (37), spokesperson for the Civil Defence in the Gaza Strip, testified about his experience during the genocide:

- “ Since the first moments of the genocidal war on the Gaza Strip on 7 October 2023, we have not
- left the field. We have continued to work around the clock with all our capabilities and available
- resources, despite the heinous and indescribably massive destruction that has hit all the necessities
- of life and public services for the people of Gaza City. In addition, public, health and essential service
- facilities have not been spared from targeted attacks, despite their crucial role in providing essential
- services to the population in times of conflict.
-
- The Gaza Civil Defence, a leading agency operating in Gaza City, has faced targeted attacks and
- extensive destruction aimed at hampering its rescue operations and its essential role for our resilient
- Gazans during the ongoing genocide. Since the start of the war and until September 2024, over 70 of
- its staff have been killed and dozens of its vehicles and equipment damaged.”

Since the beginning of the war, the IOF has deliberately targeted Civil Defence and municipal teams, including direct attacks on their buildings and equipment, as well as direct attacks on their personnel.

During the 15-month period, the IOF killed 94 Civil Defence workers and arrested 26 others.¹²⁸ These individuals were targeted while carrying out their humanitarian duties, which included recovering bodies and rescuing the injured from beneath the rubble of homes destroyed by Israeli airstrikes. Such attacks have severely hampered rescue efforts, leading to a significant rise in civilian deaths due to the lack of resources and the inability of emergency teams to reach and extract residents from collapsed buildings in a timely manner.

Among the incidents documented by PCHR are the killing of three Civil Defence crews in Nuseirat and the killing of five Gaza Municipality employees.

¹²⁸ Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

On 27 June 2024, the IOF bombed the temporary Civil Defence headquarters in Nuseirat refugee camp, killing three staff members: Ziad Mohammed Al-Habbash, Ammar Rajeh Awad, and Abdul Ghaffar Ayash Asaad. Three others were injured: Mohammed Al-Telbani, Hatem Abu Taqiyah, and Abdul Rahim Mahmoud Al-Munirawi. Mohammed Abu Areeban, Director of Civil Defence in the Central Governorate, confirmed to PCHR that the headquarters was targeted by the IOF without prior warning and in the absence of any military activities in the area:

“ I heard a loud explosion that shook the area, and I saw yellow dust filling the place. At first, I thought the explosion was outside the headquarters. But as we moved toward the sound, I saw my colleagues, covered in blood, sitting on a bed at the western entrance of the headquarters. I was in shock, unsure of what to do in the face of such a horrific scene. I managed to pull myself together and with the help of people who had come to the scene and some of my colleagues who were still working, we placed the body of Ziad Mohammed Salim Al-Habbash on a stretcher and into the Civil Defence ambulance. Ammar Rajeh Awad was placed on another stretcher and into the same ambulance, along with the injured Yahya Mohammed Al-Telbani and Hatem Sobhi Abu Taqiyah. We transported them all to Al-Awda Hospital in Nuseirat.”

The IOF has also killed many municipal workers in all the governorates of the Gaza Strip, including at least 170 employees of the Gaza City municipality, among them are four mayors. While dozens more have been injured. Many of the dead and injured were targeted while carrying out humanitarian tasks, such as operating or repairing water wells, or helping to remove rubble from destroyed buildings and recover the dead and injured.¹²⁹

On 21 June 2024, five employees of the Gaza municipality were killed in an Israeli airstrike while working on the distribution and operation of water wells in the Gaza Municipality garage. The strike targeted the fuel division room at the eastern garage without prior warning, killing all five employees inside: Engineer Anwar Sobhi Al-Jundi, Zahir Hamdi Al-Haddad, Sharif Omar Al-Jundi, Ibrahim Zuhair Abu Khater, and Ahmed Ismail Al-Helo. The airstrike destroyed the administration room and the eastern garage wall. Eyewitness Assem Eyad Al-Nabeh (34), a member of Gaza Municipality's Emergency Committee and Director of Public Relations, recounted the following:

“ At the moment of the strike, I was in the southern section of the garage, which houses the municipality's emergency administration, along with several workers. After hearing a loud explosion that shook the area, we rushed toward the building's main southern gate but found no signs of the strike. At that moment, we saw several neighbours running toward the site as dust filled the air, and it became clear that the eastern gate of the garage had been hit, just 20-30 meters from

129 Interview conducted by PCHR with Ismail Al-Thawabta, Director of the Government Advertising Office.

- *the emergency administration building... Several bodies were found in the garage courtyard, about*
- *20-30 meters from the impact zone, thrown outside by the force of the explosion. Other bodies were*
- *pulled from under the rubble, torn apart and difficult to identify because the body parts had mixed*
- *together.*”

• **Attacks on Humanitarian Workers, Including UN Staff**

Since the beginning of the war, the IOF has repeatedly targeted humanitarian workers, including UN staff. Attacks were launched on buildings and humanitarian convoys without warning, despite prior coordination and the IOF's knowledge of their coordinates.¹³⁰ These attacks are part of a deliberate and systematic policy to target humanitarian aid convoys and distribution centres, as well as those waiting to receive the aid .

As a result, more than 369 humanitarian workers have been killed in Gaza since October 2023, with UNRWA personnel accounting for 263 of these fatalities¹³¹—representing the highest number of UN personnel killed in a single conflict or natural disaster.¹³² International organisations, such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and World Central Kitchen (WCK), have also been targeted.

For example, on 20 February 2024, an Israeli tank shelled a residential building in the Al-Mawasi area, west of Khan Younis, housing local MSF staff and their families. The attack left two people dead and seven injured. Human Rights Watch's investigation following the incident revealed that the staff and their families had received no advance warning from Israeli forces, despite the fact that the organisation had provided the Israeli authorities with the coordinates of the building.¹³³

On 1 April 2024, WCK was in turn targeted.¹³⁴ Israeli drones launched three separate attacks on

¹³⁰ See Human Rights Watch (2024) 'Gaza: Israelis Attacking Known Aid Worker Locations', 14 May. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/05/14/gaza-israelis-attacking-known-aid-worker-locations> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

¹³¹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2025) *Humanitarian Situation Update #253: Gaza Strip*, 8 January. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-253-gaza-strip> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

¹³² UN News (2024) 'Guterres 'personally devastated' over inability of UN to safeguard staff in Gaza, despite best efforts', 6 June. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/06/1150736> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

¹³³ Human Rights Watch (2024) 'Gaza: Israelis Attacking Known Aid Worker Locations', 14 May. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/05/14/gaza-israelis-attacking-known-aid-worker-locations> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

¹³⁴ World Central Kitchen (2024) 'Gaza team update'. Available at: <https://wck.org/news/gaza-team-update> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

a convoy of three white Toyota Hilux vehicles travelling along the Deir al-Balah coast towards the south of the Gaza Strip. Two of the vehicles were marked as WCK. The first strike completely burned the front of the first vehicle with a missile, allowing the driver to escape and join another vehicle in the convoy. A second missile then struck another vehicle 500 metres away, killing three passengers, while two others managed to escape and board the third car. Then, about a kilometre to the south, the Israeli drones again targeted the third car with a missile, killing four team members. In total, seven people were killed in the attack, including one woman. The victims were from Australia, Poland, and the United Kingdom, with some holding dual nationality, including American, Canadian, and Palestinian. Among them was a Palestinian driver. The attack, according to the international organisation, occurred despite prior coordination with the Israeli military. The targeted team was leaving a food warehouse in Deir Al-Balah, central Gaza, after unloading over 100 tons of humanitarian food aid. WCK condemned the attack, stating that it was not only an assault on their team but on all humanitarian organisations showing up in the direst of situations where food is being used as a weapon of war.

PCHR also documented an attack on another WCK convoy. An eyewitness, K.Q., testified about the killing of three of their employees in November 2024.

“
At approximately 8:00 on Saturday, 30 November 2024, while I was driving on Salah al-Deen Street, I got off at Al-Abarah Street and saw a white jeep driving fast. It stopped suddenly, and I heard an explosion and smoke rising from it. I approached it and heard a cry for help, then another missile fell, so I threw myself to the ground. After the shelling stopped, I approached again and found the jeep hit, and inside there were three motionless people wearing uniforms with the WCK logo. I saw my relative among the injured bleeding from his thigh and hand, so I helped him with others and took him to Nasser Hospital. The martyrs who were killed in this attack were: Azem Jalal Muhammad Abu Daqqa (33), Muhammad Adel Muhammad Al-Namla (28), and Ahed Azmi Muhammad Qudaih (31), all of whom were WCK employees. Two civilians who were trying to provide assistance and rescue were also killed: Adel Hussein Ahmed Samour (35) and Ibrahim Jamil Abd Abu Lahia (31).”

III. REPEATED EVACUATION ORDERS AND MASS DISPLACEMENT

H. Gh. (31), from North Gaza, recounted the series of displacements she endured before being arrested at the Netzarim Checkpoint while fleeing the ongoing bombardments.

“

In the beginning of Israeli aggression on Gaza on 7 October 2023, the Israeli warplanes started bombing our area, including houses, enticing fear among us. Later, they dropped leaflets to evacuate the area, so my brother, his wife and I left the house at 13:00 on 18 October 2023. We went to Al-Fakhourah School and stayed there until mid-November.

While we were inside, the Israeli tanks fired artillery shells at the school, so we evacuated to Hafs school in Jabalia refugee camp near Abu Rashed pool. On 1 December 2023, at around 19:00, the IOF fired white smoke bombs, killing 55-year-old Naderah Al-Taweel, her daughter told me that she was decapitated by these bombs, and an ambulance arrived half an hour later and took her away. They fired these bombs heavily around us, causing clouds of smoke. We could not see and the tents in the school were set on fire.

The next day, at around 08:00, we walked along the so-called 'safe corridor' to the Netzarim checkpoint. When we arrived, the IOF ordered all the evacuees over loudspeakers to sit on the ground and wait for the others to come. We waited for half an hour and then they ordered us to move, holding up our ID cards and keeping a distance from each other. Meanwhile, the IOF called me to come with my ID and my belongings, including my backpack, which contained my clothes along with a snake bracelet, a light necklace, two rings, a pair of earrings, a Note 9 mobile phone, a mini mobile phone and 2000 shekels. One of the soldiers ordered me to throw all my belongings on the ground and enter a tent where a female soldier was. The tent was completely closed, but a small part, like a door, was open. I threw everything I had and entered the tent. [...] A few minutes later, she took me to a tent with a chair and an interrogator.”

Throughout the war, the IOF issued 68 evacuation orders¹³⁵ through various means, including social media posts, air-dropped leaflets by drones, text messages, phone calls, and voice messages. As a

¹³⁵ The orders can be found at: <https://gazamaps.com/>.

result, around two million Palestinians were forcibly displaced,¹³⁶ meaning that over 87% of Gaza's population has been displaced at least once,¹³⁷ with many displaced multiple times—some as many as 25 times.¹³⁸ No area, city, or village was spared from the threat of displacement.

Once evacuated, these areas faced total destruction. The IOF also deliberately bombed IDPs during their evacuation, turning the so-called “safe corridors” and “safe zones” into death traps.¹³⁹ Areas initially designated as “safe” or “humanitarian” zones were later reclassified as combat zones by the IOF, effectively turning the newly displaced into military targets and forcing them to flee once again. These repeated incidents had devastating consequences for thousands of IDPs.

In the Netzarim corridor, south of Gaza City, the IOF established a buffer zone, preventing any return to northern Gaza and killing many who attempted to do so, even after Israel declared an end to combat operations.

As the situation worsened, the UN Secretary-General aptly summarised, “Gaza residents are being told to move like human pinballs—ricocheting between ever-smaller slivers of the south, without any of the basics for survival. But nowhere in Gaza is safe.”¹⁴⁰

PCHR has documented the harrowing ordeal of displaced Palestinians, who have been forced to move from one location to another in search of safety, only to encounter constant threats to their lives and the lives of their families. As they fled from the relentless bombardment, many found no refuge, as each new destination brought the same risks of violence, displacement, and death.

‘Aziza Majed Mohammed Faraj (32), mother of four children (12, 11, 8, 4), shared with PCHR her difficult journey, filled with evacuations, loss, and suffering.

“ On the morning of 7 October 2023, we had no idea of the horrors that awaited us. Fear took over as the first waves of bombing in our area were chaotic and indiscriminate. For the first three days, there was no safe place to be. Looking for shelter, we decided to go to my husband's uncle's house in the Al-Zawiyah area of Jabalia, thinking it would offer some

136 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) (2024) *Israeli Occupation Aggression on Palestine since Oct. 7th 2023, Latest Update 21:00, 20/10/2024*. Available at: <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/default.aspx> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

137 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) (2023) *Conditions of the Palestinian Population on the Occasion of World Population Day*, 11 July. Available at: <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4544> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

138 Government Media Office of the Gaza Strip (2025) ‘Statement No. (734)’, 21 January. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

139 Albanese, F. (2024) *Anatomy of a Genocide: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967*, presented to the United Nations Human Rights Council, 26 March. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/genocide-as-colonial-erasure-report-francesca-albanese-01oct24/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

140 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2024) *Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #63*. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-63-enarhe> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

protection. But we unwittingly stepped into our destiny. On 11 October 2023, the house where we had taken shelter was bombed. I was seriously injured and my daughter Fatmah (11) and two other children from the same family were martyred. The bombing was relentless and the ambulances couldn't reach us. It was the residents of the neighbourhood who came to our rescue. They pulled us out of the rubble, put us on a donkey-cart and covered our bodies with blankets. We were taken to the Indonesian hospital, but my condition was so critical that the doctors couldn't treat me. They referred me to the Al-Shifa Medical Complex. On arrival at Al-Shifa, the doctors discovered that my blood count had dropped dangerously to 3. I was immediately admitted to intensive care. I had shrapnel wounds all over my body - my head, ears, lips, hands and back, which had been torn open in a horrific injury. My wounds remained unstitched for 20 days as doctors used staples to hold the tissues together while they slowly healed. I even needed 30 stitches in my womb. The pain was unbearable, but I fought with everything I had to survive.

Today, I can no longer look after my children or do the housework. I've become irritable and often scream in frustration, feeling as if I've lost control of my own body and mind. The doctors said the shrapnel would have to be removed after the war, but the pain never stops. When I left Al-Shifa Medical Complex in December 2023, I was alone. None of my family could come with me. The IOF had besieged the hospital and forced us to evacuate, with no regard for the fragile condition of the patients. We were treated with complete inhumanity, forced to take certain roads leading to the southern Wadi Gaza and to pass through a military checkpoint on Salah al-Deen Street. It was a terrifying journey. I was pushed in a wheelchair, helpless and frightened, with no clear direction of where I was going. Along the way I met staff from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) who helped us get through the checkpoint. Eventually I was reunited with my family and we found temporary shelter at the Palestine Technical College in Deir al-Balah. Here we survive day by day, dealing with the loss of our home and the painful memories of what we've endured. Every corner reminds us of what we've lost, and every day brings new challenges.”

IV. MASS ARRESTS AND TORTURE OF THOUSANDS OF CIVILIANS

Walid Anwar Yousif Al-Khalili (35), a paramedic with the Palestine Medical Relief Society (PMRS), described his arrest and detention to PCHR. While on duty and wearing his official vest, Walid met Dr. Marwan Al-Refati, and the two walked together to check on injured individuals in the Tal al-Hawa neighbourhood. While on Al-Sena'ah Street, Israeli snipers shot Dr. Marwan in the abdomen and then in the forehead, killing him. Walid narrowly escaped being shot by hiding and seeking shelter in abandoned buildings. He was later arrested by the IOF and subjected to torture.



In the morning, I was taken to Israel in a troop carrier, and I knew this because I heard the settlers' children swearing at me and saw them from behind the blindfold. We arrived at a military base, I did not know where it was or its name. I was presented to a military investigator from the Golani Brigade, who forced me to take a pill, probably with hallucinogenic effects, with a very small amount of water, and when I asked for more water, the investigator refused. The soldiers then dressed me in a nappy and a khaki jumpsuit and made me lie down on the bed, after placing an iron ring around my head and steel handcuffs on my feet, both of which were used to shock me sporadically on the head and feet. The investigator started to say certain words, waiting for my answer, like (weapon-Hamas-hostages-tunnels-7th October), and if I did not answer or if the investigator did not like my answer, he would shock me. To be honest, I felt very strange, like I was flying in the sky and not fully conscious of being able to answer the questions. I stayed like this for days, during which I was forced to take hallucinogenic pills and receive electric shocks, imagining myself in our house and calling my family. They did not offer me food or water and I was still in a nappy and did not feel like going to the toilet. [...]

During one of the interrogations [at my third detention facility], an investigator introduced himself as being from the Mossad and said that he had come to question me about my involvement in the kidnapping of foreigners, especially Americans. He threatened to kill me if I did not confess, and people accompanying him started beating me for some time, and then again forced me to take a hallucinogenic pill. They took me to another room, where I heard gunshots and soldiers pretending to escape, and Hamas members took over the place and entered the room, asking me about the brigade I belong to, where I live, and the mosque near me. I told them that I was a paramedic and did not belong to Hamas or Al-Qassam (it turned out that they were so-called "birds" who are placed among the detainees to deceive them and obtain confessions from them). Then they left and soldiers came in and took me to another place, which was a container. There was an investigator who said he was from the Golani Brigade. The soldiers tied my feet with a chain and pulled me up to the ceiling. My head was hanging down and they put my head in a bucket of water. I was very thirsty and drank a lot of water. They held my head down in the water for some time and tied my hands and feet so that I barely touched the ground outside the examination room for several hours. After they took me down, they brought me back into the room and the investigator drew an ambulance on the wall and asked me to drive it and bring Sinwar, the Hamas leader. I told him there was no fuel in the ambulance, so he gave me an electric shock. I pretended to drive the ambulance

- and went to the Tal al-Hawa neighbourhood in Gaza City. When I returned, I told him that Sinwar
- had gone to Egypt. The investigator laughed and said he would go to the Al-Nasr neighbourhood in
- Gaza City and bring Sinwar.”

Since 7 October 2023, the IOF has carried out widespread arbitrary arrest campaigns targeting Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip. It has detained thousands of Palestinians, especially civilians from the eastern and northern border areas of Gaza. This campaign has extended to include over 10,000 workers and patients from Gaza who were present in Israel and the West Bank legally.

Following the initiation of the Israeli ground invasion on Gaza on 27 October 2023, the IOF continued its extensive arrest operations, targeting thousands more Palestinians, among them numerous children, women, and elderly individuals. This extensive crackdown also targeted



- A Palestinian detainee, who
- was released by the IOF,
- being received at a hospital in Gaza, with visible signs of torture on his body.

essential workers, such as doctors, nurses, journalists, and teachers, along with young women who had no discernible ties to resistance groups, as well as dozens of UNRWA employees.

On 3 November 2023, the IOF returned 3,026 workers to the Gaza Strip via the Kerem Shalom crossing,¹⁴¹ revealing that some had died in Israeli detention centres due to torture.

According to UNRWA, between 12 November 2023 and 4 April 2024, the IOF released 1,506 detainees, including 84 women and 43 children.¹⁴² Prior to the ground assault on Rafah, releases were conducted through the Rafah crossing, where individuals were received at the initial station staffed by UNRWA teams and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). After, hundreds more were released from various areas along the eastern border of Khan Younis and Deir al-Balah, as well as the northern border of Gaza. There were no designated entities to receive the released detainees, forcing them to walk long distances through devastated and hazardous areas, often exposed to the risk of gunfire, until they reached populated areas where residents assisted them in accessing the nearest hospital.

The majority of detainees experience enforced disappearance, being denied contact with the outside world for extended periods. On 9 August 2024, PCHR launched an online platform enabling Palestinians in Gaza to report cases of their relatives' disappearance and detention since 7 October 2023. By mid-September 2024, PCHR received approximately 400 reports.

Israeli detention centres have witnessed an unprecedented increase in the number of deaths among detainees, alongside growing testimonies regarding torture and severe retribution. Due to Israel's refusal to provide information about the fate and whereabouts of Palestinian detainees from Gaza, it is challenging to determine the exact number of fatalities, although confirmations of at least 53 deaths have emerged.¹⁴³ Most of the reported deaths have been based on testimonies from released detainees or information gathered by the Palestinian Prisoners Affairs Commission and human rights organisations, as the occupation authorities have recently begun allowing visits to some Gaza detainees. As of 18 September 2024, PCHR had also documented the deaths of 21 detainees from Gaza.

PCHR was able to gather testimonies from more than 100 released detainees. In a report published in May 2025, PCHR concluded that the Israeli army arrested Palestinian civilians from Gaza *en masse*. All former detainees interviewed for the purpose of the report were civilians, arrested from their homes, schools, hospitals, or at checkpoints, as well

141 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2023) *Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel: Flash Update #28*. 3 November. Available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-28> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

142 United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). (2024) *Detention and alleged ill-treatment of detainees from Gaza during Israel-Hamas War*. 16 April. Available at: <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/detention-and-alleged-ill-treatment-detainees-gaza-during-israel-hamas-war> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

143 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (2024) *Detention in the context of the escalation of hostilities in Gaza (October 2023 – June 2024)*. 31 July. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/thematic-report-detention-gaza-31jul24/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

as from the “humanitarian corridors” while seeking shelter, or after surrendering following the cancellation of their work permits by Israel. They were detained without any justification or explanation, with the only reason provided being that they were “from Gaza”.

They were detained in various facilities throughout Gaza, Israel, and other parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, specifically established for this purpose. During their detention, detainees were repeatedly transferred from one facility to another and subjected to inhumane conditions and extreme forms of physical and psychological ill-treatment amounting to torture. The vast majority of those interviewed were held incommunicado, and all were released in Gaza without charge.

PCHR found that the torture followed a consistent pattern across all detention facilities and affected all 100 interviewees who suffered serious health consequences. It was characterised by brutal and intimidating interrogation techniques, dire living conditions, and a combination of various well-known methods of torture, including repeated beatings, suspension, electrocution, forced stress positions, sexual violence, as well as psychological violence.

More particularly, the testimonies showed that the detainees spent entire days in stress positions, either standing or kneeling, without the ability to move. Some, naked and in diapers, had their hands and feet shackled with iron handcuffs for hours on end. They were subjected to sleep deprivation, repeated beatings, including while naked, insults, humiliation, and death threats. Any complaints, non-compliance with orders or attempts to move were met with harsh punishments, such as raising their hands with barbed wire over their heads.

In addition, most detainees were denied access to medical care and medication. Some witnessed the death of several individuals due to the lack of medical assistance, while one detainee had his leg amputated due to the tightness of the handcuffs and after the operation, he was denied the necessary medicines and care, while being taunted with the phrase “**you belong to death**”.

Palestinians released from detention had no access to psychological assistance and support, given the lack of sufficient mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services in the Gaza Strip, which increases their suffering and makes their recovery almost impossible. They also have no safe shelters and access to basic necessities such as food and hygiene products. They are left in a war zone, traumatised and/or injured, unable to heal and recover. These violations not only affect



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● *Palestinian people were arrested by the IOF and subjected to inhuman conditions.*
●

the detainees themselves, but also extend to their families and communities, causing deep scars in the Palestinian social fabric.

Below are some testimonies from former detainees collected by PCHR.

One female detainee reported that she was ordered by a male soldier to undress at the time of her arrest. Only after her refusal were female soldiers called in to conduct a strip search. Subsequently, the male soldier proceeded to inquire about her virginity and marital status. Following this intrusive questioning, she endured an interrogation by soldiers while held at gunpoint. Following her arrest, soldiers attempted to touch sensitive areas of her body, including her private parts.

Another female detainee described that she was subjected to insults and being told that all Gazan women were liars and hypocrites. During one of the interrogation sessions, she was forced to bend as male soldiers made the female soldiers throw themselves at her, choosing the largest among them. She also described how female detainees experienced sexual harassment, as soldiers touched their necks and breast and removed their hijab.



PCHR's field researcher, Yousef Ibrahim, during his meeting with released Palestinian detainees while they were in one of Gaza's hospitals.

PCHR also documented how the IOF used Palestinian civilian detainees as human shields to carry out military missions that endanger their lives. M. A. S. (21) told PCHR:

“ I was used as a human shield about 15 times. One soldier came and ordered me to go out with him, but this time I was alone. I felt scared because we were usually taken by two or three. I refused to go out, so the soldier hit me in the back with the butt of his rifle, forced me to go out with him, and put me in a tank, which travelled for about ten minutes, then stopped and took me off the tank and asked me, without putting on my uniform, to go to a previously destroyed tank, to film it. I refused out of fear, and under the beatings and the soldiers' threats to shoot me, I put the helmet with the camera on my head and headed to the tank, with the soldiers behind me. About ten meters before I reached the targeted tank, I felt a poke in my chest from the right side. I looked where the pain was, and I was bleeding, so I fell on the ground and fainted. The next day I woke up and found myself in a hospital, and I knew when I was released from the medical reports that I was in Soroka Hospital, that I had a bullet wound from my back that exited through my chest.”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ To read the entire testimony: Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) 'They forced me to wear a military uniform and conducted house searches', 16 September. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/they-forced-me-to-wear-the-israeli-military-uniform-and-search-houses/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).



●
 ● Palestinian detainees in an Israeli detention center.
 ●

Additionally, a released detainee, Ismail Qarmout, reported the following:

“ They forced me to wear a nappy (pampers), re-tied my hands and blindfolded me. They took me into a 2x2 caravan with two soldiers, one of whom was sitting at a computer. They sat me on an iron chair with one hand tied behind the chair and the other handcuffed to the chair from the front and my feet tied to the legs of the chair and my blindfold removed. One of them started interrogating me. The interrogation lasted about five hours, then they took me out to an area with a gravel floor. While waiting to enter the interrogation or afterwards, I was subjected to Shabih by being suspended by my handcuffed hands from an iron bridge, with the tips of my feet touching the ground, and I remained suspended until they finished interrogating the other detainees. Then, they returned us to the barracks during the evening hours. ”

Qarmout also witnessed the death of one of his co-detainees:

“ On the 18th day of detention, at around 17:00, one of the detainees asked to see a doctor because he was suffering from shortness of breath due to a heart attack, but the soldiers refused to take him to the doctor and asked the guard to cover him up. At around 5:00 the next morning, when they were counting the detainees, the detainee who had asked to go to the doctor did not get up, so they asked the guard to wake him up and found that he had died. Several soldiers entered the barracks and suppressed us by throwing stun grenades, beating us with batons, and unleashed dogs at us. This assault lasted half an hour, after which they took the deceased detainee, whose name we don't know.¹⁴⁵ ”

F. (26) also recounted:

“ I was electrocuted once, which knocked me unconscious. I regained consciousness when a doctor was wrapping my left foot that had been electrocuted. A day later I was transferred to another barrack where I stayed for five days. During this time my left foot swelled due to the electric shocks and the accumulation of rotten blood and pus. I asked for treatment, but they refused and told me to drink water. On the fifth day, after the swelling worsened, a doctor came and took me to a field hospital inside the prison. They tied me to bed and performed a half-hour surgery on me without anaesthesia. When I asked for anaesthesia, the doctor refused. The soldier said that I had no right to ask for anything and hit me with a plastic baton on my stomach during the operation. After that, they took me back to the barrack. A few days later, they summoned me and two other young men. We were taken to a concrete yard where they removed our blindfolds. They took one of the young men and stripped him naked, then unleashed a police dog on him, which raped him. This lasted for two minutes amid the young man's screams. After that, I was moved with the other young man to a new barrack, and I could no longer hear the screams of the young man who had been raped. ”

¹⁴⁵ To read the entire testimony: Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) 'I was subjected to torture and witnessed the death of one detainee', 27 April. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/i-was-tortured-and-witnessed-death-of-another-detainee/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

V. USE OF UNLAWFUL MEANS OF WARFARE

PCHR has documented the use of means of warfare deliberately intended by Israel to inflict maximum harm. These include weapons designed to disperse extensive shrapnel and the deployment of white phosphorus gas. The use of such weapons intensifies civilian suffering and results in severe, long-lasting environmental and health consequences.

Foreign surgeons who have operated in the Gaza Strip during the military assault reported that many of the amputations and life-altering injuries—particularly among children—are the result of missiles and shells packed with metal designed to fragment into tiny, hard-to-detect pieces.¹⁴⁶ Despite their small size, these fragments cause extensive internal damage. While such injuries have also been observed in adults, the impact on children has been far more severe due to their smaller, more vulnerable bodies. Dr. Mark Perlmutter, an orthopaedic surgeon from North Carolina, described the horrific nature of these injuries after working in Gaza hospitals: “X-rays showed shattered bones with a pinhole wound on one side, a pinhole on the other, and a bone that looks like a tractor trailer ran over it. The children we operated on—most of them had these small entry and exit points.”¹⁴⁷

Dr. Fadel Naeem, a consultant in orthopaedic surgery at Al-Ahli Hospital, was present during the hospital’s bombing in October 2023. He recounted to PCHR the severe injuries he witnessed in the aftermath of the attack:

“Remarkably, the bomb or missile used in this incident was a specific type intended to kill the largest possible number of people. This was evident in the medical examination of the victims’ bodies, which showed sharp cuts as if knives had exploded among the displaced, severing their bodies and limbs. This suggests that this weapon was designed specifically to kill and inflict this type of injury, not for demolition or collapsing the building. [...] We have never encountered such complex, varied, and severe injuries in previous wars or escalations.”

Evidence of Israel’s use of white phosphorus—an incendiary weapon that can burn through skin to the bone and cause severe respiratory damage—has also been documented since the outset of the conflict.¹⁴⁸ In addition to inflicting agonizing injuries, white phosphorus poses long-term health risks and environmental hazards, further compounding the suffering of affected communities. PCHR has recorded instances of its deployment and the devastating impact it has had on civilians.

¹⁴⁶ The Guardian (2024) ‘Israeli weapons packed with shrapnel causing devastating injuries to children in Gaza, doctors say’. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jul/11/israeli-weapons-shrapnel-children-gaza-injured> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

¹⁴⁷ *Idem*.

¹⁴⁸ See for example, Human Rights Watch (2023) *Questions and Answers on Israel’s Use of White Phosphorus in Gaza and Lebanon*. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/10/12/questions-and-answers-israels-use-white-phosphorus-gaza-and-lebanon> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

In mid-November 2023, I was at Al-Shati Clinic in Gaza City when the IOF heavily dropped gas bombs with a distinct odour and white colour that filled the area. While trying to escape and cross the street, the gas got into my eyes, and I could not see anymore. I heard people saying it was phosphorus gas. I was eight months pregnant, so I was worried about my baby after inhaling that gas. There were no nearby hospitals in the northern Gaza valley, so I had to evacuate to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah, where the doctor informed me that I lost my baby due to phosphorus gas inhalation. After three days of suffering from the miscarriage, I was finally able to get my eyes examined, and the doctor confirmed that I had lost vision in my left eye due to retinal damage caused by the phosphorus gas.

Aya Al-Wakeel (34) also shared with PCHR:

“During the siege of Al-Shifa Hospital, which began on 18 March 2024, the Israeli army burned down the house we were sheltering in, which belonged to civilian Nael Abu Bakr, using white phosphorus gas, while we were inside. We could not put out the fire for fear that our presence would be discovered, which would expose my brothers to arrest or one of us to death, or force us to flee south of Wadi Gaza. My sick father inhaled white phosphorus gas for more than nine continuous hours until the fire died down on its own. During the 14 days of the siege, Israeli tanks fired smoke bombs loaded with white phosphorus at the house every few hours, penetrating the windows and choking the air. After the siege was lifted, we were able to leave for Egypt for treatment, but my father died two weeks after his arrival, suffering from severe pneumonia, as doctors confirmed, as a result of his intense exposure to white phosphorus gas.”

VI. DEPRIVATION OF FOOD, WATER, AND OTHER BASIC NECESSITIES

Chronology: Imposition of famine in the Gaza Strip

On 7 October 2023, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant announced a complete siege on the Gaza Strip, stating: “I have ordered a complete siege of the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed.”¹⁴⁹ Later, Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israel’s Minister of National Security also declared: “As long as Hamas does not release the hostages, the only thing that should enter Gaza is hundreds of tons of explosives from the air force – not a single gram of humanitarian aid.”¹⁵⁰

As a result, all border crossings were closed. Between 8 and 15 October, the IOF completely cut off three main water pipelines to Gaza, severing 75% of Gaza’s drinking water supply.¹⁵¹ In northern Gaza, residents were deprived of clean water entirely—food stocks were quickly depleted during the first weeks of the war, and bottled water became unaffordable.

On 13 October, the IOF ordered 1.2 million residents to evacuate northern Gaza. UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned, “Moving more than one million people across a densely populated warzone to a place with no food, water, or accommodation, when the entire territory of Gaza is under siege, is extremely dangerous – and in some cases, simply not possible.”¹⁵²

Water availability in Gaza dropped to just three liters per person per day¹⁵³—far below WHO’s emergency minimum of 15 liters.¹⁵⁴ Contaminated, salty water became the only option for many. Cooking even basic staples like rice or lentils also became nearly impossible.¹⁵⁵

At the end of October, Israel launched a ground invasion into northern Gaza, cutting it off from the south and enforcing

149 Channel 14 (2023) *Youtube video*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLXjx9C3Fgs> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

150 Ben-Gvir, I. (2023) ‘Itamar Ben-Gvir on X, 17 October 2023’. Available at: <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1714340519487176791> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

151 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). (2024) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri: Starvation and the right to food, with an emphasis on the Palestinian people’s food sovereignty*. 17 July, para. 52. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a79171-starvation-and-right-food-emphasis-palestinian-peoples-food> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

152 António Guterres (2023) *Official statement on Platform X*, 14 October. Available at: <https://x.com/antonioguterres/status/1712976048445333796> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

153 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2023) *Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #11*. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-11> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

154 Reed, B., Shaw, R. and Chatterton, K. (2013) *How much water is needed in emergencies*. WHO Technical Note No. 9. Geneva: World Health Organization. Available at: <https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/water-sanitation-and-health/environmental-health-in-emergencies/technical-notes-on-wash-in-emergencies> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

155 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2023) ‘The world cannot stand by as starvation is used as a weapon of war in Gaza’. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/world-cannot-stand-starvation-used-weapon-war-gaza> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

a full siege. The Israeli Energy Minister confirmed water supplies were resumed only in southern Gaza to “push civilians to move south”,¹⁵⁶ revealing the deliberate use of deprivation as a tool of forced displacement.

After 21 October, the Rafah crossing reopened for the first time since 8 October.¹⁵⁷ Israel began allowing limited humanitarian aid, excluding fuel, into southern Gaza—amounting to less than 4% of the average daily imports before the conflict.¹⁵⁸ However, aid deliveries were subject to complex and opaque Israeli inspection procedures, arbitrary denials, and delays.¹⁵⁹ Trucks were often targeted by the IOF,¹⁶⁰ and bomb-damaged roads, communication blackouts, and mass displacement further obstructed aid distribution.

The influx of displaced people from northern Gaza put additional strain on southern and central areas. Despite growing needs, the volume of aid allowed in remained stagnant and far below humanitarian requirements and continued to exclude fuel.¹⁶¹

By December 2023, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) reported that Gaza’s entire population was experiencing crisis or worse levels of food insecurity. Around 577,600 people (26% of the population) were facing *catastrophic* hunger (IPC Phase 5).¹⁶²

By early 2024, food availability had plummeted. People went from two meals a day to one meal every other day-or none at all. In 2024, only 17% of needed food aid reached Gaza, compared to 66% in 2023.¹⁶³

156 Israel Katz (2023) *Official statement on Platform X*, 15 October. Available at: https://x.com/Israel_katz/status/1713572621994828188 (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

157 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2023) *Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #15*. Available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-15> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

158 *Idem*.

159 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). (2024) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri: Starvation and the right to food, with an emphasis on the Palestinian people's food sovereignty*. 17 July, para. 51. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a79171-starvation-and-right-food-emphasis-palestinian-peoples-food> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

160 See for example, UN News (2024) ‘UN food agency suspends staff movements in Gaza following attack’. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/08/1153701#:~:text=A%20%E2%80%9Cclearly%20marked%20UN%20humanitarian,at%20UN%20Headquarters%20on%20Wednesday> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

161 See UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2023) *Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel, Flash Update #15*. Available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-15> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

162 World Food Programme (WFP) (2023) ‘Gaza grapples with catastrophic hunger as new report predicts famine if conflict continues’. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/gaza-grapples-with-catastrophic-hunger-as-new-report-predicts-famine-if-conflict-continues-dec21-2023/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

163 Norwegian Refugee Council (2024) *Israel's siege now blocks 83% of food aid reaching Gaza, new data reveals*, 16 September. Available at: <https://www.nrc.no/news/2024/september/israels-siege-now-blocks-83-of-food-aid-reaching-gaza-new-data-reveals/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

On 26 January 2024, the ICJ ordered Israel to take “immediate and effective measures” to allow humanitarian assistance, highlighting the death toll, famine, and catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.¹⁶⁴ However, Israel ignored the order and aid convoys and humanitarian workers continued to be denied entry into Gaza or attacked while delivering aid.¹⁶⁵

Northern Gaza became a death trap. Few aid trucks were allowed in, and those that entered were targeted by Israeli snipers and shelling. On 29 February 2024, 118 Palestinians were killed and 760 injured in what became known as the “Flour Massacre” (for more details see section 1.c.i.).

Simultaneously, Israeli authorities launched a disinformation campaign against UNRWA, Gaza’s largest relief agency, accompanied by donor states—including the U.S.—which suspended funding.¹⁶⁶ In March, Israel barred UNRWA from delivering food to northern Gaza entirely. Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini condemned the move as a deliberate effort to deepen famine, warning: “Many more will die of hunger, dehydration and lack of shelter.”¹⁶⁷

From 1 to 20 March, only 159 trucks per day entered Gaza—far below the 500-truck target.¹⁶⁸

The ICJ issued a second ruling on 28 March, stating that famine was no longer a risk but a reality.¹⁶⁹ At least 31 people, including 27 children, had died from starvation and dehydration by that point.¹⁷⁰

In April, Israel withdrew from parts of southern Gaza but maintained a siege on the north.

Soon after, Israel seized the Rafah crossing, completely cutting off supply routes and imposing a total siege on Gaza. By May 2024, no significant amounts of humanitarian aid had reached Gaza. Despite the ICJ’s third ruling in May 2024 ordering Israel to halt military operations in Rafah and allow humanitarian aid, little to no meaningful aid reached

164 ICJ (2024) *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)* – Order of 26 January 2024, paras 72 and 86. Available at: <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/203447> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

165 See for example, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) (2024) ‘WFP food deliveries to northern Gaza face further setbacks’. Available at: <https://www.wfp.org/news/wfp-food-deliveries-northern-gaza-face-further-setbacks> (Accessed: 29 May 2025); World Central Kitchen (WCK) (2024) ‘7 WCK team members killed in Gaza’. Available at: <https://wck.org/news/gaza-team-update> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

166 Human Rights Watch (2024) ‘Gaza: US, UK Outliers in Holding Back UNRWA Funding’. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/18/gaza-us-uk-outliers-holding-back-unrwa-funding> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

167 UN News (2024) ‘Israel tells UN it will reject UNRWA food convoys into northern Gaza’. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147916#:~:text=%E2%80%9CDespite%20the%20tragedy%20unfolding%20under,made%20famine%2C%E2%80%9D%20he%20wrote> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

168 United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) (2024) *UNRWA Situation Report #93 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem*. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/unrwa-situation-report-93-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem-all-information-19-20-march-2024-valid-20-march-2024-2230-enar> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

169 ICJ (2024) *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)* – Order of 28 March 2024, para. 21. Available at: <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240328-ord-01-00-en.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

170 *Idem*.

Gaza.¹⁷¹ Famine spread across the territory. UN experts warned of widespread starvation, but the aid flow remained severely restricted until January 2025.¹⁷²

The Israeli army launched a large-scale ground offensive beginning on October 6, 2024, imposing a strict siege on the northern Gaza Governorate amid an almost complete shortage of humanitarian aid. Between October 6 and 28, Israeli authorities rejected 36 requests to coordinate the arrival of vital aid convoys to the areas of Jabalia, Beit Hanoun, and Beit Lahia in northern Gaza, while 14 convoys faced obstacles, and 23 others were facilitated.¹⁷³

On November 8, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) famine review committee issued a grave warning about the imminent and widespread risk of famine in northern Gaza, as the worst-case scenario began to unfold in reality. The IPC projected that the threat of famine would extend to the entire Gaza Strip between November 2024 and April 2025, due to escalating conflict, large-scale displacement, and reductions in humanitarian aid. The committee confirmed that rates of hunger, malnutrition, and related mortality were rapidly increasing in the northern Gaza Strip, and that the famine threshold had likely already been crossed or would be imminently exceeded.¹⁷⁴

Fatima Al-Jamal (39), told PCHR about the situation in northern Gaza:

- “We immensely suffered during this period from hunger and dehydration, as our areas in northern
- Gaza had no access to clean drinking water. We were forced to drink well water, which caused
- intestinal infections and inflammation to many of us. As for flour, if it's available, our daily ration

171 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). (2024) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri: Starvation and the right to food, with an emphasis on the Palestinian people's food sovereignty*. 17 July, paras. 62-64. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a79171-starvation-and-right-food-emphasis-palestinian-peoples-food> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

172 In August 2024, an average of just 69 aid trucks per day entered Gaza—a record low—compared to 500 per working day during the previous year, a figure that was already insufficient to meet the population's needs. Between 1 and 15 September, only 37 (39%) of the 94 planned humanitarian missions coordinated with Israeli authorities for northern Gaza were allowed to proceed. Another 25 missions (27%) were denied access. In southern Gaza, of the 243 coordinated humanitarian movements, 129 (53%) were facilitated, while 41 (17%) were denied. See United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). (2024) *UNRWA Situation Report #133: Situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem*. 3 September. Available at: <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-133-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2024) *Humanitarian Situation Update #218: Gaza Strip*. 16 September. Available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-218-gaza-strip> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

173 OCHA. Humanitarian Situation Update #233 | Gaza Strip (29 October 2024). <https://www.ochaopt.org/ar/content/humanitarian-situation-update-233-gaza-strip>

174 OCHA. Humanitarian Situation Update #237 | Gaza Strip (12 November 2024). <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-237-gaza-strip>



● A bakery destroyed in an Israeli airstrike on al-Nusirat refugee camp.

- is no more than half a loaf in the morning, and the only available food is rice. When aid reaches northern Gaza, which
- includes flour—if the IOF allows it to enter—it is distributed at a very dangerous point (Roundabout 17), where many men
- have been killed at that moment. We cannot risk the lives of my husband and son for an uncertain loaf of bread. Later,
- the food crisis worsened drastically, as rice and flour disappeared from the markets, forcing us to survive on one meal a
- day and make bread from animal feed as a means of survival. I have lost 25 kilograms of my weight, having spent many
- days without food. I feel severe fatigue and constant helplessness, as I find myself unable to feed my children as I used
- to. I dream of the moment when I can sleep deeply after satisfying my children with food. I hope for the day when we
- can return to our normal lives, where my children have the food and security they need. Many times, I am overwhelmed
- by fatigue from the extreme hunger and sorrow over what has become of us as innocent civilians. What wrong have we
- committed to endure this suffering? ”

Since the beginning of its military offensive, Israel has imposed a siege on the Gaza Strip, cutting off access to food, water, fuel, and other essential supplies. After issuing evacuation orders instructing civilians to move to the southern

part of the Gaza Strip, Israel used starvation as a method of warfare-intensifying the blockade in the north and thereby creating unbearable conditions to compel the population to evacuate. This tactic effectively weaponised access to basic necessities to force mass civilian displacement. In the south, although limited amounts of food and water were sporadically permitted, the supply was insufficient to meet the needs of both the existing population and the large number of IDPs who had been forced to relocate there.

In addition to the blockade, Israel attacked and destroyed water points, food storage facilities and markets, as well as local food production sources, including farms, factories, bakeries, water wells, and the fishing sector (for more details see Section 1.c.x.). This destruction has also been accompanied by the targeting of humanitarian convoys and workers and the killing of hundreds of Palestinian civilians waiting for bread, flour, or drinking water (for more details see sections 1.c.i and viii.).

By December 2023, Gaza accounted for 80% of the world's people facing famine or catastrophic hunger. Never before in post-war history has a population been starved so quickly and completely as the 2.3 million Palestinians living in Gaza.¹⁷⁵ Many have been forced to survive on animal feed and grass, while many others have had to forgo their daily meals, and some have gone long days without food.

In September 2024, approximately 96% of Gaza's population was experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity.¹⁷⁶ More than 495,000 people-representing 22% of the population-remained in IPC Phase 5, the most severe category of food insecurity, classified as *catastrophic*.¹⁷⁷ 33% were classified in *emergency* (IPC 4).¹⁷⁸ The UN Secretary-General stated: "This is the highest number of people facing catastrophic hunger ever recorded by the Integrated Food Security Classification system – anywhere, anytime."¹⁷⁹

175 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). (2024) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri: Starvation and the right to food, with an emphasis on the Palestinian people's food sovereignty*. 17 July, para. 1. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a79171-starvation-and-right-food-emphasis-palestinian-peoples-food> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

176 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) (2024) *Gaza Strip: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Special Snapshot (1 May – 30 September 2024)*. Available at: <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1157065/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

177 United Nations (2024) *Gaza Strip: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Special Snapshot (1 May – 30 September 2024)*. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/gaza-strip-famine-ipc-snapshot-25jun24/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

178 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) (2024) *Gaza Strip: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for 1 May – 15 June and Projection for 16 June – 30 September 2024*. Available at: <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1157065/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

179 UN News (2024) 'Imminent famine in northern Gaza is 'entirely man-made disaster''. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147656> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

Samira Abdul Latif Nattat (62), a colon cancer patient, described her experience during the war:

“After the humanitarian pause ended, my home in the Al-Safatwi area was brutally bombed by the IOF, completely destroying it, along with all the food supplies I had stored. After that, the famine intensified with no vegetables, fruits, meat, or flour. And when flour was available, it was too expensive to afford. As for humanitarian aid, if Israel allows it to enter, IOF gunfire targets those who go to collect it, leading to the death and injury of many civilians. I cannot risk the lives of my children or my husband just to get food. We were forced to make bread from bird and animal feed, but my health condition cannot tolerate it. I suffer from colon cancer, and even eating a small amount to ease my hunger caused severe stomach pain and worsened my condition. Throughout Ramadan, the only food we had to eat was mallow leaves, a type of wild plant. In addition to my constant fear of my illness progressing due to the lack of treatment, I now live with the daily torment of hunger and malnutrition. I've gone many days without any real food, suffering the pain of relentless hunger. I feel as though the cancer is spreading through my body. I am constantly weak and dizzy, to the point that I can no longer walk or perform even the simplest tasks as I did before the war. My life is slowly being taken from me in a world that turns a blind eye to our suffering and pain.”

As a result of Israel's systematic starvation of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, at least 44 people,¹⁸⁰ including several children,¹⁸¹ have died between October 2023 and January 2025. However, the true toll is likely higher, as many of these deaths go undocumented. Hospitals typically only register fatalities that occur within their facilities or when bodies are brought in. And 3,500 children were still at risk of death in January 2025, due to the famine.¹⁸²

Amna Mohammed Ahl (33) shared with PCHR how she witnessed her children suffer from starvation:

“The Israeli occupation prevented any food supplies from reaching the northern Gaza Valley and targeted many of the bakeries in the area. After weeks of siege, all the food in our home and the local shops was completely depleted. I will never forget the sadness and helplessness I felt as I stood before my children—feelings so intense they will stay with me for years to come. I could not bear the thought of my children yearning for just a piece of bread. I cried through many nights, not only from hunger but from the pain of watching my children suffer. I always gave them my share and went without food.”

180 Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Statement No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025)

181 Save the Children. (2024) *“It's not fair to die of hunger” – The lives of malnourished children in Gaza endangered by obliteration and obstruction of medical care*. 17 July. Available at: <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/it-s-not-fair-die-hunger-lives-malnourished-children-gaza-endangered-obliteration-and> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

182 Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Statement No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025)

Pregnant women and children have been among the hardest hit, due to their heightened nutritional needs. This has led to the deaths of many children and placed countless others at serious risk. 90% of children under two, and 95% of pregnant and breastfeeding women, were reported to be experiencing severe food poverty.¹⁸³ By mid-January 2024, 318,603 children aged 6 to 59 months had been screened for malnutrition. Of these, 21,638 were diagnosed with acute malnutrition, including 4,766 with severe acute malnutrition (SAM); among the latter, 145 had medical complications.¹⁸⁴ Malnutrition can lead to stunting¹⁸⁵—an irreversible condition that impairs both physical growth and cognitive development¹⁸⁶— and ultimately to death.¹⁸⁷ In December 2023, 30,000 children under five in Gaza were estimated to be stunted.¹⁸⁸ Stunting severely limits a child's ability to learn, thrive, and reach their full potential, threatening not only individual futures but the well-being of the entire community.¹⁸⁹

Areej Dukhan (28), pregnant during the genocide, told PCHR:



At the beginning of the war, I was seven months pregnant. After receiving regular checkups from a private doctor and having a stable pregnancy, I moved to the southern Gaza Valley. As the bombing escalated, I returned to my home in the north, in the Al-Mashahira area, where the suffering became indescribable. Fire belts struck every part of the strip, and we were cut off from water and flour, living in tragic conditions. I could only eat one meal a day, consisting of rice and some legumes, while meat, vegetables, and fruits were a dream to obtain, leaving me severely malnourished. On the morning of 5 December 2023, the IOF shelled the 4th floor of our building

183 World Bank (2024) *Impacts of the Conflict in the Middle East on the Palestinian Economy*, p. 2. Available at: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/c25061ab26d14d7acc0330d5a7b4d496-0280012024/original/PalestinianEconomicUpdate-Sept2024-FINAL.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

184 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2024) *Gaza humanitarian response update, 16–29 September 2024*. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-humanitarian-response-update-16-29-september-2024> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

185 "Child stunting refers to a child who is too short for his or her age and is the result of chronic or recurrent malnutrition. Stunting is a contributing risk factor to child mortality and is also a marker of inequalities in human development. Stunted children fail to reach their physical and cognitive potential. Child stunting is one of the World Health Assembly nutrition target indicators. Child stunting is one of the indicators under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators target 2.2". World Health Organization (WHO) (2024) *Child malnutrition: Stunting among children under 5 years of age*. Available at: <https://www.who.int/data/gho/indicator-metadata-registry/imr-details/72#:~:text=Child%20stunting%20refers%20to%20a,their%20physical%20and%20cognitive%20potential> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

186 Anera (2024) 'Food Production Systems Under Attack in Gaza'. Available at: <https://www.anera.org/blog/food-production-systems-under-attack-in-gaza/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

187 United Nations News. (2025) *Gaza: 57 children reported dead from malnutrition, says WHO*. 13 May. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/05/1163166> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

188 ReliefWeb. (2024) *Child deaths in Gaza Strip due to disease and malnutrition can and must be prevented*. 3 December. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/child-deaths-gaza-strip-due-disease-and-malnutrition-can-and-must-be-prevented> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

189 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (2024) *Over one hundred days into the war, Israel destroying Gaza's food system and weaponizing food, say UN human rights experts*. 16 January. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/01/over-one-hundred-days-war-israel-destroying-gazas-food-system-and> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

with a tank shell while we were living on the 1st floor to escape the heavy bombing. I lived in a state of fear and anxiety, and that morning, we managed to escape on foot to my husband's relatives' house on Al-Wehda Street. However, the situation did not improve. On 20 December 2023, the IOF surrounded us, and we couldn't leave. Tanks encircled us, and a quadcopter hovered above, firing relentlessly, with shells falling everywhere. Those moments were some of the hardest I have ever experienced, especially since I was nine months pregnant. During the siege, drinking water was scarce, and I had to drink salty water. Sometimes, we found worms in the municipal water. As for food, I could only eat a quarter of a loaf a day, and we had to share the loaf among the family. I suffered from severe indigestion due to the bread made from bird feed, which was full of sand, leaving me malnourished, weak, and dizzy, alongside the constant fear of losing my baby. On 29 December 2023, I felt labour pains while we were still under siege. The tanks were very close, shells were falling, and the quadcopter was flying overhead. We feared leaving at night, afraid of becoming targets of the shelling. Despite all the fears, I had to leave with my mother-in-law under extremely difficult conditions. After giving birth, there were no facilities to examine the baby, but she seemed normal at first. We returned home, and I was supposed to breastfeed her, but due to severe malnutrition, I couldn't. There was no baby formula available due to the siege, and after much difficulty, we found one can from a neighbour in the building. On 4 January 2024, IOF withdrew from the area, and we returned home. I thought my baby was fine, but on 4 February 2024, after giving her the two-month vaccine, we noticed significant changes in her condition. After consulting several doctors, she was diagnosed with brain atrophy, increased electrical activity, developmental delays, and epilepsy, all caused by malnutrition and the toxic gases that IOF had dropped on us. Now, we struggle to provide her with baby formula, and when it is available, the price is exorbitant.

In addition to food and water, Israel's blockade has targeted essential hygiene and sanitation supplies. Personal hygiene items such as soap, shampoo, hygiene and dignity kits, and disinfectants have been restricted, leaving families without basic hygiene products. Other items were also banned, including lice shampoo, nappies, scabies medicine, spare parts for WASH equipment, tents, vaccines, water tanks, and water treatment equipment.

This shortage has led to dangerous health conditions in overcrowded shelters, where thousands of displaced families are forced to live. Healthcare facilities have also struggled to obtain basic cleaning materials necessary to protect patients, staff, and caregivers from infections.

Inadequate hygiene has become a breeding ground for disease, such as diarrheal diseases and respiratory infections, that could otherwise be prevented through basic sanitation, particularly among the most vulnerable groups, such as children, pregnant women, and those with compromised immune systems (for more details, see Sections 1.c.xiii and xiv).

M.J. (32) told PCHR:

“ I have been suffering from severe itching on my hands and feet for about a year. It turned out I had a skin infection that caused painful blisters. I received treatment that helped clear the blisters, but they left scars and kept coming back. I had to see a specialist doctor. It was difficult to reach him due to the large number of patients. The doctor explained that the reason was the environment in the shelter where I live, which lacks cleanliness, with insects and bedding rife, and a lack of sterilisation and cleaning tools. I feel that my life has become unbearable, and I cannot live a stable or normal life.”

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● Sewage flowing through the middle of a street between destroyed buildings in Khan Younis, south of the Gaza Strip.
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VII. EXTENSIVE DESTRUCTION OF GAZA'S CITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Malak Moein Shaheen (17) told PCHR:

“We were forced to flee in October 2024, and our suffering continued until January 2025, when the ceasefire was announced. I was so happy to finally be returning to my home in the north, and I expected to find some comfort amidst the devastation. But when I returned, the shock was immense. I felt like I had lost the ability to breathe. I cried a lot when we reached our area, and I couldn't locate my home amidst the rubble. After the heavy shelling, it became impossible to distinguish any of its features; the area had been wiped out as if it had never existed. The destruction extended as far as the eye could see. I was terrified, and when we began to identify its location, I stood in silence, unable to believe my eyes. I couldn't imagine what I had seen. The house we lived in had four floors, but now it was just ruins. Ten women and 13 children lived in this destroyed house.”

Alaa Mahmoud Al-Masry (32) also shared:

“I was one of the first people to return to the northern Gaza Strip governorate, as I was eagerly awaiting the truce to go into effect, eager to run to our house to check on it. I walked with my neighbour Hussein Odeh (32) from Al-Jalaa Street to Al-Saftawi neighbourhood. As we reached the middle of the neighbourhood, the signs of destruction began to appear clearly, but I could still recognize the landmarks. When we reached Abu Sharkh roundabout on Al-Bahr Street in Jabalia, I stopped for a moment in shock at what I saw; the extensive damage had turned the area upside down. I asked him, “Do you know where we are?” He replied sadly, “I swear to God I don't know.” We continued walking, trying to identify the areas by some of the landmarks that were still present, until we reached the Tamraz gas station in the middle of Jabalia camp. There was the biggest shock: there was not a single house standing in the camp. All the houses were destroyed, and there was no infrastructure or clear roads. At that moment, we didn't know where our homes were. But we recognised them from a partially destroyed building that stood at the beginning of our street. We parted then, each of us seeking reassurance about their home. After much suffering amidst the massive destruction and houses piled on top of each other, I was finally able to find our home. When I stood in front of it, I felt intense sadness and indescribable shock. The home that was the fruit of a lifetime of toil and hardship by my father, my siblings, and I, and which contained the most beautiful memories, was now just ruins. It was the place where we lived in peace, and today there is no trace of life in it anymore.”



-
- A Palestinian woman inspecting the extent of destruction in
- a residential area in al-Nusirat refugee camp.

More than a year of Israeli military aggression has resulted in unprecedented destruction across the Gaza Strip. The IOF carried out attacks by air, sea, and land, systematically flattening entire neighbourhoods. In January 2025, almost 70% of all structures in the Gaza Strip had been destroyed or damaged, including 92% of all housing units, 80% of commercial facilities and 68% of the total road network.¹⁹⁰ Over the course of the period investigated, an estimated 100,000 tons of high-explosive ordnance were used. The Gaza Governorate recorded the highest damage count with 46,685 damaged structures, followed by Khan Younis with 42,300 damaged structures and the northern Gaza Governorate with 37,614 damaged structures.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2025) *Reported Impact Snapshot: Gaza Strip – 8 January 2025*. Available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-8-january-2025> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

¹⁹¹ United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) (2024) *Gaza Strip Cropland Damage Assessment – August 2024*. Available at: <https://unosat.org/products/4047> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

These figures remain preliminary, as comprehensive damage assessments have not yet been possible due to the scale of destruction and ongoing access restrictions. However, field documentation by PCHR indicates that in areas invaded by the IOF, virtually no building has been left undamaged.

Homes and streets have been destroyed, following ground incursions where heavy military machinery, including bulldozers, razed infrastructure before bombardment. The IOF also deployed so-called “fire belt” bombs,¹⁹² causing mass damage on a single location. Suliman ‘Atiyah Abu ‘Eidah, resident of Beer al-Na’jah area in northern Gaza Strip, testified:

“ On Wednesday, 1 November 2023, while I was in my barbershop, I heard 9 loud and strong explosions (fire belt; they were so powerful that I recited Shahada, thinking the bombings were near my shop). Moments later, I realised it was at the Six Martyrs area, where plumes of smoke were rising, reaching Al-Fakhoura. When I became sure that it was in Abu ‘Eida area, I rushed home near the Etisalat building, which is not far away from the targeted area, to tell my father. I headed back to the scene because my sister Hanadi’s house was there and I had taken her to her house in the morning with her sons, Ahmed and Mohammed. I saw ambulances and people pulling out the injured and recovering dead bodies, so I helped them. Most of those retrieved from under the rubble were dead. The destruction was immense, with buildings seemingly evaporating. We recovered many dead bodies and injured people over several days. During the search, I saw toes sticking out from the rubble and sand, so I called others to dig. We found the body of a woman with severe injuries to the head mostly crushed by a large stone that fell on her. The bulldozer was digging while we retrieved the bodies and put them by the roadside. For quick burials, the hospital sent a staff member with shrouds to prepare identified bodies for funeral prayers and then their burial in Al-Falouja Cemetery. Around 100 persons were killed in this massacre, including 80 from Abu ‘Eida family. While some bodies have been found shredded into pieces, others are still missing. Also, thirty houses were destroyed and others sustained partial damage. On the first day, we found the body of my sister-in-law Somaya Ziad Hassan Abu ‘Eida, while my sister Hanadi and her son Mohammad were found on the third or fourth day. They were buried in Al-Falouja Cemetery.”

Hospitals,¹⁹³ schools and universities,¹⁹⁴ as well as other public and government infrastructure, such as the Palace of Justice and Court Records were severely destroyed or damaged, as were the Palestinian Legislative Council Complex and the building of the Central Archives of Gaza City, which contains thousands of historical documents and national records dating back over a hundred years.

192 A “Fire Belt” refers to attacks involving the dropping of many missiles on a single location by the Israeli air force.

193 For more details, see Section 1.c.viii.

194 For more details, see Section 1.c.ix.

The IOF also destroyed Gaza's only power plant and the networks of the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO), including all its infrastructure, facilities, warehouses, and machinery, leaving 2.3 million people without reliable power. The destruction included 830 km of medium voltage networks and 2,300 km of low voltage networks, as well as 1950 overhead distribution lines, 120 underground distribution lines, 245,000 digital meters, six company buildings and headquarters, six warehouses and 51 cars and heavy vehicles.

In addition, 67% of water and sanitation facilities and infrastructure were destroyed or damaged, by June 2024.¹⁹⁵ Among the affected facilities were 194 water production wells, 40 high volume water reservoirs, 55 sewage pumping stations, 76 municipal desalination plants, four wastewater treatment plants, and nine warehouses. The IOF also destroyed the two principal water quality analysis laboratories.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, approximately 70% of all sewage pumps and 100% of all wastewater treatment plants were deliberately destroyed.¹⁹⁷

Finally, the IOF deliberately and systematically targeted the telecommunications infrastructure in Gaza, directly striking main and subsidiary switches, transmission towers, fibre-optic networks, transmission lines, and the international gateways connecting Gaza to the outside world.¹⁹⁸ As a result, approximately 75% of the territory's 841 mobile phone towers were rendered inoperable, and telecommunications services were completely cut off on at least ten separate occasions.¹⁹⁹ These blackouts coincided with periods of intense airstrikes, demonstrating a deliberate strategy to isolate the population, severely restrict internal communication, and prevent civilians from calling for assistance during emergencies.

195 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2024) *Humanitarian Situation Update #179, Gaza Strip*. Available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-179-gaza-strip> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

196 *Idem*.

197 Oxfam (2024) *Israel Systematically Uses Water as a Weapon of War Against Palestinian Population in Gaza*. Available at: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/israel-using-water-weapon-war-gaza-supply-plummets-94-creating-deadly-health> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

198 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) (2024) *PCBS and the Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Economy Issue a Joint Press Release on the Eve of the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day*. Available at: <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=5755> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

199 *Idem*.

VIII. EXTENSIVE DESTRUCTION OF THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The IOF has also systematically targeted Gaza's healthcare system, striking hospitals, clinics, fertility centres, ambulances, and medical personnel in a deliberate effort to dismantle vital medical infrastructure. As a result, most hospitals have been destroyed or rendered inoperable, leaving the wounded with nowhere to turn. The few that remain are barely functioning and many were forced to cease to function—crippled by critical shortages of medicine, equipment, fuel, and medical materials, caused by the ongoing blockade and the near-total disruption of humanitarian aid. Hospitals have been forced to make impossible, life-or-death decisions, with remaining facilities—especially in northern Gaza and Gaza City—operating far beyond their capacity, in some cases at three times their normal load.

The war has dramatically compounded an already fragile situation. Long before this latest escalation, Gaza's healthcare system had already been critically weakened by years of Israeli-imposed blockade. The current campaign of destruction has pushed it to the point of collapse.²⁰⁰

Mohammed Shaheen, Doctor in the Orthopaedic Department at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, testified to the challenges faced by health professionals in Gaza:

“
The injuries received at the hospital were unparalleled to injuries in previous military aggressions, and we, as doctors, endured the worst of experiences during the first months of the current aggression due to the lack of essential medicines, such as morphine and strong painkillers suitable for critical and complex injuries, as well as anaesthetics. This has forced us to perform amputations without anaesthesia, which is extremely painful. Also, many cases require multiple urgent surgeries by specialised doctors given their limited number compared to the number of injuries overwhelming the emergency and operating departments. Additionally, cases with serious injuries cannot afford to wait long for surgeries, especially if their wounds are open and at risk of infection that would render surgical intervention extremely difficult. Consequently, saving many of these cases becomes difficult if they are not urgently referred for treatment abroad. In some cases, with serious injuries, their limbs were amputated as the lack of healthcare and treatment necessary after surgeries would cause infections in their wounds.”

²⁰⁰ Prior to the ongoing Israeli military campaign, PCHR published several reports documenting Israel's violations and restrictions that had long impeded Gaza residents' right to health. These reports highlighted, among other issues, Israeli-imposed restrictions on the travel of patients from Gaza and limitations on the entry of essential medicines and medical equipment. Such measures had severe consequences for thousands of patients in the Gaza Strip. For further details, see PCHR's reports on the right to health: <https://pchrgaza.org/category/publications/thematic-reports/right-to-health/>.

• ***Destruction and Raid of Medical Facilities***

Dr Iyad Khalil Ahmed Abed, Consultant Vascular Surgeon at the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahia, told PCHR about his ordeal during the siege on the hospital until his forced evacuation on 22 November 2024 and arrest at a checkpoint :

“ On 7 October 2023, I received a phone call from the hospital administration asking me to come to the hospital urgently due to the huge influx of dozens of injuries flowing into the hospital and the declaration of a state of emergency. I worked around the clock for over a month due to the heavy workload and the displacement of many of my colleagues to the southern Gaza Strip. In mid-November 2023, conditions at the hospital deteriorated due to recurrent strikes around the hospital, causing severe damage to the hospital. We were unable to provide medical services for patients due to the lack of oxygen, the damage inflicted to the operating rooms, and lack of medicines, medical supplies, food, and drinking water. On 19 November 2023, around 03:00, Israeli warplanes pounded heavy air strikes around the hospital, which continued until 06:00. Israeli tanks and military vehicles reached the hospital's proximity and fired a shell towards the surgical department. As a result, 12 patients were killed, with the medical staff unable to recover the dead bodies due to Israeli sniper fire around the hospital, which targeted anyone who approached. Many patients who remained at the hospital during that period were killed due to the collapse of the medical services after the power supplies and water tanks had been targeted while approximately 50 patients in the Vascular Surgery and Orthopaedic Departments were on the waiting list for surgeries. On 20 November 2023, the hospital administration informed us they received a call from the IOF ordering us to evacuate the patients, medical crews and displaced people from the hospital as a prelude to storm the hospital. On the first day, 21 November 2023, the IOF allowed two buses to reach the hospital and transport many patients and injured. The following day, four buses and six Ministry of Health ambulances were allowed to transport the injured, medical personnel, and displaced people. My colleagues and I headed to the Israeli military checkpoint established at the Kuwait roundabout. After searching us, Israeli soldiers ordered me to sit in a pit behind a sand berm dug by IOF's bulldozers. I was detained for two months and released on 21 January 2024. During detention, I was interrogated several times about the nature of my work at the hospital and subjected to torture.”

Abdullah Mo'een 'Ata Al-Ghandour told PCHR how his son's health significantly deteriorated after being subjected to repeated assaults by Israeli soldiers while undergoing treatment at various hospitals, leading to additional injuries.

“ My 28-year-old son Abdullah, married with a daughter, was wounded at the end of February 2024 in an Israeli airstrike and was taken to Al-Shifa Hospital for treatment where the doctors amputated his left leg and had a platinum implant in his right leg due to severe bone laceration. During his treatment and stay at the hospital, the IOF stormed the hospital in March 2024, assaulted him, stamped on his right foot, and shot it at close range, leaving him to bleed until they withdrew from the hospital. His family transferred him to Al-Maamadani Hospital in central Gaza to stop the bleeding. While there, the Israeli army stormed the hospital, forcing the patients out, including my son, after assaulting him again. Currently, my son is in Al-Zaytoun neighbourhood in eastern Gaza, and we have been unable to evacuate him abroad because he is awaiting approval for a referral for treatment abroad to have a joint replacement in his right foot. However, the closure of the crossings deprives him of his right to travel abroad for treatment, sentencing him to death in besieged areas with no medical treatment for the wounded.”

The IOF's assault on medical facilities included the targeting of both public and private hospitals throughout the Gaza Strip. At the end of June 2024, 34 hospitals had been destroyed or rendered non-functional, with the remaining hospitals only partially functioning. Most of the northern Gaza Valley's hospitals completely ceased functioning, except for the Al-Ahli hospital partially functioning. Additionally, 80 of Gaza's 90 healthcare centres were rendered inoperable, and more than 139 ambulances have been destroyed by the IOF.²⁰¹

While some hospitals managed to reopen, their ability to provide basic medical services to the wounded was severely diminished, especially due to the lack of essential medicines such as anaesthetics and painkillers, and a shortage of fuel needed to power hospitals.

From the outset of the military aggression, the IOF engaged in a widespread propaganda campaign, claiming that Gaza's hospitals were being used for military purposes. The IOF specifically targeted Gaza's largest medical centre, the Al-Shifa Medical Complex in Gaza City. During a press conference on 27 October 2023, a 3D animated video was released by an Israeli military spokesperson, falsely accusing Al-Shifa of housing a Hamas headquarters.²⁰² Consequently, the IOF attacked and besieged the hospital, which had become a refuge for thousands of displaced civilians. The IOF continued to use such

201 Palestinian Ministry of Health (2024) *Health Emergency Sector Report on Day 347 of the war*, 16 September. Available at: <https://t.me/MOHMediaGaza/5828> (Accessed: 29 May 2025). See also: Palestinian Return Centre (2025) *Gaza Health Sector Report*. Available at: <https://prc.org.uk/upload/library/files/Gaza-HealthSectorEN0125.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

202 Israeli Defence Forces (2023) *IDF Official YouTube Channel*, 27 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ggBF9rnBeQ> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

baseless accusations to justify the repeated bombing and siege of other medical facilities, despite the lack of evidence to support these claims, and the reality on the ground contradicting such claims.

After the IOF withdrew from the hospitals, Palestinians discovered at least seven mass graves in the courtyards, mainly in Gaza's two largest medical complexes: Al-Shifa Medical Complex in Gaza City and Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis, where 520 bodies were found buried.²⁰³

PCHR documented attacks on six hospitals and medical facilities.²⁰⁴ Here are five examples illustrating the Israeli destruction of medical facilities.

Al-Ahli Arab Al-Maamadani Hospital

At around 19:00 on 17 October 2023, the IOF bombed the Al-Ahli Arab Al-Maamadani Hospital in eastern Gaza City. The hospital was sheltering approximately 5,000 IDPs from Gaza City. The bomb fell in the hospital courtyard, specifically at the far end of the administration building, approximately 15 meters from the main entrance, which was crowded with thousands of IDPs. The attack resulted in the killing of 471 people, including women and children, and injured more than 1,000 others. The bombing caused partial damage to some of the hospital buildings due to the shrapnel that scattered around the hospital's premises, as well as burns caused by fires inside the hospital corridors.

Eyewitnesses reported hearing a loud whistling sound followed by an explosion that shook the area, setting several vehicles parked in the courtyard on fire, which in turn exploded, intensifying the blaze. The explosion coincided with a complete electricity blackout in the hospital and its surroundings. Dr Nahidh Ghrabiah, an eyewitness to the attack, stated, *"Throughout my work during previous wars and assaults on Gaza, I have never seen such injuries. Most of the dead were dismembered, with their limbs torn off and the bodies severely burned. Body parts were scattered across the hospital courtyard and even reached the trees, extending up to 100 meters, including the area near the operating room where I was at the time."* Ghrabiah believes that the weapon used in the attack was of a new kind, due to its devastating results and the staggering number of casualties. The

203 Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Statement No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025); see also Palestinian News and Information Agency (WAFA) (2024) *80 bodies found in 3 mass graves in the Al-Shifa complex in Gaza City*, 11 May. Available at: <https://www.wafa.ps/pages/details/95311> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

204 Al-Shifa Medical Complex – Gaza City; Al-Ahli Arab Al-Maamadani Hospital – Gaza City; Kamal 'Adwan Hospital – Beit Lahia; Indonesian Hospital – Beit Lahia; Al-Amal Hospital – Khan Younis; Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis; UNRWA clinic in Al-Sabra neighbourhood.

explosion created a 3-meter wide and 1.5-meter-deep crater in the ground. He also mentioned that *"the medical team at Al-Ahli Arab Hospital was unable to perform surgeries on dozens of injured individuals given the hospital's limited resources and the damage to the operating room caused by the bombardment and the power outage."* First aid was provided to the injured until ambulances arrived to transport the dead and wounded to Al-Shifa Medical Complex in Gaza. Firefighters later arrived to extinguish the flames.

Amer Mohamed Hassan (30) stated:

“ I was sitting directly in the main entrance courtyard near the church building, in front of the blood lab. Suddenly, I heard a whistling sound and saw something falling in front of me (whether it was a missile or bomb, I do not know), coming from the western side of the hospital. Before it hit the ground, it exploded on one of the cars parked in the middle of the courtyard, followed by successive explosions. Cars and trucks parked in the hospital's courtyard began to burn and explode, and burning shrapnel was flying everywhere, targeting civilians. The darkness turned into daylight due to the intensity of the flames. Even the mattresses and belongings of the displaced people caught fire with pieces of flesh scattered in each corner of the hospital. What I saw and experienced is beyond imagination and too difficult to put into words. Body parts were strewn all over the hospital. The screams and pleas for help still echo in my mind. One piece of shrapnel hit my left leg. Engulfed by fear and terror, I did not realize I was injured. Minutes later, I tried to stand up to look for my wife and five children, but I could not stand because I realised the seriousness of the injury to my left leg, which was almost severed from my body.”

Dr Fadel Naeem, a consultant in orthopaedic surgery at the hospital, told PCHR:

“ On the evening of 14 October 2023, while we were on duty inside the hospital, we heard two very loud explosions. We didn't expect the occupation forces to dare target the hospital, and we assumed it happened in the vicinity. However, the next morning, during our rounds inside the hospital, we were shocked to discover that the occupation forces had targeted two rooms in the specialised radiology building with two shells, causing the destruction of the rooms and burns to the building. It's worth mentioning that the building was completely empty of displaced people. This attack enticed fear and panic among the displaced people. Later that evening, Dr Maher Ayad, the medical director of the hospital complex, received a phone call from an intelligence officer of the IOF, asking why the Baptist Hospital had not been evacuated yet. He was told that the two shells were a signal to evacuate the hospital completely. After this call, the hospital's administration reached out to the bishop, as the hospital is affiliated with the Patriarchal Church in Britain and the Red Cross. They also contacted the U.S. Embassy. The decision was clear: the hospital was safe and would not be harmed, and this threat was baseless. We

were informed to continue providing medical services to the population. At the same time, there were multiple warnings from the occupation army to evacuate and bomb certain neighbourhoods of Gaza, especially those in the same residential area as the hospital. This led many residents to seek refuge in the hospital's courtyards, believing it to be one of the safest places, and that the soldiers wouldn't consider striking it—particularly after the reassurances we had received that the hospital would not be bombed or evacuated. As a result, the number of displaced people increased. On 17 October 2023, at around 19:00, I was in the ground-floor operating room, taking a break after performing several surgical and plastic surgery for the injured. Suddenly, I heard a very loud explosion that shook the place. I was injured on my forehead due to the collapse of the false ceilings in the operating room and the shattering of the windows. The electricity was cut off in the hospital. I began wondering where the explosion had occurred. I looked out of the operating room windows and saw cars exploding and engulfed in flames. Just a few minutes later, displaced people started flooding into the operating room, informing us that there were dozens of injured and dead people lying in the hospital courtyards following the recent attack. We rushed outside to see what was happening. The scene was beyond description—a major catastrophe had befallen the displaced people and the hospital. The scene was too horrific to put into words: dead bodies, injured people, and dismembered limbs of women, children, and men scattered everywhere inside the hospital compound. In the first moments after the attack, we tried our best to save as many of the injured as possible, despite the limited resources, the damaged main operating room, and the lack of electricity. We began prioritising the most critical injuries, as all the injuries were incision wounds, resembling cuts from sharp weapons like swords or knives, tearing through flesh and bones. These wounds were not just the result of an explosion or burns but seemed to have been caused by sharp objects. The bodies of the victims were shredded in pieces everywhere—on trees, in the courtyards, and at the doors of the operating room. Most body parts were dismembered and strewn all around. These were painful and difficult moments for the medical team, even as we collected the bodies. It was nearly impossible to identify them due to the severe dismemberment and mutilation. Added to this was the chaos, terror, panic, and cries for help from the displaced people everywhere, in a scene beyond description. Everyone was searching for their children and family members among the bodies of the killed and the injured. We immediately contacted the Ministry of Health and Al-Shifa Hospital to inform them of the catastrophic situation at the Baptist Hospital following the attack and that the hospital could not handle such a large number of casualties. Within minutes, Civil Defence vehicles arrived at the hospital and managed to extinguish the fires raging in the cars, while ambulances operated like a beehive to transfer the injured to Al-Shifa Hospital. The transfer of the injured lasted nearly two consecutive hours. After stabilising the situation inside and around the hospital, the Hospital was fully evacuated of patients, the injured,

- and the displaced. We, as medical staff, worked under difficult and miserable conditions, handling more than 500 dead and
- wounded people at once—a number beyond the capacity of any hospital in the world, let alone hospitals that have been
- under siege for 17 years and are operating under constant shelling.”

The hospital was attacked again on 18 December 2023. At the time, the hospital was one of the last remaining facilities providing emergency care in Northern Gaza and held patients needing urgent surgery.²⁰⁵ During the attack, the IOF destroyed parts of the building²⁰⁶ and arrested around 20 doctors and medical staff,²⁰⁷ as well as several patients and civilians seeking refuge in the hospital. Three of the arrested individuals, including a doctor, a Senior paramedic, and a civilian, were later released and interviewed by PCHR. They were all subjected to torture and inhumane conditions while in detention.

'Izz al-Deen Abu Zaydah, Director of the emergency and ambulance services department at Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, was present during the attack. Following the raid, he was arrested and tortured.

- “On 18 December 2023, at around 11:00, I was at Al-Ahli Hospital where the IOF surrounded the hospital with tanks, military vehicles, and bulldozers. They breached the hospital's western and northern outer walls and then raided it. Afterwards, IOF ordered the medical staff and personnel via loudspeakers to get out of the hospital.
- My colleague Saeb Salah Safi, who serves as the hospital accountant, and I, both administrators at the hospital, chose to approach the IOF. We intended to clarify that only medical personnel, patients, and their companions were present inside the hospital. and that we have a list of their names, so they would know that there are no other persons, and we are doing our humanitarian duty.
- The IOF not only refused to talk with us, but also ordered us to take off our clothes, except for our underwear, and took photos of us. There were other persons with us, who the IOF called via loudspeakers to get out of the hospital. Afterward, the IOF ordered us to wear white overalls, blindfolded us, tied our hands behind our backs with plastic zip ties, took us to armoured personnel carriers, and ordered us to sit on our knees. There were about 40 persons working at the hospital, three of which were women from the hospital custodian's family members.”

205 Reuters (2023) *Northern Gaza no longer has a functional hospital, WHO says*, 21 December. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/northern-gaza-no-longer-has-functional-hospital-who-says-2023-12-21/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

206 Al Arabiya (2023) *Gaza's Al-Ahli Hospital out of action after Israeli army assault: Director*, 19 December. Available at: <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2023/12/19/Gaza-s-Al-Ahli-Hospital-out-of-action-after-Israeli-army-assault-Director-> (Accessed: 29 July 2024).

207 WHO EMRO (2023) *Opening remarks, UN Palais briefing*, 21 December 2023, 21 December. Available at: <https://www.emro.who.int/media/news/opening-remarks-un-palais-briefing-21-december-2023.html> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).



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- The Specialized Surgeries Building at Al-Shifa Medical Complex that was stormed and targeted by the IOF several times.
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Al-Shifa Medical Complex

On 10 November 2023, the IOF surrounded the Al-Shifa Medical Complex. At that time, the complex was already unable to function, with 600-650 inpatients, 36 babies in incubators, kidney dialysis patients, and over 1,500 IDPs inside. Although the hospital went out of service, the medical staff partially continued to provide healthcare for patients and the injured who remained at the hospital.

On 15 November 2023, IOF tanks and soldiers stormed the hospital, killing dozens of people, destroying large parts of the hospital, and arresting many individuals, including patients and medical staff, inside. As a result of the raid, approximately 200 people, mostly sick and injured civilians, were killed. Due to the sheer number of casualties, doctors, with the help of some trapped civilians, were forced to bury the bodies in the front courtyard of the surgery and reception building. Among the dead, 111 bodies were later exhumed by Israeli forces, taken under their custody, and relocated to a mass grave in southern Rafah.

Before their withdrawal from the Complex on 24 November, the IOF blew up many of the hospital's facilities and buildings with about 180 patients still inside, as well as seven medical staff members, suffering from hunger and dehydration, due to the siege.

On 18 March 2024, the IOF launched a second military attack on Al-Shifa, maintaining a two-week siege, causing mass casualties and inflicting further destruction. During this period, the IOF stormed several hospital wards, committing a massacre against dozens of civilians, including patients and injured individuals. The attacks, which continued until 1 April 2024, destroyed much of the hospital's infrastructure, including critical facilities such as the neonatal intensive care unit and the emergency department, burning at least 115 beds in what was once the emergency department and 14 incubators in the neonatal intensive care unit, among other assets.

Rami Muhammad Misbah Al-Ar'ir (17) recounted his experience during the siege. He described how the IOF surrounded the hospital, arresting everyone in the front yard and courtyard. Army vehicles entered the premises, and Israeli soldiers opened fire while drones carried out relentless bombings. Those taking shelter near the windows were shot at.

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On Sunday, 17 March 2024, at approximately 02:00, the IOF raided the vicinity of Al-Shifa Hospital. The assault began with a series of rocket barrages fired from aircraft, without any time intervals between them. These strikes were targeted at the area surrounding the hospital and lasted for about five uninterrupted minutes. After the aerial bombardment, the IOF began indiscriminate gunfire from drones and machine guns mounted on tanks. There was also the sound of sniper fire. Anyone attempting to leave the hospital was shot by Israeli snipers.

My family and I decided to stay inside the building, away from the windows, after the soldiers started shouting through loudspeakers, “Al-Shifa is besieged, everyone stay where you are,” and we could hear the loudspeaker with difficulty, because of the sound of gunfire and the sound of military vehicles and shells.

My family and I were on the third floor. It was Ramadan and we didn't eat the suhoor meal because of fear and panic. Everyone on the third floor was displaced. I was able to go down carefully to the second floor to find out from people what the soldiers were talking about on the microphone and to know the fate of those inside the building, and while I was going down the stairs there was a martyred person being carried by a group of people. He was killed by occupation snipers after he tried to look out the window to see what was happening outside.”

Following the withdrawal of Israeli forces, the Palestinian Ministry of Health announced that the complex was no longer operational. According to PCHR's investigations, 135 people were killed inside and around the hospital during the raid, including four medical personnel who were executed by gunfire. Additionally, at least 20 patients have died during the siege due to the lack of access to care and restricted movement of health workers. Several medical personnel were either arrested or reported missing.²⁰⁸

Three mass graves were later discovered in the hospital courtyards, containing 80 bodies, of which only 13 were identified, including three women. This number does not include the bodies found inside the hospital. Between 8 and 17 April 2024, Civil Defence Crews, Forensic Teams, and the Ministry of Health initiated excavation and clearing operations, based on information provided by medical personnel and citizens who had witnessed the siege. During these operations, three mass graves were discovered.²⁰⁹

1. The first mass grave was found in front of the main reception and emergency building on the eastern side, near the administration building, where 12 bodies were exhumed.
2. The second mass grave was located west of the Dialysis Building and between the Resource Development Building, where 18 bodies were retrieved.
3. The third mass grave was discovered in front of the specialised surgery building in the complex's front courtyard. Approximately 50 bodies were exhumed from within and around the surrounding sand dunes.

With the destruction of Al-Shifa Hospital, Gaza City and northern Gaza have lost their only CT scanning capabilities and much of their laboratory infrastructure, critically undermining the region's capacity to diagnose and treat patients.²¹⁰ The WHO described Israel's destruction of the complex as "ripping the heart out" of the enclave's health system.²¹¹

PCHR received eyewitness testimonies confirming that the IOF conducted summary executions of

208 World Health Organization (WHO) (2024) *Six months of war leave Al-Shifa hospital in ruins, WHO mission reports*, 6 April. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/06-04-2024-six-months-of-war-leave-al-shifa-hospital-in-ruins--who-mission-reports> (Accessed: 29 May 2025). See also Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) (2024) *Gaza: Al-Shifa hospital destroyed*. 2 April. Available at: <https://msf.org.au/article/project-news/gaza-al-shifa-hospital-destroyed> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

209 Middle East Eye (2024) *Bodies found in new mass grave at Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza*, April. Available at: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/bodies-found-new-mass-grave-shifa-hospital-gaza> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

210 WHO (2024) *Six months of war leave Al-Shifa hospital in ruins, WHO mission reports*, 6 April. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/06-04-2024-six-months-of-war-leave-al-shifa-hospital-in-ruins--who-mission-reports> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

211 WHO (2024) *Destruction of Al-Shifa hospital 'rips heart out of Gaza health system'*, UN Geneva, 2 April. Available at: <https://www.unognewsroom.org/story/en/2123/gaza-al-shifa-hospital-destroyed-who-02-april-2024> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).



● The damage to Abu Yusef al-Najjar Hospital and its surroundings in Rafah.
 ●

dozens of civilians, including medical personnel, and left many patients to die due to the lack of medical care and the spread of epidemics. In his testimony to PCHR regarding the mass graves, Dr Moatasem Salah stated:

● “They were patients’ bodies. This is quite evident since they had external fixators, primary catheters used for treatment, and some bodies were even buried with their medical files. There were bodies with gunshot wounds to the head or chest, headless bodies, and others that were crushed and mutilated, likely run over by vehicles. Several of the bodies belonged to women who were executed. All the bodies exhumed showed signs of recent decomposition, indicating they had not been buried for long.”
 ●

He added:

● “The IOF bulldozed piles of trash from the hospital’s premises and buried them along with the bodies in the second ‘western’ mass grave, located between the Dialysis Building and the Resource Development Building. [...] I am absolutely certain that dozens of bodies remain buried in the hospital courtyards, but they have not been recovered due to the lack of proper equipment for deep excavation. Standard bulldozers can only reach a certain depth, posing a significant challenge in retrieving more bodies.”
 ●

Kamal 'Adwan Hospital

After the 7-day humanitarian truce ended, the IOF raided Kamal 'Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia, where horrible atrocities occurred, particularly in December 2023, during which the IOF targeted and besieged the hospital. The hospital was the only remaining hospital within Northern Gaza and hosted hundreds of people, including medical staff, patients, and civilians.²¹²

On 13 December 2023, after enduring a five-day siege, IOF troops and tanks raided the hospital, destroying its gates and walls. They ordered everyone inside the hospital, including the medical staff, out into the courtyard. Over two days, they interrogated and beat them. On the first day, the IOF arrested 70 persons, including members of the medical staff and the director of the hospital, Dr Ahmed Al-Kahlout.

Dr Sa'eed Ma'rouf (57) described to PCHR how medical supplies ran low, and the hospital's ability to care for patients became severely compromised.

“ In mid-November 2023, after the IOF besieged Kamal 'Adwan Hospital, patients' health conditions deteriorated as only few medical staff remained on duty triggered by fear and anxiety and amid shortages of medicine, medical supplies, food and water. Under those dire circumstances, the medical staff at the paediatrics department was treating an overwhelming number of children infected with Intestinal infectious diseases, pneumonia and meningitis given the chronic shortage of medicine and medical supplies. The hospital was bombed several times; one was on the hospital's paediatric in-patient department, killing a child and injuring his mother; another targeted the hospital's western gate and destroyed several cars, and a third one targeted the hospital's northern gate, killing four to six persons not to mention the scattering shrapnel that was hitting the hospital buildings' roofs. Under extremely challenging conditions a few days before the IOF's raid of the hospital, I, another doctor and nurses managed to leave the hospital and headed to the Al-Ahli Arab (Maamadani) Hospital in Gaza City to work there.²¹³ ”

Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis

212 Al Jazeera (2023) Israeli forces raid Gaza's Kamal Adwan Hospital after days of strikes, 12 December. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/12/israeli-forces-raid-gazas-kamal-adwan-hospital-after-days-of-strikes> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

213 Read the full interview here: <https://pchr-gaza.org/even-doctors-have-not-been-spared-torture/>



• The Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) Hospital in Gaza.

Hospitals and healthcare centres in the southern Gaza Strip were also not spared by the IOF, including the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis – Gaza’s second-largest medical facility, as well as Al-Amal Hospital run by PRCS. The IOF deliberately besieged those hospitals several times before evacuating and bombing them and sniping their medical personnel in addition to hindering the movement of ambulances. As a result, the provision of all medical services for patients and injured was delayed and dozens of them were arrested.²¹⁴

On 22 January 2024, the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis was besieged, with about 300 medical staff, 450 patients, and at least 10,000 IDPs inside. During two weeks, the IOF imposed a total siege, cutting off medical convoys. All buildings surrounding the complex were bombed and burned, and displaced people were shot as they tried to leave. Dozens were killed and injured, and bodies were left on the streets for days as it was too dangerous to collect them due to Israeli snipers.²¹⁵ On 13 February 2024, the IOF sent Jamal Abu ‘Ola to inform the hospital’s administrative director, Dr Atef Al-Hout, of the need to evacuate the IDPs. After obeying the Israeli orders, Jamal Abu ‘Ola was killed

214 Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) (2024) ‘PRCS’s Al-Amal Hospital is Out of Service’, April. Available at: <https://www.palestinercs.org/en/Article/11871/PRCS%E2%80%99s-Al-Amal-Hospital-is-Out-of-Service> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

215 Interview by PCHR with Dr ‘Atif Al-Hout, Director of Nasser Medical Complex, on 15 May 2024. To find the entire testimony, please see: <https://pchrgaza.org/ar/%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9-%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A8%D9%8A/>.

along with another person at the hospital gate, a day before the complex was stormed.²¹⁶ Despite the very challenging situation, the IDPs managed to evacuate under heavy fire and shelling. Only 273 patients who were unable to move remained in the hospital along with their companions.

Two days later, the IOF stormed the hospital and destroyed its facilities, in addition to bulldozing and digging up dozens of graves inside the complex. During the siege, five patients in the intensive care unit died due to a lack of oxygen.²¹⁷

On 14 April 2024, the Civil Defence in Khan Younis uncovered three mass graves within the hospital, and exhumed 392 bodies.²¹⁸ Only a few of those bodies were identified, while the rest remained unidentified due to decomposition and severe disfigurement. The bodies were subsequently buried in a mass grave at the Turkish cemetery.

1. The first mass grave was found in front of the morgue on the western side.
2. The second mass grave was found behind the morgue on the eastern side.
3. The third mass grave was found near the Dialysis Building on the northern side.

The exact number of bodies in each grave is unknown, but the largest number of bodies was retrieved from the grave in front of the morgue on the western side. These graves were roughly three meters deep, with the bodies stacked haphazardly; many in advanced stages of decomposition, while some still had visible features.

Colonel Yamen Abu Suleiman, Director of Civil Defence in Khan Younis, stated that Civil Defence teams began excavations in the courtyards of Nasser Medical Complex on 18 April 2024, following reports from citizens about missing relatives and bodies from inside the complex. One citizen reported discovering a mass grave while digging in the hospital courtyard. Abu Suleiman stated:

“During the excavation, we were surprised to find a sheer number of bodies wrapped in blue shrouds, a colour unfamiliar to us, as burial shrouds are usually white... By Thursday evening, 25 April, we discovered three mass graves within the complex containing 392 bodies... Around ten bodies were found with their hands bound by plastic ties, wrapped in blue shrouds typically used by

216 *Idem.*

217 *Idem.*

218 CNN (2024) *Almost 400 bodies have been found in mass grave in Gaza hospital, says Palestinian Civil Defense*. 25 April. Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/25/middleeast/gaza-400-bodies-mass-grave-hospital-intl/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).



● The damage caused by the targeting of Al-Basma Medical Center in Gaza City.

- the IOF. Due to the decomposition, we couldn't determine the exact injuries. Some bodies had medical bandages on their
- hands and feet, and some were burned... I also saw two bodies with their abdomens ripped open, one crudely stitched,
- and another stapled with medical pins.”

UNRWA clinic in Al-Sabra neighbourhood

Even primary healthcare centres were not spared. On 15 May 2024, IOF warplanes bombed a UNRWA clinic in Al-Sabra neighbourhood in Gaza City, which sheltered hundreds of IDPs, killing 25 people, including women and children, and injuring dozens more. This attack occurred just one day after IOF troops bulldozed the clinic's walls.

Ghassan Mohammed Al-Da'our (45) told PCHR:

“ There were more than 200 displaced people in the Al-Sabra Clinic, including me, members of my family with my brother's wife and her children. We sought refuge in the clinic after our home was destroyed at the beginning of the offensive. At dawn on Wednesday, we were surprised by Israeli warplanes bombing the clinic, which housed only civilian displaced people, most of them children, women, and elderly people. The building collapsed on us. The bombing resulted in approximately 25 deaths and dozens of injuries, most of them severe, with many limbs amputated. My brother's wife, Rahma Abdelbaset Al-Daour (40), and her children, Maryam Ibrahim Mohammed Al-Daour (19), and Nour (3) were killed. Her other two children, Obaida (15) and Baraa (8) were seriously injured and were taken to the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City for treatment. It should be noted that the Israeli forces knew we were there, as they had invaded the area the previous day and demolished the clinic's outer wall without asking us to leave.”

• ***Destruction of Reproductive Healthcare Facilities***

Dr. Mohammed Joda, director of the Hala Fertility Center, told PCHR how the centre was completely destroyed by the IOF:

“ The centre was bombed by tank shells, completely destroying all equipment and causing extensive damage to the building. During the war, five women had embryos that we were unable to transfer to their wombs, and therefore, the implantation process was not completed. For two of these women, the implantation was a last resort, as they had no chance of a subsequent implantation. Of the eight centres operating before the war, six were completely destroyed or taken out of service by the Israeli occupation army. Under the current circumstances, there is no possibility of performing implantation operations, as these operations require special materials and supplies that are unavailable due to the blockade.”

The IOF has destroyed several fertility centres in Gaza, including Gaza's largest fertility clinic-Al-Basma IVF Centre, resulting in the loss of more than 4,000 frozen embryos and 1,000 sperm and

unfertilised eggs.

PCHR documented the destruction of Al-Basma IVF Centre, which occurred in two phases. The first phase happened within the first seven weeks of the Israeli military aggression, when a critical shortage of nitrogen, necessary to preserve the embryos, led to their ruin. Despite the centre's urgent appeals for liquid nitrogen or for the relocation of the containers to a safer area—similar to how frozen embryos were safely relocated from Ukraine under the protection of Western countries²¹⁹—these pleas were ignored.

In December 2023, the second phase of destruction occurred when an Israeli tank shell completely obliterated the embryo lab. The UN Commission of Inquiry also documented the incident in a report published in March 2025.²²⁰

For many affected families, the loss of these embryos represents the end of their last opportunity to have children, especially for those struggling with age-related fertility issues or chronic illnesses. Others face severe financial barriers, making it nearly impossible to afford another attempt at conception.²²¹ The destruction of the Al-Basma IVF centre has not only deprived individuals of their hopes for future children but also adds to the broader pattern of violence aimed at undermining the very future of the Palestinian population.

M.A. (28) told PCHR:

“After my marriage, my dream of motherhood was delayed for four years, and after suffering with treatments, the doctor decided that I should start IVF, which is an expensive and physically exhausting process. I had to borrow \$2,000 just to prepare for it. I began my treatment journey. It was tiring, but the feeling of motherhood outweighed the pain, and I was counting the moments to achieve this dream. I completed the procedure on 25 September 2023, and the embryos were implanted in my uterus. [...] When the doctor told me that things were going well and that the probability of the procedure being successful was 90%, my hopes increased. However, on 7 October, the bombing was intense and frightening, but what was on my mind at that moment was fear for the embryos. The pregnancy test was scheduled for 8 October 2023, and according to the doctor, things were going well. The next day, the unexpected happened: I began bleeding heavily. I quickly headed to the lab, but the lab owner's look was frightening, and he told me the results were negative. [The doctor] told me that I had lost the embryos due to extreme fear, ending my dream at that moment. Joy was replaced by disappointment, and a feeling of denial and silence swept over me. I kept repeating to myself, “I will finish

219 Interview by PCHR with Dr. Baha Al-Ghalayini. See also Aydin B. et al. (2024) 'O-315 A war in Europe?: Ukrainian scientists' struggle for life and future, relocation and securing of frozen biomaterials', *Human Reproduction*, 37(Supplement_1). Available at: https://academic.oup.com/humrep/article/37/Supplement_1/deac106.108/6620386 (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

220 United Nations (2025) *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Israel: Gender-Based Violence*, 13 March, paras 41-42 42. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/report-of-the-commission-of-inquiry-israel-gender-based-violence-13march2025/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

221 Telephone interview by PCHR with Dr. Bahaa Al-Ghalayini, Director of Al-Basma Medical Center for Fertility and IVF, on 2 November 2024.

the war. I will return for the operation again after all this patience and suffering.” But suddenly, the Hala Fertility and the Al-Basma IVF Center were destroyed. Everything was lost; there was nothing left for me to return and return the embryos. As the war continued for more than a year, I tried to contact the doctor and told him that I wanted to resume treatment and look for a new opportunity to have children. He told me that the fertility centres had been destroyed, and that the necessary medications were not allowed in due to the blockade. I received a medical report for a transfer abroad due to my infertility, but that changed nothing. The crossings were also closed, and few cases were able to travel. As if my dream of motherhood is not my right.”

• **Targeting Medical Personnel**

The attacks were not limited to the destruction of physical infrastructure; medical staff were also systematically targeted. Doctors and nurses were killed or arrested, while many were also forced to flee their workplaces under threat. Some hospitals were ordered to evacuate, leaving critically ill patients—including premature babies in incubators—without life-saving care (for more details, see Section 1.c.i.).

• **Denial of Treatment Abroad**

Sameh Saleh Sa'd (41), from Al-Tuffah neighbourhood in eastern Gaza City, injured during the war, told PCHR about his lack of approval to travel:

“ On 3 January 2024, I was injured with tank shell shrapnel when I was in my house in Al-Sha'af area. I was then taken for treatment at Al-Shifa Medical Complex, where doctors informed me that I needed surgery on my left leg, which was hit by shrapnel causing bone laceration. As a result, my left leg has become 15 centimetres shorter than my right leg. The doctors at the Al-Shifa Medical Complex were unable to perform the surgery amid no resources, and I was then referred to several hospitals due to invasion threats and evacuation orders. I am still waiting for the approval on my travel for treatment abroad for bone grafting in my left leg.”

In addition to destroying Gaza's healthcare infrastructure, Israel has systematically obstructed the ability of patients to access life-saving treatment abroad.²²² From the outset of its military offensive, Israel suspended patient transfer mechanisms through the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing, halting access to hospitals in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Simultaneously, it imposed severe restrictions on the movement of patients and wounded individuals through the Rafah crossing, which had been partially functioning for medical evacuations until it was stormed and taken over by Israeli forces on 7 May 2024. This deliberate obstruction occurred at a time when Gaza's healthcare system had already collapsed, with major hospitals destroyed and no viable treatment options available inside the Strip. As a result, thousands of critically ill and wounded individuals were effectively denied access to urgent care.²²³

According to a report published by PCHR in June 2024,²²⁴ only 4,895 patients were able to travel through the Rafah crossing for treatment abroad before the Israeli takeover on 7 May. This figure represents a fraction of the total 25,000 patients who had submitted urgent travel requests for treatments and surgeries not available in Gaza.²²⁵ The average number of permitted exits was just 40 per day—only about 3% of all applications.

Among the cases documented by PCHR were Malak Jamal Hassan (22) and her sister Alaa Jamal Hassan (24) both suffering from cystic fibrosis. Malak managed to travel to Egypt as her condition worsened due to the lack of drugs and the difficult conditions. Her sister unfortunately died before being able to receive any treatment. According to their father, Jamal Saadat Hassan (52), his two daughters have lived with their disease by sticking to their treatment protocol despite having difficulty accessing their medicines before the war. However, after they stopped taking their drugs, their condition worsened. He added:

“ I could not obtain medicines for my daughters for not being able to reach the specialised healthcare facilities. We have endured many challenges after evacuating to Nuseirat refugee camp, and my daughters could not use the nebulizer because of the constant power outage, in addition to the lack of essential vitamins and supplements. Things got worse after a nearby building was bombed on 31 October 2023. My daughters inhaled dust, dirt, and the smell of gunpowder that badly affected their health and developed serious symptoms, such as suffocation, yellow eyes, swollen abdomen, and stomach-ache, accompanied by chest pain, and generalised muscle weakness that made them unable to move. We went to the European Hospital for medical follow-up, but due to lack of specialised medical personnel after many doctors

222 See for example, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *Thousands of Patients at Risk of Death amid no Humanitarian Corridor to Evacuate them from Gaza Strip for Treatment*, 1 October. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/thousands-of-patients-at-risk-of-death-amid-no-humanitarian-corridor-to-evacuate-them-from-gaza-strip-for-treatment/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

223 According to field follow-up by PCHR.

224 Palestinian Center for Human Rights (2024) *Gaza Strip patients are victims of genocide*, August. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/ar/%d9%85%d8%b1%d8%b6%d9%89-%d9%82%d8%b7%d8%a7%d8%b9-%d8%ba%d8%b2%d8%a9-%d8%b6%d8%ad%d8%a7%d9%8a%d8%a7-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a5%d8%a8%d8%a7%d8%af%d8%a9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%ac%d9%85%d8%a7%d8%b9%d9%8a%d8%a9/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

225 Palestinian Ministry of Health (2024) Health Sector Emergency Report for Day 248 of the Aggression, 10 June. Available at: <https://t.me/MOHMediaGaza/5530> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

- travelled, it deprived them of receiving adequate treatment. Immediately, we initiated the medical
- referral procedures for them to receive treatment abroad, but Alaa's condition deteriorated, and
- she died on 9 January 2024. Meanwhile, due to the slow patient referral mechanism, Malak could
- only travel on 9 April 2024.”

Following the closure of the Rafah crossing, patient evacuations came to a complete halt throughout May and June 2024. During this period, thousands of critically ill individuals were left without access to life-saving treatment. It was not until late June 2024 that the WHO managed to resume limited evacuations, eventually facilitating the transfer of 2,235 patients, accompanied by 3,342 family members.²²⁶ These evacuations were carried out in stages across 63 missions, all coordinated by the WHO, and continued until a ceasefire agreement was reached in January 2025.

Dr. Fadi Alawneh, a Jordanian oncological surgeon who participated in a medical mission organised by the Mercy International Foundation, shared his experience with PCHR. During his mission in November 2024, he performed 20 cancerous tumour removal surgeries at a hospital in Gaza City:

- “The health system in the Gaza Strip lacks the capabilities for radiotherapy and hormone
- receptor tests associated with breast cancer, as well as targeted therapies, biological therapies, and
- radioactive iodine. [...] Therefore, I am almost certain that all cancer patients in the Strip need to
- travel abroad to receive comprehensive treatment that respects their humanity.”²²⁷

The transfer of patients from the Gaza Strip for medical treatment abroad is subject to a complex and burdensome system of Israeli-imposed bureaucratic procedures. Israel enforces discriminatory criteria, rejecting all travel requests from younger male patients. These procedures often involve delays that are grossly disproportionate to the urgency of many medical conditions, particularly for cancer patients and others in need of immediate care. Under current regulations, Israeli authorities require that patient travel requests be submitted by countries they classify as “third parties” or by recognised international organisations. Each request must include a written

226 WHO. Health Dashboard. Available at: <https://response.reliefweb.int/palestine/health> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

227 Media statements made by Dr. Fadi Alawneh to Al Jazeera Negt, November 2024. Available at: <https://aja.ws/r36kv8> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

commitment specifying the patient's planned departure route—whether overland through the Egyptian or Jordanian borders, or by air via Israel's Ramon Airport. These steps demand full coordination with Israeli officials, including the submission of all required documentation at least two weeks in advance of the planned evacuation.

However, data collected by PCHR indicates that patients often face waiting times that exceed this two-week period. Many experienced prolonged uncertainty and psychological distress while awaiting approval, frequently left in the dark regarding the status of their applications and forced to navigate unclear or delayed communication in order to follow up on their cases.

Samih Muhammad Zeno (58) reported that his wife died two months after being diagnosed with leukaemia. She was unable to travel to Egypt to begin treatment, and was not provided with treatment at health centres in the Gaza Strip.

“
My wife suffered from severe pain in her bones at the beginning of December 2024. We thought the pain was caused by the hard work and burdens imposed by the living conditions resulting from the war on the Gaza Strip. My family was displaced to Khan Younis from the Zeitoun neighbourhood in Gaza, and when my wife's pain intensified, we went to a medical point affiliated with the Hope Foundation. The doctor examined her and recommended that she visit Nasser Medical Complex for a blood test. There, three days later, the doctors informed us that she was suspected of having leukaemia and recommended that she be followed up at the Friendship Field Hospital to begin the medical referral procedures, as she needed a laboratory test that is not available in Gaza. This news had a devastating impact on my wife and greatly affected her psychological health. Although we were at the beginning of the road, her condition was rapidly deteriorating while she waited to receive treatment in the Gaza Strip. We completed all travel procedures to begin her treatment outside the Gaza Strip. I was following up on the referral process until we received a call from the World Health Organization in mid-January 2025, informing us that her turn to travel was imminent, with confirmation of the registration of companions. We decided that two of my unmarried daughters would accompany her to expedite the process of obtaining Israeli security approval. We were forced to do so, as all the traveling patients were not expected to return to the Gaza Strip due to the ongoing war. It is a difficult decision to split your family in two in such difficult circumstances. On 15 February 2025, my wife's condition deteriorated after we returned to Gaza City during the ceasefire. She was admitted to the Baptist Hospital in Gaza City for follow-up, but she passed away two months after waiting for her right to receive treatment.”

According to the Ministry of Health, there are approximately 12,500 cancer patients in the Gaza Strip, with more than

3,000 new cases diagnosed in just the past year and a half.²²⁸ Since October 2023, over 7,000 of these patients have had their medical referrals processed, yet only around 1,100 have been able to travel for treatment.²²⁹ These patients were transferred to several Arab and European countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, and others. The majority of those who were able to leave are women and children.

• *Casualties Caused by the Absence of Medical Care*

The destruction of Gaza’s hospitals and medical services—coupled with the absence of viable alternatives such as adequately equipped field hospitals—has had catastrophic consequences for the sick and injured. With hospitals unable to provide essential treatments such as cancer care and dialysis, and with severe shortages of critical medications—including pain relief, antibiotics, and drugs for chronic and life-threatening conditions—many have died from infections or untreated wounds/illnesses.

PCHR has documented numerous such cases, demonstrating the devastating toll of the healthcare system’s collapse on civilians and highlighting the urgent need for access to adequate medical care.

Serbion Wadee’ Al-Turk (18) was among the victims after he sustained serious injuries in an IOF airstrike near the Holy Family Church, where he and his family sought refuge. Serbion’s uncle, William Serbion Al-Turk (55), from Gaza City, told PCHR:

“On 3 March 2024, a strong explosion occurred near the church. At the time, my nephew Serbion was on the church roof along with others conducting maintenance and cleaning works. Due to the sudden explosion, Serbion fell from the third floor to the ground, and first aid was provided to him on the spot before immediately transferring him to Al-Shifa Medical Complex. Serbion was admitted to the emergency department for five days despite going into a coma and needing admission to the ICU, but due to the overwhelming number of patients and injured in the hospital, shortage of medical personnel, unavailability of his medical treatment at hospitals in Gaza City and northern Gaza, and the inability to refer him for treatment abroad, Serbion passed away on 12 March 2024.”

228 Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

229 Data obtained by PCHR during an interview with the Health Information Department at the Ministry of Health, on 19 March 2025.

The injured Mahmoud Jameel Matar (35) told PCHR about the critical injury he sustained on 13 November 2023. While he was being treated at the Indonesian Hospital, Mahmoud, his wife, and his brother remained trapped inside the hospital for nine days:

“ I was staying at the Indonesian Hospital after being injured when the IOF had just started a siege on the hospital. Many doctors and nurses fled, leaving only a few medical staff and patients who were unable to move. Consequently, we did not receive proper treatment, and the situation deteriorated with the tightening of the siege in mid-November. We spent five days without medical treatment or food. My wife moved me to the department's corridor to avoid snipers and drones, and she changed my wound dressing herself. On 19 November, the second floor of the hospital was bombed, killing several patients. Teargas canisters were also heavily fired inside the hospital by the IOF. On 22 November, I was evacuated to the south, but my health conditions got worse, forcing doctors to amputate my legs after going through unbearable suffering during the siege.”

The suspension of cancer treatment in Gaza's hospitals, coupled with prolonged delays in securing opportunities for medical evacuation, has resulted in the deaths of 615 cancer patients—179 of whom died in the first quarter of 2025 alone.²³⁰ Similarly, the repeated disruption of dialysis sessions for kidney failure patients during the Israeli offensive has had catastrophic consequences. Out of approximately 1,200 patients, 472 have died, representing a staggering 41% mortality rate. Between 2 and 13 March 2025, 22 additional kidney failure patients lost their lives, reflecting the ongoing severity of the crisis.²³¹ Moreover, 244 thalassemia patients have been deprived of their right to essential medical care and adequate nutrition. As a result, 28 patients have died, unable to access the life-sustaining treatment they require.²³² Several newborns also died as a result of a lack of incubators or appropriate medical care (for more details, see Section 1.c.xiv.).

Dina Zuhair 'Amer Hiji (35), who lost her mom to cancer, told PCHR:

“ In September 2023, a month before the war, my mother (67) was very sick and had a low blood cell count of 6, which caused her to bleed. When her symptoms worsened, she went to an internist who examined her and ordered

230 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2025) *The Silent Death: Cancer Patients Left to Die Waiting: Victims of Genocide in the Gaza Strip*, May, p. 14. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/The-Silent-Death.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

231 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2025) *Kidney Failure Patients Without Healthcare*, May, p. . Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Kidney-Failure-Patients-Without-Healthcare.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

232 Data obtained by PCHR during an interview with Ibrahim Abdullah, patient coordinator at the Thalassemia Friends Association, on 14 March 2025. See also Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR). (2025) *The suffering of thalassemia patients in Gaza Strip: When treatment becomes a distant dream*. 30 April. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/the-suffering-of-thalassemia-patients-in-gaza-strip-when-treatment-becomes-a-distant-dream/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

additional tests, which revealed that she had a tumour in her colon and liver. She then went to Al-Shifa Hospital and was admitted three times in September, each time for a week. And because of her health condition, the hospital referred her to the Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital so that she could be followed up by a doctor. Her first appointment at the Turkish hospital was on Monday, 9 October 2023, but she could not start her treatment because the war broke out on Saturday, 7 October 2023. During the war, we went to Al-Shifa hospital where the doctors told her to go to the south as her treatment was not available there. On 9 November, I evacuated with my sister and my mother to Deir al-Balah in search of doctors and treatment. We went to many doctors but they all said that there was no treatment for her and that she should wait until the war ended. My mother needed saline flushes and painkillers from time to time due to her high creatinine levels from the cancer. We went to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, where the doctors refused to see her or give her any treatment, saying that the hospital only accepted emergency cases. They told us that we could go to Dar al-Salam Hospital in Khan Younis, where there was treatment for cancer. [...] My mother waited so long for her name to be on the travel lists for treatment in the UAE. And because I had no access to the internet and because of the power cuts and the poor communication network, I walked to the administration building of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital every day from 08:00 to check whether her name was on the travel lists or not. [...] My mother's health was deteriorating day by day and the symptoms were getting worse; she had a fever and was vomiting. Her pain was unbearable and she screamed all the time because of the pain in her chest and back. And when we asked the doctors what to do, they said she would be like this until she drew her last breath. My mother died on 24 January 2024 because she was not allowed to travel and due to the lack of medicines and hospitals for cancer patients.

PCHR estimates that hundreds of patients suffering from various diseases have died silently, unable to access primary care facilities and hospitals, especially in the besieged areas of Gaza City and north Gaza.

IX. EXTENSIVE DESTRUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Samiha Al-Nadi, a displaced person from the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood who is currently sheltering in a school with her husband and three children, told PCHR:

“After our residential neighbourhood was suddenly bombed, my husband, our three children, and I left our house because we were scared and hit by scattered shrapnel. We were taken to Al-Maamadani hospital, where we were treated quickly due to the influx of dozens of martyrs and injured. After our house was destroyed, we sought shelter in the same school where my daughter Suhad (9) was studying. She used to excel academically and participate in extracurricular activities like school radio and the student parliament. Now, my daughter is very sad, and traumatised because she has been living as a displaced person in school for over four months. The conditions here are unbearable; there is no drinking water, the food is very scarce and unhealthy, and sewage water leaks into the schoolyard. My daughter cries bitterly as she watches the school she loved and spent happy times turn into a place of miserable living and great suffering.”

From the outset of Israeli military aggression, the IOF has systematically targeted Gaza's educational infrastructure, depriving hundreds of thousands of students of their right to education both in the short and long term. The attacks involved the deaths, injuries, and detentions of students, teachers, and university professors, coupled with the destruction of kindergartens, schools, universities, and other educational facilities.

By the 2025 ceasefire, the IOF had killed 12,800 students and 760 teachers and educational employees,²³³ while more than 14,200 students and 2,200 teachers had been injured by June 2024.²³⁴ In addition, 150 academics, including respected scholars and three university presidents, have been killed.²³⁵

In parallel, the IOF has carried out targeted attacks damaging or destroying 87.7% of school buildings.²³⁶ Among them, 65.3% were used by IDPs as shelters. In March 2024, the UN recorded over 200 direct hits on schools, with half of UNRWA schools being targeted.²³⁷ At least 84.6% of schools now require full reconstruction or major repairs to

233 Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

234 ReliefWeb (2024) *A year of silence in Gaza's classrooms: the urgent need for educational revival*, 3 August. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/year-silence-gazas-classrooms-urgent-need-educational-revival-3-august-2024> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

235 Information collected by PCHR during an interview with Dr Mahmoud Matter, Assistant Secretary at the Ministry of Education, on 15 August 2024. See also Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

236 Save the Children (2024) *Education under attack: Gaza – nearly 90 school buildings damaged or destroyed*. Available at: <https://www.savethechildren.net/blog/education-under-attack-gaza-nearly-90-school-buildings-damaged-or-destroyed> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

237 UN News (2024) *Gaza: UN calls for urgent action to save education amid crisis*, 4 March. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1148031> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

become operational again²³⁸ (for more details on targeting civilians in schools, see section 1.c.i.). Furthermore, 12 universities have been targeted,²³⁹ along with the destruction of 36 football stadiums and gyms.²⁴⁰

UN experts and rapporteurs have raised alarm over these attacks, calling it “scholasticide”. In a joint statement, they condemned these attacks as part of a deliberate, ongoing pattern of violence aimed at dismantling the very foundation of Palestinian society. The experts stated: “*When schools are destroyed, so too are hopes and dreams.*” They also emphasised the long-term impact on the fundamental rights of Palestinians to learn and freely express themselves, noting that a whole generation of Palestinians is being deprived of its future.²⁴¹

As of 7 October 2023, over 625,000 students across government, private, and UNRWA schools have been denied access to education. Among them, 39,000 students were unable to sit for their high school Tawjihi exams.²⁴² Additionally, 88,000 university students have been affected, with around 550 unable to pursue scholarships abroad. Around 800,000 children of kindergarten age were also unable to attend school during the 2023-2024 academic year, and are still unable to attend school in the current year.²⁴³

238 ReliefWeb (2024) *A year of silence in Gaza's classrooms: the urgent need for educational revival*, 3 August. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/year-silence-gazas-classrooms-urgent-need-educational-revival-3-august-2024> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

239 Education Cluster in Palestine (2024) *Verification of damages to schools based on proximity to damaged sites backed by satellite imagery*, April. Available at: <https://educationcluster.app.box.com/s/k3seqiez5tp2j6gnkqmw9qm3wsxd0ty> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

240 Gaza Government Media Office (2024) Update on Israeli attacks, Day 345, 15 September. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3148> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

241 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2024) ‘UN experts deeply concerned over “scholasticide” in Gaza’. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

242 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2024) ‘Year of silence in Gaza's classrooms: urgent need for educational revival’, 3 August. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/year-silence-gazas-classrooms-urgent-need-educational-revival-3-august-2024> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

243 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *800,000 students deprived of their right to education amid ongoing destruction of schools and universities*, 9 September.. Available at: <https://pchr.org/800000-students-deprived-of-their-right-to-education-amid-ongoing-destruction-of-schools-and-universities/#bcc95cd7-28ac-4f9a-89a2-2a539bf89620> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).



● The damage to the historic Al-Pasha Palace in Gaza City.



● The damage to Rashad
 ● Al-Shawa Cultural Center
 ● in Gaza City.

X. EXTENSIVE DESTRUCTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND FOOD PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

Farmer Jabr Ali Al-'Attar (47) told PCHR about the loss of his farms and livelihood.

“ I work in agriculture and own seven dunums of land with egg-laying chicken farms, housing 88,000 birds, in addition to 52 heads of livestock. I also own three dunums of closed farms that rely on electronic systems as I supplied 48,000 chickens to the market. Additionally, I allocate two dunums for growing fruit, and I also own a grocery store known as 'America Market', which I purchased for \$200,000. It had been open for six months before the war erupted. When the war started, Beit Lahia was under indiscriminate Israeli shelling, yet I chose to stay with a group of workers. Four days after the war began, I moved the chickens from the closed farms to two other farms—one belonging to my nephew Ahmed Al-'Attar and the other to the Al-Faqih family. However, despite these efforts, all the farms were bombed and completely destroyed. On 21 October 2023, Iskan Tower, where my store was located, was destroyed, losing a huge quantity of food supplies and my family's home. I estimated my losses to be between 4 and 4.5 million dinars.”

Since the first day of the Israeli military aggression on the Gaza Strip, the agricultural sector, livestock, and fishing industry have been systematically and deliberately targeted by the IOF. Both agricultural and animal production have completely collapsed, leaving the Gaza Strip unable to meet even the most basic food needs. In November 2023, daily losses to the agricultural sector were already estimated at \$2 million by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.²⁴⁴

This calculated destruction of Gaza's food security infrastructure has plunged the region into a severe state of vulnerability. The scale of this devastation has crippled Gaza's ability to produce its own food for decades, depriving its population of any means of survival and recovery and its main livelihood. As a result, Gaza has become entirely dependent on humanitarian aid for its food supply, a situation exacerbated by Israel's ongoing siege, which restricts the entry of food, water, and other essential resources, effectively weaponising access to basic survival needs.

²⁴⁴ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) (2023) *The impact of the Israeli occupation aggression on the agricultural sector in Gaza Strip*, 2023, 28 November. Available at: www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4643 (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

'Abed al-Hameed Mohammed Abu 'Ariban (53), from Wadi al-Salqa village, east of Deir al-Balah told PCHR how he lost everything during the war:

“ Since the onset of the war, we have stopped working due to the power outage and the lack of livestock feed. I live in Wadi al-Salqa and my family and I have been engaged in livestock breeding, farming, and food production for 40 years. I own a 2-dunum cattle and calf farm, three egg-laying chicken farms, a dairy products factory, four dunams planted with 100 olive trees, in addition to two dunums of greenhouses used for planting vegetables and other crops.

In early December 2023, the IOF began their ground invasion into the Khan Younis area, and my family and I were forced to flee from Wadi Al-Salqa to the centre of Deir al-Balah. We left everything behind. Israeli vehicles completely destroyed our village. Nothing was spared from destruction, including my farm. Bulldozers demolished the cattle and calf barn, my egg-laying chicken farms, and razed the agricultural land and greenhouses. Even the vehicle I used for distributing eggs and dairy products was destroyed.”

A direct attack on greenhouses in Gaza.



The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported widespread and significant damage to the agricultural sector throughout Gaza, including cropland, greenhouse, agricultural infrastructure, agricultural wells, solar panels, and others²⁴⁵—vital pillar of the local food production chain.²⁴⁶ As of January 2025, over 75% of Gaza's cropland had been damaged (113 square kilometres out of 150)—primarily in northern Gaza (84%), Gaza (80%) and Deir Al-Balah (74%).²⁴⁷ More particularly, vegetable production and trees, including olive trees, have been under targeted destruction, with 58% and 80% of damage, respectively.²⁴⁸

Additionally, the military attacks targeted vital agricultural infrastructure, for example 64% of wells and 56% of the greenhouses have been damaged.²⁴⁹ Irrigation systems, solar panels, warehouses, as well as logistical equipment were also destroyed.²⁵⁰ Finally, Israel also flooded tunnels with seawater. This action has triggered a serious environmental crisis, raising the risk of long-term soil degradation and groundwater contamination. With sewage networks already collapsing, the intrusion of saltwater threatens to contaminate the aquifer and render much of the remaining arable land uncultivable.²⁵¹

According to FAO, in April 2025, only 4.6% of Gaza's cropland was available for cultivation, with cropland in Rafah and nearly all cropland in the Northern governorate no longer being accessible.²⁵²

A stark illustration of Israel's systematic destruction of Gaza's agricultural sector is its occupation of over 130 km² of land which has been converted into a military buffer zone. Much of the land

245 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (n.d.) *Family farming in Gaza Strip*. Available at: <https://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/1727423/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

246 UNOSAT and FAO (2025) *Gaza Strip cropland damage analysis*, 30 January. Available at: <https://unosat.org/products/4072> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

247 *Idem*. See also Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) *Analysis of cropland damage in Gaza Strip*. Available at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/072e6c5e-afab-4f19-928a-651d63cf554b> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

248 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2023) *The impact of the conflict on agriculture in the Gaza Strip: damage assessment and recovery needs*. Available at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/00817415-31d0-41d7-aa41-6f107d5f04b6> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

249 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2024) *Emergency food security and nutrition assessment in Gaza Strip*. Available at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/5f74d78d-9abc-4612-9b78-bcb68219993f> (Accessed: 29 May 2025); Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2024) *Agricultural livelihoods in Gaza: challenges and opportunities*. Available at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/09e7c2a2-6a31-4ac4-88c9-deb023f14a10> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

250 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *We will leave them nothing: New PCHR report reveals Israeli destruction of Gaza's agricultural sector and food systems aims to erase Palestinian existence*. Available at: <https://pchr-gaza.org/we-will-leave-them-nothing-new-pchr-report-reveals-israeli-destruction-of-gazas-agricultural-sector-and-food-systems-aims-to-erase-palestinian-existence/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

251 Scientific American (2023) 'As Israel floods Gaza's tunnels with seawater, scientists worry about aquifer contamination'. Available at: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/as-israel-floods-gazas-tunnels-with-seawater-scientists-worry-about-aquifer-contamination/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

252 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2024) *Assessment of the environmental and agricultural impacts in Gaza*. Available at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/713e4d65-b8b0-4b10-bee3-57b95c5e479f> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

appropriated consisted of fertile agricultural terrain, depriving Palestinians of vast areas essential for local food production, food security, and their livelihood.²⁵³ One particularly devastating example is the deliberate targeting of the Wadi Gaza Nature Reserve, an ecologically significant area that had been undergoing rehabilitation after years of environmental degradation largely attributed to Israeli policies.²⁵⁴ These restoration efforts were abruptly undone with the establishment of the Netzarim Corridor and an expansive surrounding buffer zone by the IOF. This corridor not only physically severed northern Gaza from the south, but also rendered the Wadi Gaza Nature Reserve a no-go zone, resulting in its destruction.

The livestock sector in Gaza has also been severely impacted, particularly in the northern and eastern areas of the Gaza Strip. Airstrikes and ground artillery shelling, coupled with acute shortages of animal feed and water, have led to catastrophic losses across all categories of livestock and the related infrastructure. As of September 2024, approximately 95% of cattle and nearly all calves had perished.²⁵⁵ The situation for small ruminants is similarly dire, with only 43% of sheep and just 37% of goats still alive.²⁵⁶ The poultry sector has experienced the most dramatic collapse, with only about 1% of poultry surviving in September 2024.²⁵⁷ Infrastructures have also been completely destroyed, with 645 home barns, 625 broiler farms, and 502 sheep farms wiped out by December 2024.²⁵⁸ This devastation has left the food production industry in Gaza on the brink of collapse.

The IOF has also systematically targeted Gaza's fishing sector—one of the territory's most vital sources of livelihood. Once producing approximately 4,600 tons of fish annually, the industry has now been brought to a complete standstill. 85% of the sector's total assets has been reduced to rubble, including the destruction of the Gaza Seaport.²⁵⁹ More than 900 fishing boats and 96 motorized vessels were directly bombed,²⁶⁰ and marinas along the northern coast, Az-Zawaida, Deir al-Balah, and Khan Younis have sustained extensive damage.²⁶¹ Since October 2023, the IOF has killed 150 fishermen.²⁶² In addition, the two largest fish farms in the Gaza Strip have been destroyed, alongside the main fish market, refrigeration and storage facilities, and the headquarters of the Fishermen's Union.²⁶³

253 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2024) *We will leave them nothing: New PCHR report reveals Israeli destruction of Gaza's agricultural sector and food systems aims to erase Palestinian existence*. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/we-will-leave-them-nothing-new-pchr-report-reveals-israeli-destruction-of-gazas-agricultural-sector-and-food-systems-aims-to-erase-palestinian-existence/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

254 Euronews Green (2023) 'Now we can breathe a little: How Gaza is bringing its wetlands back to life'. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/green/2023/04/16/now-we-can-breathe-a-little-how-gaza-is-bringing-its-wetlands-back-to-life> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

255 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2024) *Gaza geospatial data shows intensifying damage to cropland*. Available at: <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/gaza-geospatial-data-shows-intensifying-damage-to-cropland/en> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

256 *Idem*.

257 *Idem*.

258 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (2025) *Damage to agricultural infrastructure due to the conflict in the Gaza Strip as of 31 December 2024*. Available at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/12aaed0f-b809-438c-978f-14e8d9aaaaee2> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

259 Interview conducted by PCHR with Zakaria Bakr, fisherman and activist documenting the suffering of fishermen in the Gaza Strip, 25 October 2024.

260 *Idem*.

261 *Idem*.

262 Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO) (2024) *Fact Sheet: The Fishing Sector in the Gaza Strip Under the Severe Impact of War*, 17 September. Available at: <https://pngoportal.org/uploads/documents/2024/09/q43ZG.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

263 Interview conducted by PCHR with Zakaria Bakr, fisherman and activist documenting the suffering of fishermen in the Gaza Strip, 25 October 2024.



●
● Feed factory in al-Zawida area in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip.
●

This devastation has left more than 4,000 fishermen, many from Gaza City and northern Gaza, without their primary source of income, stripping them of the ability to support their families. The task of rehabilitating the sector appears nearly impossible, especially given the ban on the entry of fishing materials and equipment.

Fisherman 'Atef Said Atef Saeed Abu Rayala (39) shared with PCHR:

“ On the fourth day of the war, the IOF bombed the Gaza Port basin, where my family's fishing boats were docked. We had a 350,000 USD fishing launch and a 150,000 USD “Shanshula” boat. Due to the military strikes, the boats and equipment caught fire and burned for two days, with no access to extinguish the flames. They were completely destroyed. We were severely impacted, and my fishing business came to a halt. In August 2024, I attempted to return to fishing on the beach in Deir al-Balah. I managed to secure enough funds to purchase a small fishing boat, and now I'm trying to make a living after losing everything. However, the efforts of fishermen to venture out to sea are fraught with danger. Every day, fishermen are targeted and shot at by Israeli warships. We face death on a daily basis, and every time we head out to sea, we don't know if we'll survive and make it back to shore.”

XI. EXTENSIVE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The people of Gaza are not only suffering severely from the ongoing military assault, but the significant and increasing environmental damage is forcing them into a long and painful recovery period. According to a preliminary assessment conducted by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the environmental impacts of the war in Gaza are unprecedented, exposing the community to increased risks of soil, water, and air pollution, as well as potentially irreversible damage to natural ecosystems.²⁶⁴

According to the report, Israel's war has released harmful substances and debris, including dust, unexploded ordnance, asbestos, industrial and medical waste. Water, sanitation, and hygiene systems have been destroyed, polluting beaches, fresh water, and soil, and threatening the health of residents and marine life. The solid waste management system has been severely damaged, with 1,200 tons of garbage accumulating daily, deteriorating air quality. Heavy munitions and explosive chemicals have also contaminated the soil. The aftermath of this destruction includes more than 39 million tons of rubble, which presents an immense challenge for Gaza's environment.²⁶⁵ The removal of this debris is expected to take years, hindering recovery efforts and contaminating the land.²⁶⁶

In addition, approximately 281,000 tons of carbon dioxide were emitted during the initial 60 days of military aggression,

264 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (2024) *Environmental Impact of the Conflict in Gaza: Preliminary Assessment*, 18 June. Available at: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/45739/environmental_impact_conflict_gaza.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

265 *Idem*.

266 UN News (2024) 'Conflict in Gaza causes extensive environmental damage – UN report', 11 April. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1149051> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).



● PCHR's field researcher, Waleed Zaqqout, while documenting Israeli crimes in Gaza.

which is equivalent to the annual carbon footprint of 20 climate-vulnerable nations or the emissions from burning 150,000 tons of coal. A study conducted by British researchers confirmed that over 99% of these emissions were the direct result of Israeli aerial bombardments, particularly before the ground invasion of residential areas.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ British researchers (2024) 'A Multitemporal Snapshot of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from the Israel-Gaza Conflict'. Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4684768 (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

XII. EXTENSIVE DESTRUCTION OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PROPERTY

Salim Abdullah Salim Al-Wazir (72) owner of Hammam Al-Samra, testified about the destruction of the hammam by Israel:

“The Hammam is located in the oldest area of Gaza City, surrounded by many archaeological sites such as the Omari Mosque, the Pasha Palace, and Khan Al-Zeit, which included a hotel, a café, a restaurant, and a horse stable, in addition to the Qaysariyya Market. I took possession of Hammam Al-Samra in the 1950s after decades of renting it. The bathhouse has historical, cultural, and architectural significance, as trade caravans from all over the world would visit the area, especially the Khan and its surroundings, to benefit from the commercial excellence and to relax. They would visit Hammam Al-Samra, as the Bedouins of Sinai and Beersheba had done since before the Nakba. Doctors also used to send their patients to the bathhouse because they believed it stimulated blood circulation and improved the efficiency of the arteries. On 25 December 2023, Israeli warplanes completely destroyed the bathhouse in a direct attack. I had hoped to end my life managing Hammam Al-Samra. Since I was born, I have been visiting it with my father. The bathhouse holds the memories of countless visitors spanning over 900 years. I was part of the bathhouse, and it was part of me. So, I lost a large part of my body and my soul.”

PCHR documented how the IOF deliberately targeted cultural and religious sites, revealing a broader strategy to erase Palestinian history, cultural identity, and their very existence on their land. For example, a total of 823 mosques have been completely destroyed, while 158 others require restoration. Three churches were also destroyed.²⁶⁸ The IOF has also specifically targeted Palestinian landmarks, systematically destroying key monuments and properties. As of March 2024, around 63% of all heritage sites in Gaza had been damaged, of which 31% had been completely destroyed.²⁶⁹ These sites included historic mosques, churches, markets, and archaeological sites— many of which have stood for over a thousand years. In addition to these significant landmarks, universities, libraries, museums, theatres, murals, castles, manuscripts, and other cultural institutions have been obliterated, further erasing the rich heritage and history of Palestine.

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has conducted a preliminary damage assessment of cultural properties through remote monitoring based on satellite imagery. Their assessment has confirmed damage to 107 sites across Gaza’s governorates, including 13 religious sites, 74 buildings of historical and/or artistic interest,

²⁶⁸ Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

²⁶⁹ World Monuments Fund (WMF) (n.d.) Gaza. Available at: <https://www.wmf.org/monuments/gaza> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

three depositories of movable cultural property, nine monuments, one museum and seven archaeological sites.²⁷⁰

The targeting of historical buildings and ancient places of worship has been systematic, with these sites subjected to artillery shelling, air bombardment, and demolition. Among the sites affected were three classified as World Heritage Sites or listed on the preliminary list of cultural sites in Palestine: Anthedon Harbor, the Ancient Saint Hilarion Monastery, and Wadi Gaza, which is considered a natural heritage site.

In a report published in June 2024, PCHR exposed the destruction of several significant sites, with notable examples including: the Byzantine Church of Jabalia, the Porphyrius Orthodox Church, the Great Omari Mosque, Sheikh Shaaban Mosque, Al-Zafar Damri Mosque, Dar Al-Saqa Archaeological Site, Tell al-Muntar, Gaza's British Cemetery, Saint Hilarion Monastery, Tell es-Sakan, Tell 86 in Al-Qarara, Mazen Market, the Khalil al-Rahman Mosque, Tel Rafah, Sayed al-Hashim Mosque, Qaser al-Basha, Al-Khader Shrine in Deir al-Balah, Deir al-Balah Museum, the Al-Fukhari Archaeological Site, the Shrine of Joseph (Yusuf), and Barquq Castle in Khan Younis.²⁷¹

Among the countless cultural sites targeted was the Great Omari Mosque, which was bombed on 19 November, 2023, causing significant damage and leading to the collapse of its 1,400-year-old minaret. Israeli aircraft returned to bomb the mosque again on 8 December 2023, destroying much of what remained. Tariq Mahmoud Haniya, a 60-year-old tour guide at the mosque, shared his experience with PCHR:

“ I have been working as a tour guide at the Omari Mosque for 18 years, welcoming daily delegations from local and foreign schools and universities. When the army withdrew from the mosque's vicinity, I went to see what had happened. What I found was unimaginable—piles of stones and rubble scattered everywhere, and the destruction was overwhelming. Israeli aircraft had completely destroyed the mosque.”

He continued,

270 UNESCO (2025) *Assessment of Cultural Heritage in Gaza*. Available at: <https://www.unesco.org/en/gaza/assessment#:~:text=As%20of%208%20April%202025,museum%20and%207%20archeological%20sites> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

271 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (2024) *Cultural Genocide Report*. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Cultural-Genocide-2024.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).



• The damage to Al-Omari Mosque in Gaza City.

“ The Omari Mosque is not just a place of worship; it is part of Gaza’s long history of learning, culture, and faith. It was a central gathering point for Gazans, especially during Ramadan nights, when it would be filled with worshippers. We also held ceremonies there to praise the Prophet Muhammad and dhikr sessions. Now, with the mosque destroyed, we are deprived of our spiritual and cultural practices. This loss is not just physical; it is a deep spiritual wound for our community.”

XIII. ENGINEERING OF A HEALTH CATASTROPHE

Dr. Hossam Abu Safieh, Director of Kamal 'Adwan Hospital, testified about the increase of infectious diseases:

- “We suffered a lot during the months of aggression in dealing with people infected with various
- infectious diseases. The first polio case in central and southern Gaza is a warning signal of a
- looming disaster, by which the IOF obliterates years of success in the Palestinian immunisation and
- vaccination program, which had eradicated such diseases over the past two decades. The fear is
- palpable as we face a fast-spreading virus in the face of chronic shortages in medical supplies and
- trained healthcare personnel and specialists. Therefore, the only way to combat the disease is to
- end the war, restore the vaccination system for all age groups, and allow medical teams to work
- freely and safely, ensuring families' access to vaccination centres.”²⁷²

Israel's military offensive has precipitated a catastrophic humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, creating deadly conditions—particularly for the ill and injured, as well as pregnant women, newborn, and children. Israel has repeatedly ignored all warnings from the UN and deliberately engineered this catastrophic situation. The systematic destruction of Gaza's infrastructure, combined with the repeated evacuations, and the siege blocking the entry of lifesaving food, basic necessities, medicine, medical supplies, fuel, and tents has created the ideal conditions for the rapid spread of infectious diseases. With sewage systems destroyed, garbage collection systems inoperative, and water supplies tainted, Gaza is facing a surge in preventable diseases.

Entire families are forced to live in dire conditions. As of January 2025, at least eight Palestinians died as a result of the severe cold in tents, including 7 children.²⁷³ The Ministry of Health recorded 2,136,026 cases of infectious diseases as a result of displacement.²⁷⁴

The collapse of healthcare services has also crippled vaccination efforts, leading to a resurgence of previously controlled diseases, including outbreaks of polio and vaccine-preventable illnesses.

²⁷² Phone interview conducted by PCHR with Dr Hossam Abu Safieh, Director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, on 19 August 2024.

²⁷³ Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

²⁷⁴ *Idem*.

71,338 cases of infection with hepatitis B were reported.²⁷⁵ In mid-august 2024, the first case of type 2 poliovirus in Gaza was recorded, a virus that had resurfaced in Palestine for the first time in 25 years. Dr Hani Al-Felet, head of the paediatric department of Shuhada Al-Aqsa Hospital, told PCHR that a 10-month-old baby has been partially paralysed after contracting polio in Gaza since his family could not reach vaccination centres due to evacuations orders, difficult transportation, and the deteriorating security situation in Gaza. Dr Al-Felet added:

“
There is a higher risk of polio outbreak since there is a large number of unvaccinated children, particularly those displaced from northern to southern Gaza, as well as newborns who are yet to receive their two-month vaccine. And given the current dire conditions, the virus is poised to spread like wildfire.”

By August 2024, over 1.5 million cases of infectious diseases, such as skin diseases, upper respiratory infections, hepatitis, meningitis, dysentery and diarrhoea, have been reported in central and southern Gaza Strip.²⁷⁶ Acute respiratory infections alone have resulted in almost 1 million cases, with 3,500 new cases emerging each week. Diarrheal diseases are also a significant threat, affecting over half a million people, with an alarming number of new cases among young children, with 122,338 in children under five. In addition, 500 cases of bloody diarrhoea, 103,385 cases of scabies and lice, 65,368 cases of skin rash, 11,214 cases of chickenpox, and 104,766 cases of acute jaundice syndrome were recorded, with 1,500 new cases weekly.²⁷⁷ According to the Ministry of Health, 350,000 chronic patients are at risk due to the blockade and the lack of medicines.²⁷⁸

275 *Idem*.

276 Palestinian Ministry of Health (2024) Health Sector Emergency Report for Day 347 of the Aggression, 16 September.

277 World Health Organization (WHO) (2024) *oPt Emergency Situation Update*. Available at: https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/Sitrep_-_issue_3c.pdf (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

278 Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

XIV. CREATION OF A CATASTROPHIC CRISIS FOR PREGNANT AND BREASTFEEDING WOMEN AND NEWBORNS

Aya Mohammed Al-'Azazma (18) told PCHR about the difficult loss of her baby:

“ On 16 October 2023, when I was 3-months pregnant, the IOF bombed three residential buildings next to us and near Kamal Adwan Hospital. The missiles wiped out the buildings and the whole area. At that moment, I felt like something was running down my legs and I had cramps that made me unable to move, along with severe abdominal and back pains. I started shaking in fear and then went with my husband to the street, finding ourselves alone all the way, as no one dared to go out under the indiscriminate bombardment. We arrived at Kamal Adwan Hospital, where the doctor informed me that I had lost my baby, and that the force of the missile had caused his heartbeat to stop. I broke down in total shock grieving the loss of my first baby, wishing for the end of this war that has deprived me of meeting and holding my baby.”

The Israeli military attack in Gaza has resulted in a catastrophic humanitarian crisis for pregnant and breastfeeding women and newborns, subjecting them to a race against death. With the lack of protection from military attacks, the destruction of healthcare infrastructure, limited and unsafe access to essential medical services, food insecurity, a lack of basic necessities and safe living conditions, the risks to maternal and child health are greater than ever.

UN experts have condemned the direct bombardment of hospitals and the denial of access to healthcare:

“ The treatment of pregnant and lactating women continues to be appalling, with the direct bombardment of hospitals and deliberate denial of access to health care facilities by Israeli snipers, combined with the lack of beds and medical resources placing an estimated 50,000 pregnant Palestinian women and 20,000 new-born babies at unimaginable risk. Over 183 women per day are giving birth without pain relief, while hundreds of babies have died because of a lack of electricity to power incubators.”²⁷⁹

279 OHCHR (2024, May 6). Onslaught of violence against women and children in Gaza unacceptable: UN experts <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/onslaught-violence-against-women-and-children-gaza-unacceptable-un-experts>

- **Lack of Protection from Israeli Military Attacks**

Warda Mahmoud Ward (27), a pregnant woman from Gaza, describes her experience during the war, including inhaling white phosphorus, repeated displacement, and extreme stress, all of which contributed to complications during her high-risk pregnancy and the tragic loss of her baby.

“ I was 2-months pregnant when the Israeli war started. I took refuge in my family's house next to mine in the Al-Saftawi area. On 15 October 2023, my family house was severely damaged after a bombing took place behind it, during which I inhaled white phosphorus. The intense bombing continued, forcing us to evacuate to the southern Gaza Valley in search of safety. During this time, we had to evacuate several times in extremely difficult conditions, with no chance to rest. I also had to cook using fire and do difficult housework due to power and water cuts. This was extremely exhausting, especially with the lack of food, vegetables, and fruit. I had to rely on unhealthy canned food and undrinkable water, which caused me to vomit several times. When I was 5-months pregnant, my amniotic fluid broke. I immediately went to several clinics for treatment and remained under close observation for my high-risk pregnancy. In my 7th month of pregnancy, I went into labour and had a C-section. I was admitted to the operating theatre with a blood count of 9 and left with a blood count of 7 due to heavy bleeding, and the delivery was difficult. On 22 March 2024, I gave birth to my baby, whom I wanted to name “Hussam”, but he only survived for one hour due to respiratory distress (he could not breathe normally). The doctors told me that the difficult circumstances I had been through, including repeated displacements, running, stress, exhaustion, and the inhalation of white phosphorus, had led to a premature birth and ultimately to the death of my baby.”

Pregnant women in the Gaza Strip face severe challenges and risks as a result of the Israeli military attacks and siege, all while being denied the specific protection or care they are entitled to under international humanitarian law (IHL).²⁸⁰ IHL explicitly recognizes that pregnant women should receive particular protection and respect, ensuring their safety and well-being during armed conflicts. This includes safeguarding hospitals where they seek care, ensuring that they are not targeted, and guaranteeing the unimpeded passage of essential supplies, such as food, clothing, and tonics, which are crucial for their health.

However, these protections have not been upheld, leaving pregnant women in Gaza vulnerable to the devastating effects of the conflict. They are directly targeted by the IOF, suffering fatalities, injuries, and exposure to toxic gases and substances, including white phosphorus, which severely compromise their health and the health of their unborn

²⁸⁰ Fourth Geneva Convention, Articles 16–18, 21–23, 38, 50, 89, 91 and 127; Additional Protocol I, Article 70(1) and Article 76(2).

children. Dr Ziad Abu Taha, obstetrician and gynaecologist, testified about the devastation caused to pregnant women by the use of white phosphorus.

- “Women’s exposure to white phosphorus fired by the IOF in Gaza leads to birth defects or increases risks of miscarriages that have recorded remarkably high rates compared to pre-war rates. Also, a rise in birth defects has been recorded, but there are no accurate statistics for the prevalence of these defects.”

Additionally, Palestinian women endure profound psychological trauma and physical stress as they navigate the constant threat of violence, displacement, and deprivation. In the midst of this crisis, there is an alarming and critical lack of special protections to ensure maternal and reproductive health, leaving pregnant women vulnerable to a range of complications, from malnutrition and inadequate prenatal care to the risk of miscarriage, premature delivery, and death. This absence of protection highlights the grave neglect of Palestinian women’s health by Israel.

• **Unsafe and Limited Access to Essential Medical Services for Pregnant Women and their Newborns**

Sozan Mohammed Moqqat (34) recounted how she lost her baby as a result of the war and her inability to access proper healthcare.

- “With the beginning of the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip on 7 October 2023, I was 6-months pregnant. Before the war, I was having regular check-ups with doctors, who predicted high blood pressure during pregnancy and stressed the need to start treatment in the last month. At the beginning of January 2024, I started suffering from high blood pressure, but I couldn’t reach the doctors due to the communications blackout and the shutdown of clinics because of the intense bombardment and fear of attacks. The Al-Sahabah Medical Complex was the only operational hospital providing childbirths, but it did not provide follow-up services for women due to power outages, lack of fuel, and shortage of medical staff as many of them had evacuated to the south. On 8 January, my health seriously deteriorated, and I began having contractions, so my husband

- *tried to find any means of transportation to take me to the hospital, but most of the hospitals were closed, except for the*
- *Al-Sahaba Medical Complex, which was operating with limited resources. We had to go to the hospital by tuk-tuk, as no*
- *ambulance services were available. I arrived unconscious at the hospital, and the doctors informed my husband that I*
- *had lost my baby. They had to perform manual ventilation on me for 8 hours due to the lack of oxygen and electricity.*
- *After staying three days at the hospital, the doctors gave me a week to have a spontaneous expulsion of my dead foetus,*
- *and the abortion occurred on 18 January. Afterwards, I experienced memory loss caused by this hard experience and*
- *experiencing these harsh conditions. I feel that the main reason for the loss of my baby was the war and being unable to*
- *reach doctors on time.*”

Since 7 October 2023, pregnant women in Gaza have faced unprecedented challenges in accessing essential healthcare.²⁸¹ The destruction of hospitals and infrastructure, including the main maternity wards,²⁸² and the severe shortages of medical supplies, such as anaesthetics and maternity kits, have significantly increased the risks for both mothers and newborns, leading to alarming rises in maternal and neonatal deaths, as well as intrapartum foetal fatalities and stillbirths.²⁸³ A concerning 300% rise in miscarriages has also been recorded.²⁸⁴

As a result, pregnancy in Gaza has been deliberately turned into a life-threatening condition for thousands of women.²⁸⁵ Around 155,000 pregnant women and new mothers are struggling to survive and access basic healthcare.²⁸⁶ Arvind Das, International Rescue Committee (IRC) Team Lead for the Gaza Crisis, reflected on the devastating reality, saying:

- “
- *Hearing doctors’ stories about women delivering still-born foetuses in the hospitals where we worked is devastating.*
- *Health organisations have reported a threefold increase in miscarriage rates among women in Gaza since October 7.*
- *Doctors shared their feelings of helplessness with me. The toll of this conflict is enormous, affecting not just the current*
- *but also future generations deeply.*”²⁸⁷

281 See for example, UN (2025) *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Israel: Gender-Based Violence*, 13 March 2025, paras 39-58. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/report-of-the-commission-of-inquiry-israel-gender-based-violence-13march2025/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

282 The main maternity wards in Gaza were located in Al-Shifa and Nasser Medical Complexes,

283 UN (2025) *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Israel: Gender-Based Violence*, 13 March 2025, paras 40; 49. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/report-of-the-commission-of-inquiry-israel-gender-based-violence-13march2025/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025); The Lancet (2024) *Will there be a future for newborns in Gaza?*, 2 November. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)02249-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02249-9/fulltext) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

284 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2024) *Gaza nine months on, pregnant women carry the burden of conflict*, 9 July 2024. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-nine-months-pregnant-women-carry-burden-conflict> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

285 The Lancet (2024) *Will there be a future for newborns in Gaza?*, 2 November. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)02249-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02249-9/fulltext) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

286 UN Human Rights (2024) *Onslaught of violence against women and children in Gaza unacceptable: UN experts*, 6 May 2024. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/onslaught-violence-against-women-and-children-gaza-unacceptable-un-experts> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

287 ReliefWeb (2024) *Pregnant women and mothers in Gaza are fighting to keep themselves and their babies alive amidst healthcare collapse, the IRC warns*, 2 April 2024. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/pregnant-women-and-mothers-gaza-are-fighting-keep-themselves-and-their-babies-alive-amidst-healthcare-collapse-irc-warns> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

Pregnant women in Gaza face grave risks even before reaching hospitals. The shortage of ambulance crews and vehicles and their destruction by the IOF, forces many women to make perilous journeys to hospitals on foot or by private means, risking their lives in the process or to give birth in unsafe, unsanitary environments.

Even when they manage to reach hospitals, they find a healthcare system in crisis. Repeated Israeli military strikes have systematically destroyed key medical facilities, severely disrupting access to vital care, including antenatal and postnatal services. Maternity wards at Gaza's Al-Shifa and Nasser Medical Complexes, both critical to the region, have been rendered non-operational. Specialised maternity hospitals, such as Al-Emirati Maternity Hospital and Al-Awda Hospital, were either directly targeted or forced to cease operations altogether.²⁸⁸

Mercè Rocaspana, MSF emergency unit health advisor, explained: "The main health risks for pregnant women are blood-pressure related complications such as eclampsia, haemorrhage and sepsis – which can become deadly if not treated in time," She added: "In contexts like Gaza, late access to care is posing a health risk to pregnant women and their children, where the health system has been decimated and collapsed, posing severe risk to the health of pregnant women and their children."²⁸⁹

Due to the Israeli blockade, severe shortages of electricity, medication, and vital medical equipment are widespread. Pregnant women were forced to undergo c-sections without anaesthesia. Doctors also reported being forced to perform unnecessary hysterectomies to improve the chances of saving the lives of women due to the lack of blood supplies, rendering them unable to have more children in the future.²⁹⁰

The ongoing airstrikes and military actions have also led to the evacuation of healthcare workers and patients, further crippling the ability of hospitals to provide the critical care that pregnant

288 UN (2025) *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Israel: Gender-Based Violence*, 13 March 2025, para. 40. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispa/document/report-of-the-commission-of-inquiry-israel-gender-based-violence-13march2025/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

289 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2024) *Al Nasser hospital, Khan Younis: Living conditions and lack of care threatening the lives of pregnant women and newborns [EN/AR]*, 25 July 2024. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/al-nasser-hospital-khan-younis-living-conditions-and-lack-care-threatening-lives-pregnant-women-and-newborns-enar> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

290 Juzoor for Health and Social Development (2023) *The ravages of war: impact on mothers & newborns in Gaza*, 11 November 2023. Available at: <https://www.juzoor.org/emergency/2369.html> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

women and newborns desperately need.²⁹¹ Mohammed Mousa 'Atallah, Administrative Deputy Director at Al-Sahabah Medical Complex in Gaza City, told PCHR:

“The complex suffers an acute shortage of medical personnel as only two doctors now work around the clock instead of 15 female and male Obstetrician-Gynaecologists working before at the complex while the rest has evacuated to the southern Gaza Valley. The complex also faces difficulties in providing oxygen due to the destruction of most oxygen plants, now only depending on a small inadequate plant. Moreover, there is a shortage of medical supplies and anaesthesia, forcing doctors to perform c-sections with partial anaesthesia. Also, the complex suffers a continuous power blackout, rendering it unable to operate incubators and having to use temporary incubators and refer babies to Kamal Adwan Hospital. The complex further suffers from a lack of hygiene and sterilisation supplies as Israel blocks their entry into the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, pregnant women face serious challenges posed by the destroyed roads and shortage of ambulances, threatening the lives of these women and their fetuses. As a result, many of these women are having to go on foot to the hospital. It should be noted the complex has become the only centre housing a maternity ward as all other hospitals have gone out of service due to the ongoing Israeli war.”

Many pregnant women have also been forced to give birth in unsafe, unsanitary conditions such as homes, shelters, or tents, where the lack of clean water, sanitation, and medical assistance increases the chances of birth-related complications, placing both mothers and newborns at higher risk. Pregnant women giving birth outside hospitals face high physical and psychological risks, including postpartum bleeding.²⁹²

Nismah Osama Eid Hamou (19) shared with PCHR how she had to give birth on her own in a bathroom:

“After the truce ended on 2 December 2023, I received a warning message on my phone instructing us to evacuate the area. We had to walk a long distance—about an hour and a half—toward the Al-Nasr area. I was so scared along the way that it felt like the blood had stopped flowing in my veins. That evening, the shelling was intense around the house we had fled to. The fear I had felt throughout the day triggered labour pains around midnight. The pain lasted for two hours, and everyone tried to distract me from the fact that I was in labour, hoping I could hold on until morning. But I couldn't wait—I realised I was giving birth, even though it was two weeks early. We tried to call an ambulance many times, but the network was down. In that moment, my desire to deliver my first child safely gave me incredible strength. I gave birth

291 ReliefWeb (2024) *Pregnant women and mothers in Gaza are fighting to keep themselves and their babies alive amidst healthcare collapse, the IRC warns*, 2 April 2024. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/pregnant-women-and-mothers-gaza-are-fighting-keep-themselves-and-their-babies-alive-amidst-healthcare-collapse-irc-warns> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

292 Interview conducted by PCHR with Dr Mohammed Abu Shihab, at the maternity ward at Naser Medical Complex in Khan Younis, on 9 September 2024.

- alone in the bathroom. The baby fell to the floor, and the umbilical cord detached on its own. I was
- overwhelmed by mixed emotions, but the hardest part was the deep loneliness I felt in the absence
- of my mother, who had fled to the south. The way my baby was born caused swelling in his head
- that lasted for a long time. Without any doctors around to examine him, I lived in constant anxiety
- about his safety.”

• **Increased Suffering of Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women and Newborns**

Israel’s war and blockade have caused severe food insecurity, exacerbating the already dire living conditions in Gaza. The targeting of bakeries, destruction of livelihoods, and blockades on essential food supplies have led to widespread hunger and malnutrition. The UN has reported that 95% of pregnant and breastfeeding women in Gaza are facing severe food poverty,²⁹³ which puts their health and the health of their unborn children in grave danger.

The aggression has also led to repeated displacement, the spread of epidemics, and the deterioration of living conditions in shelters, with the collapse of water supplies and power outages. All this combined has exacerbated health risks and deepened the suffering of pregnant women and newborns. As a result, many women have miscarried, while others have been forced into premature labour or have given birth to stillborn infants.²⁹⁴ Many have also suffered severe complications, living in constant fear of pregnancy loss or death during childbirth.

Samira Eyad Ahmed Al-Ju’adiy (23) lost her baby during the war. She told PCHR:

- “On 11 May 2024, I evacuated on foot to western Rafah. The next day, I headed to the American
- Field Hospital, where a doctor examined me and told me that I had subchorionic hematoma and
- needed pregnancy support tablets. Two weeks later, the doctor advised me to rest and avoid lifting
- heavy objects, assuring me that the baby was gaining weight. I was afraid for my baby, especially in
- light of the difficult and uncomfortable conditions inside the tents and lack of any rest. At the end

293 OHCHR (2024) *Onslaught of violence against women and children in Gaza unacceptable: UN experts*, 6 May 2024. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/onslaught-violence-against-women-and-children-gaza-unacceptable-un-experts> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

294 The Lancet (2024) *Will there be a future for newborns in Gaza?*, 2 November. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)02249-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02249-9/fulltext) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

of the seventh month, the doctor informed me that the placenta had increased in size, and my baby's weight was low due to malnutrition and relying on canned food with no meat, fruits, and vegetables available necessary for his growth. On 11 August 2024, I had severe bleeding at night and went to the hospital, where the doctors decided to keep me under observation for two weeks. In the ultrasound assessment, it was found that the baby's measurements corresponded to 26 weeks instead of 32 weeks, and his weight was 750 g instead of 1.8 kgs due to malnutrition. On 14 August 2024, I underwent a difficult delivery, and my baby was transferred to a neonatal incubator. Unfortunately, he passed away about 10 hours later due to his slow foetal growth caused by malnutrition.”

After giving birth, women must quickly return to dire conditions, often in tents, where lack of hygiene, food, water, and medication, and constant stress put them and their newborns at further health risk. Ne'ma 'Ali Muhammad Harara (28) was pregnant during the war. After enduring constant bombardment, displacement, and malnutrition, she underwent an emergency caesarean to deliver a premature, severely malnourished baby. Ne'ma's family faced immense challenges caring for him amid the ongoing siege.

“When the war on Gaza started on 7 October 2023, I was only one-month pregnant. By late November 2023, the IOF moved into the Sheikh Radwan area. Tanks surrounded our house and stationed beneath it. We lived in constant fear and terror as the homes around us were being bombed, filling the air with dust and rubble. Tanks opened fire to our house, forcing us to huddle in a corner. I held my children tightly, fearing bullets would hit us. For three days, we couldn't prepare any food and survived only on water. The siege was terrifying. Extreme fear caused all of us to suffer from diarrhoea. After 20 days, our supply of drinking water ran out, leaving us with no option but to drink salty water. Food was incredibly scarce, and we had to ration what little we had, fearing it would run out.

The siege lasted 52 days, and they were the worst days of my life. During that time, I lost 22 kilograms, dropping from 66 kilograms to 44 kilograms. When the temporary humanitarian pause was announced, the tanks withdrew to the Al-Karama area, allowing us to leave our home. However, as we fled, the IOF opened fire on us. I ran with my husband and children, consumed by terror, as we passed the dead bodies lying on the streets—a scene that will haunt me forever. We sought refuge in the Sabra area at my sister-in-law's house. At that time, flour was not in place, and we were forced to eat barley, which I could not tolerate. Every time I tried to consume it, I felt severely ill, my skin turned blue, and I vomited. With no other food available, we endured the agony of starvation as Gaza was gripped by famine, and even the little food that was available was exceedingly rare. Later, I went to the Patients' Friends Clinic to check on my health and that of my unborn child. After undergoing the necessary tests, the doctors informed me that I was suffering from severe malnutrition and needed to take vitamins to maintain my baby's health. However, medicines were critically scarce and prohibitively

- *expensive, leaving me unable to obtain them due to the dire circumstances. [...] My baby was born weighing 1.2 kilograms and suffered from severe infections due to malnutrition and premature birth. He was placed in an incubator, but resources were critically insufficient. Oxygen was supplied intermittently, and infections spread throughout his body. His left hand developed an ulcer that progressed to a bone infection, resulting in a hand fracture and the dislocation of his elbow joint. The doctors told us he required three surgeries to stabilize the joint, but the ongoing war made it impossible. By the end of May, my baby was discharged from the incubator but remained in urgent need of medical treatment. My husband, who suffers from Behcet's disease, struggles to provide formula for our baby amid the unbearable conditions of war and the Israeli siege, which made milk both scarce and exorbitantly expensive.*
- *My heart aches every day as I watch my baby endure pain and hunger. Every moment reminds me of how much I've lost with each bombing and attack. I can only wish for an end to this suffering and for a chance to give my child a life free of torment.*”

Additionally, many pregnant women in Gaza have been forced to assume the role of primary caregivers for their families, as their husbands and male relatives have been killed, injured, or detained by Israeli forces. These women are often left to care for multiple children, manage household chores, and navigate the dangers of ongoing military attacks without the support of their spouses. The strain of this dual role—both as a mother and sole provider—amplifies the risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth, as they face heightened exhaustion, malnutrition, and lack of medical care, all of which increase the likelihood of complications during labour and delivery. The burden of caregiving amidst such a traumatic environment leaves these women vulnerable, not only to the immediate dangers of the conflict but also to long-term health and psychological consequences.

• **Higher Neonatal Mortality**

Ms. Maryam Ziyad Al-Yazji (20) who delivered her baby a few moments before her hospital was raided shared her story with PCHR. Unfortunately, her daughter died a few days later due to the lack of power supply in the incubator.

“

I was seven months pregnant when the war started. On 4 December 2023, my father's house in the Al-Nafaq area was violently bombed, resulting in the killing of my husband. Five days later, I felt severe pain around my due date. With no transportation or ambulance services available, my mother and I had to walk to the Al-Sahaba Medical Complex despite danger and intense bombing all the way, and we were also chased by dogs. That night was one of the worst in my life. I finally made it to the Complex, and the next day, I gave birth to my daughter, Camellia. However, we couldn't put her in the neonatal incubator as the Israeli military tanks had advanced amid the bombings around the complex. As a result, the medical staff had to evacuate the complex after half an hour of my delivery, despite my unstable health condition. We walked back to my sister's house in the Al-Sahaba area, where we were besieged with shortage of food, and I felt extremely fatigued. On 14 December 2023, an artillery shell fell without warning on a room next to ours. I found my daughter, Camellia, covered under the rubble and sand and suffocated as she inhaled the smell of gunpowder. That night, Camellia's health condition deteriorated due to the IOF's ongoing bombardment and firing of smoke and white phosphorus bombs. The next day, her health got even worse, so we took her to the Jordanian Hospital, but the doctors were unable to diagnose her because there was no specialised physician. The Al-Shifa Medical Complex was out of service, so I had to return to my house with my daughter, whose health condition continued to deteriorate. On 1 January 2024, my daughter became pale and had a bluish face, so I took her to the Kamal 'Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza despite the long distance. Doctors at the hospital diagnosed her with hypoxemia and kidney failure after having blood poisoning "Septicaemia" due to the bombing and chemicals. We stayed in the hospital for 4 days, but unfortunately, my little one passed away due to the outage of the power supply in the incubator and she joined her father.

”

Layali Al-Shanbari (20) also told PCHR how the living conditions in Jabalia during the war led to a premature birth and the subsequent death of her first child.

“

I was five months pregnant when the Israeli military offensive began on 7 October. With the repeated forced displacement in search of a safe place from the Israeli bombardment, and the scarcity of food due to the occupation's ban on any food supplies entering, there were no vegetables, fruits, or even flour, and we were forced to eat ground animal feed. I felt extremely exhausted and weak, and I was unable to lead a normal life. I suffered from joint pain, and I was constantly worried about losing my first baby.

I lost about 15 kilograms and developed anaemia. Due to these circumstances, I had to give birth prematurely. My daughter was born and I was unable to breastfeed her due to malnutrition. I had to formula feed her from day one. Unfortunately, she developed severe pneumonia and died a month after her birth.

”

Since the beginning of the Israeli military aggression, neonatal mortality rates have surged due to entirely preventable causes resulting from the ongoing Israeli attacks.²⁹⁵

Rachel Cummings, Save the Children's Team Leader in Gaza, said: "The Gaza we see today is no place for a child to be born. We know that prolonged exposure to stress and trauma, coupled with substandard medical facilities, can lead to premature labour and death of newborns."²⁹⁶

Newborns up to three months old are dying of diarrhoea, hypothermia, and other preventable causes. Without essential equipment and medical support, premature and underweight babies have little to no chance of survival.²⁹⁷

Furthermore, Israel has cut off electricity in the Gaza Strip and banned the entry of fuel needed to run generators that powered Gaza hospitals equipment like incubators, contributing to the deaths of countless premature babies.²⁹⁸ Meanwhile, infant incubators are overcrowded due to the closure of most hospitals in southern Gaza Valley, thereby having to place more than one infant in a single incubator and resulting in a surge in infectious disease and epidemic cases,²⁹⁹ despite WHO's warnings that newborns would die.³⁰⁰

Dr Margaret Harris, the WHO Spokesperson, said:

“*What doctors and medical staff are telling us is more and more they are seeing the effects of starvation; they're seeing newborn babies simply dying because they (are) too low birth weight. [...] Increasingly, we're seeing children that are at the brink of death that need refeeding.*”³⁰¹

295 The Lancet (2024) *Will there be a future for newborns in Gaza?*, 2 November. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)02249-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02249-9/fulltext) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

296 Save the Children (2024) *Babies dying from preventable causes in besieged Gaza: Women self-inducing labour and facing life-threatening complications in pregnancy after nine months of Gaza conflict*, 8 July 2024. Available at: <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/women-self-inducing-labour-and-facing-life-threatening-complications-pregnancy-after-nine> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

297 Oxfam (2023) *Babies dying from preventable causes in besieged Gaza*, 23 November 2023. Available at: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/babies-dying-preventable-causes-besieged-gaza-oxfam> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

298 UN Human Rights (2024) *Onslaught of violence against women and children in Gaza unacceptable: UN experts*, 6 May 2024. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/onslaught-violence-against-women-and-children-gaza-unacceptable-un-experts> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

299 Interview conducted by PCHR with Dr Ziad Abu Taha at the maternity ward at Naser Medical Complex, Khan Younis.

300 Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2023) *Birth and death are intertwined in the Gaza Strip*, 9 November. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/01/birth-and-death-intertwined-gaza-strip> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

301 UN News (2024) *Increasing numbers of newborns on brink of death, agencies warn*, 19 March. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147711> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

Moreover, UN agencies in mid-February 2024 declared that 5% of children under age 2 were found to be acutely malnourished. Dr Hussam Abu Safiya, Director of Kamal Adwan hospital's paediatrics unit, said on 4 April that 26 children had died after experiencing starvation-related complications in one hospital alone. He added that at least 16 of those children were under 5 months old.³⁰²

During the winter, several newborns also died from hypothermia because of the cold winter weather and lack of shelter, caused by the Israeli attacks and blockade. Ms. Hanaa Mohammed Al-Qahwaji (35) shared with PCHR how her 16-day old baby died due to the extreme cold and malnutrition.

“ On 5 December 2023, we had to evacuate my brother's house in Al-Sheikh Naser area in Khan Younis under aerial and artillery bombardment and Israeli drone fire. We walked about 10 kilometres over five hours to reach the Al-Shabora area in Rafah, while I was eight months pregnant. We sought refuge in a tent at Ibn Sina School, not protecting us from the extremely cold and rainy weather. On 20 December 2023, I went into labour and was admitted to the Emirati field hospital in Rafah, where I gave birth to my baby Ahmed, who was in good health. After the delivery, we walked back to our tent due to the lack of transportation. I was so worried about Ahmed because of the cold weather and malnutrition, as there was neither healthy food adequate for breastfeeding nor an affordable formula. On 5 January 2024, I woke up to breastfeed my baby, but I found that he had passed away. Medical staff in the school tried to resuscitate him, but they informed us that he died due to the extreme cold and malnutrition. He was only 16 days old and even died before his birth certificate would be issued.”

302 Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2024) *Gaza: Israel's Imposed Starvation Deadly for Children*, 9 April. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/09/gaza-israels-imposed-starvation-deadly-children> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

D. STATEMENTS BY ISRAELI OFFICIALS

Since the beginning of the aggression on the Gaza Strip, statements have been made by Israeli officials, members of the Knesset and military leaders about their clear intention to commit acts of genocide against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, including clear statements related to mass killings, large-scale destruction, and the imposition of a total and suffocating siege.

Below are some of the most prominent genocidal statements by Israeli officials and commanders.

ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER, **BENJAMIN NETANYAHU**

On 7 October 2023, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared his clear intention to turn Gaza into rubble and asked all residents of Gaza to leave, despite knowing that the Rafah Crossing was already closed. He stated:

*“All of the places which Hamas is deployed, hiding and operating in, that wicked city, we will turn them into rubble. I say to the residents of Gaza: Leave now because we will operate forcefully everywhere.”*³⁰³

In a formal government statement on 13 October 2023, he signalled a continued and intensifying military attack, declaring:

³⁰³ Official website of the Israeli government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2023) *Statement by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu*. 7 October. Available at: <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/statement-by-pm-netanyahu-7-oct-2023> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

*“We are striking our enemies with unprecedented might. I emphasize this is only the beginning. Our enemies have only begun to pay the price, and I won’t go into detail about what comes next, but I’m telling you - this is just the beginning.”*³⁰⁴

While discussing the war on Gaza, Israel’s Prime Minister repeatedly used dehumanising and inflammatory language to describe Palestinians. In a televised statement on 26 October 2023, he framed the attack on Gaza as: *“the sons of light against the sons of darkness, and the light will prevail over the darkness.”*³⁰⁵ Again, on 24 December 2023, he escalated the rhetoric, stating it was *“a battle, not only of Israel against these barbarians, it’s a battle of civilisation against barbarism.”*³⁰⁶

On 28 October 2023, he added: *“They are committed to eradicating this evil from the world, for our existence, and I add, for the good of all humanity. Remember what Amalek did to you. We remember and we fight.”*³⁰⁷

In November, he called for a cultural transformation in Gaza, drawing comparisons to the post-World War II occupation of Germany and Japan: *“It is like, what do you do when you beat the Nazi Regime? Well, you made sure that Germany did not arm itself again. Same thing you did in the victory against Japan - you know, you won the victory, but you then also made sure that there was a cultural change in Japan. We need a cultural change in any civilian administration in Gaza.”*³⁰⁸

In another statement, he described Israel’s military actions as a fight against *“animals”* and *“monsters”*: *“My passion is unlimited for justice and truth and to place blame on Israel that is fighting these animals, these monsters.”*³⁰⁹

On 7 February 2024, in a live press conference, Netanyahu clearly and explicitly confirmed his intention and commitment to continue the destruction of Gaza: *“I am committed and pushing with all my might to bring victory, there must be a continuation of the cleansing of the area.”*³¹⁰

304 Official Israeli PM YouTube Channel (2023) *Statement by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu*. 13 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4HXaZ20M6Q> – (Minutes 01:42-02:02) (Accessed: 29 May 2025)

305 Euronews YouTube Channel (2023) *Statement by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu*. 26 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cK-D9qR8YHYE> – (Minutes 00:28-00:34) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

306 Official website of the Israeli government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2023) *Statement by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu*. 24 December. Available at: <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/christmas-message-from-pm-netanyahu-24-dec-2023> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

307 Official Israeli PM YouTube Channel (2023) *Statement by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu*. 28 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIPkoDk6isc> (Minutes 01:37-02:00) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

308 American National Public Radio (NPR) YouTube Channel (2023) *Interview with Benjamin Netanyahu*. 17 November. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOW_rQRel6c&t=123s (Minutes 03:22-03:46) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

309 American National Public Radio (NPR) YouTube Channel (2023) *Interview with Benjamin Netanyahu*. 17 November. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOW_rQRel6c&t=123s (Minutes 02:26-02:33) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

310 Official Israeli PM YouTube Channel (2024) *Live televised press conference*. 7 February. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDapLsrQd4> (Minutes 15:44–16:03) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

On the same day, he stressed that he had given a clear order that no part of the Gaza Strip would be spared: *“There is no part of the Strip that will remain immune to the IDF, this is the directive I ordered, and we all should understand that this will happen.”*³¹¹

PRESIDENT OF ISRAEL, ISAAC HERZOG

At the beginning of the military aggression, Israeli President Isaac Herzog made clear that there would be no limitations on the use of force, declaring: *“Israel will do whatever it takes, with an iron fist, to change the reality.”*³¹²

On 13 October 2023, Herzog escalated his rhetoric by effectively equating the entire Palestinian civilian population with enemy combatants—sending a clear message to the IOF that they were all legitimate targets: *“Unequivocally it is an entire nation out there that is responsible. It is not true this rhetoric about civilians not involved. It is absolutely not true.”*³¹³

ISRAELI DEFENCE MINISTER, YOAV GALLANT

On the first day of the aggression, Israeli Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant announced Israel's intention to carry out large scale destruction in the Gaza Strip that would set it back decades. He stated: *“We will change the face of reality in the Gaza Strip 50 years from now, what was is not what will be, we operate with full force.”*³¹⁴

In a video statement released on the Knesset's official YouTube channel on 9 October 2023, Yoav Gallant referred to Palestinians as “human animals” and declared a total siege of the Gaza Strip, deliberately depriving all its inhabitants of the basic necessities of human life: *“We are imposing*

311 Official Israeli PM YouTube Channel (2024) Live televised press conference. 7 February. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tDapLsrQd4> (Minutes 19:32–19:43) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

312 YouTube (2023) *Statement by Israeli President Isaac Herzog*. 12 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IPHA-L2a7LA> (Minutes 00:10–00:16) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

313 X(2023) *Statement published on Sprinter Observer*. 14 October. Available at: <https://x.com/SprinterFamily/status/1713064886027063584> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

314 Channel 14 YouTube Channel (2023) *Statement by Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant*. 7 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLXjx9C3Fgs> (Minutes 00:36–00:50) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

*a complete siege on the city of Gaza. There will be no electricity, no food, no water, no fuel, everything is closed. We are fighting against Human Animals, and we are acting accordingly.”*³¹⁵

In a speech to Israeli soldiers, Minister Galant announced that he had lifted all restrictions in order to end everything in Gaza: *“I released all restraints. Attack everything through air, land with tanks, with bulldozers, by all means. Gaza will not return to what it was. Eliminate everything.”*³¹⁶

He then gave clear instructions to the IOF to carry out complete destruction in Gaza with no exception: *“Gaza won’t return to what it was before. We will eliminate everything. The situation will change back 180 degrees.”*³¹⁷

On 26 January 2024, Minister Galant declared, *“The State of Israel does not need to be lectured on morality in order to distinguish between terrorists and the civilian population in Gaza.”*³¹⁸

His comments revealed a defiant stance, dismissing external critiques of Israel’s actions. In a further escalation, he rejected the authority of the international judicial system, asserting,

*“Those who seek justice will not find it on the leather chairs of the court chambers in The Hague,”*³¹⁹ effectively undermining the role of global legal institutions in holding Israel accountable for its actions.

315 Official Knesset YouTube Channel (2023) Statement by Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant. 9 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLXjx9C3Fgs> (Minutes 00:15–00:30) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

316 Official Likud Party YouTube Channel (2023) Minister Yoav Gallant in a speech to Israeli soldiers. 10 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=u-42ALeKrZ4> (Minutes 01:17–01:40) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

317 YouTube (2023) Video of Minister Galant in a field tour among Israeli soldiers. 11 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkCo1UXbvOc> (Minutes 00:12–00:20) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

318 X (2024) Statement published on the official account of Minister Yoav Galant. 26 January. Available at: <https://x.com/yoavgallant/status/1750879386759241776> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

319 X (2024) Statement published on Minister Yoav Galant's official account. 26 January. Available at: <https://x.com/yoavgallant/status/1750879390882316755> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

ISRAELI NATIONAL SECURITY MINISTER, ITAMAR BEN GVR

On 17 October 2023, Itamar Ben Gvir publicly and clearly stressed that preventing humanitarian aid from reaching civilians was a deliberate tactic used by Israel in its aggression against Gaza: *“As long as Hamas does not release the hostages - the only thing that needs to enter Gaza are hundreds of tons of explosives from the Air Force, not a gram of humanitarian aid.”*³²⁰

On 11 November 2023, he made an equally harsh statement, asserting that civilians in Gaza were also the enemy: *“Our goal is to win this war to destroy Hamas. By the way, when I say destroy Hamas, it also means those who distribute candy, those who support, those who sing, they also need to be eliminated.”*³²¹

Again, on 20 November 2023, he made an even more terrifying demand, stating: *“I want the possibility of beheading head after head.”*³²²

ISRAELI FINANCE MINISTER, BEZALEL SMOTRICH

On 2 January 2024, Bezalel Smotrich declared Israel's intention to rid the Gaza Strip of its entire population, stating: *“I am going to say it clearly, it is forbidden for residents to return home, and we will control the Gaza Strip. A country like Israel will not keep two million people who want to destroy it, four kilometres away from it.”*³²³

On 7 August 2024, Smotrich made another chilling statement that reflected the political will of the Israeli government to starve the entire population of Gaza to death, framing it as a moral act:

320 X (2023) *Statement published on the official account of Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir*. 17 October. Available at: <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1714340519487176791> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

321 Channel 14 YouTube Channel (2023) *Statement by Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir*. 07 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yRI-cc-D3w> (Minutes 10:06 – 10:38) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

322 OfekCenter YouTube Channel (2023) *Ben Gvir - I want the possibility to behead terrorists*. 20 November. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wiS31e-ep4> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

323 Facebook (2023) *Video of Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich published on Middle East Eye's account*. 12 October. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/236773049367113> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

*“No one in the world will allow us to starve 2 million people to death, even though it might be justified and moral in order to free the hostages. It is morally right !!”*³²⁴

ISRAELI PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, **GILAD ERDAN**

Another shocking and horrific statement came from the Israeli representative to the United Nations, Gilad Erdan, on 31 January 2024, when he was directly asked in a television interview about his stance on humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. When questioned, *“Are you also saying to stop the humanitarian aid to Gaza right now from your perspective?”* Erdan responded bluntly, saying: *“Absolutely, yes.”*³²⁵ This statement starkly highlights the Israeli government’s disregard for Palestinian lives and humanitarian assistance amidst the ongoing conflict.

ISRAELI MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, **ISRAEL KATZ**

Three days after the Minister of Defence announced a complete siege on the Gaza Strip, Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Israel Katz confirmed Israel’s intention to eliminate all basic necessities of life in the Gaza Strip, on 12 October 2023. He stated: *“Humanitarian aid to Gaza? No electrical switch will be turned on, no water hydrant will be opened and no fuel truck will enter until the Israeli abductees are returned home. Humanitarianism for humanitarianism. And no one will preach us morality.”*³²⁶ This remark further illustrates the Israeli government’s approach to using collective punishment as a means of achieving its political objectives, disregarding the humanitarian impact on Gaza’s civilian population.

324 TheYoungTurks YouTube Channel (2024) *Israeli Minister Advocates for Starving 2 Million Palestinians*. 8 August. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzQITkwZ40k> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

325 X (2024) Middle East Monitor. 26 January. Available at: <https://x.com/MiddleEastMnt/status/1752451922840395837> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

326 X (2024) Statement of Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz. 23 January. Available at: https://x.com/Israel_katz/status/1712356130377113904 (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

ISRAELI MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAEL, **AVI DICHTER**

On 11 November 2023, in a television interview, Avi Dichter referred to the war as *"the Nakba of Gaza 2023"*, stating: *"We are now actually rolling out the Gaza Nakba. It is Gaza Nakba."*³²⁷

ISRAELI MINISTER FOR SOCIAL EQUALITY AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN OF ISRAEL, **MAY GOLAN**

In the early days of Israel's aggression on the Gaza Strip, May Golan, the Israeli Minister for Social Equality and the Status of Women, explicitly declared in front of the Knesset: *"All of Gaza's infrastructures must be destroyed to its foundation and their electricity cut off immediately. The war is not against Hamas but against the state of Gaza."*³²⁸

With chilling disregard for the people of Gaza, Golan further stated on 13 October 2023: *"My message to the world is that I don't care about Gaza. I literally don't care at all. They can go out and swim in the sea."*³²⁹

On 21 February 2024, Golan again displayed her disregard for Palestinian life when, during a Knesset session, she proudly declared: *"I am personally proud of the ruins of Gaza, and that every baby, even 80 years from now, will tell their grandchildren what the Jews did."*³³⁰

327 X (2023) Statement of Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Israel, Avi Dichter. 11 November. Available at: <https://x.com/hahauenstein/status/1723441134221869453> (Minutes 00:33 – 00:40) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

328 Channel 13 (2023) *Ministers at government meeting: "This is an intelligence failure; what happened here?"* 7 October. Quoting the Minister for Social Equality and the Status of Women of Israel, May Golan. Available at: <https://13tv.co.il/item/news/politics/k6d6k-903737400/> (Minutes 01:00-01:54) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

329 X (2023) *Statement of Minister for Social Equality and the Status of Women of Israel, May Golan*. 13 October. Available at: <https://x.com/PODEMOS/status/1712749638770438487> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

330 X (2024) *Statement of Minister for Social Equality and the Status of Women of Israel, May Golan*. 21 February. Available at: <https://x.com/LowkeyOnline/status/1760372482983567558> (Minutes 00:35-00:43) (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

DEPUTY HEAD OF COGAT, COLONEL YOGEV BAR SHESHET

On 11 October 2023, Colonel Yogev Bar Sheshet, Deputy Head of COGAT, proudly declared, *“Whoever returns here, if they return here after, will find scorched earth. No houses, no agriculture, nothing. They have no future.”*³³¹

STATEMENTS FROM KNESSET MEMBERS

On 30 November 2023, Avigdor Liberman, Member of the Knesset, declared: *“There are no innocents in Gaza,”*³³² a position he reiterated on 30 December 2023.³³³ This reflects the same controversial stance he took in 2018, when he was Minister of Defence, during the events of the Great March of Return.³³⁴

Since the beginning of the aggression on the Gaza Strip, Ariel Kallner, Member of the Knesset for Likud, openly called for a second Nakba to occur in Gaza, stating: *“Right now, one goal: Nakba! A Nakba that will overshadow the Nakba of 48. Nakba in Gaza and Nakba to anyone who dares to join.”*³³⁵

Nissim Vaturi, Deputy Speaker of the Knesset, is among the many Israeli leaders who have made alarming genocidal statements against Palestinians. On the first day of the Israeli aggression, he explicitly called for the complete destruction of Gaza, stating: *“Now we all have one common goal – erasing the Gaza Strip from the face of the earth.”*³³⁶ He repeated his call with further brutality, demanding: *“Burn Gaza now no less!”*³³⁷

Tally Gotliv, Member of the Knesset for Likud also directly incited to genocide by calling for the crushing and flattening of Gaza. *“Only an explosion that shakes the Middle East will restore this country’s dignity, strength, and security. Shooting powerful missiles without limit. Not flattening a neighbourhood, crushing and flattening Gaza! Otherwise, we would have*

331 YouTube (2023) *Military footage of Israeli soldiers inside the Gaza Strip published on Channel 14*. 4 November. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqEj3DzadiM> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

332 X (2023) *Statement of Avigdor Liberman, Member of the Knesset*. 30 November. Available at: <https://x.com/AvigdorLiberman/status/1730297081959530685> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

333 X (2023) *Statement of Avigdor Liberman, Member of the Knesset*. 30 December. Available at: <https://x.com/AvigdorLiberman/status/1731253556106137917> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

334 Jerusalem Post (2018) *‘There are no innocents in Gaza,’ says the Israeli Defence Minister*. 8 April. Available at: <https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/there-are-no-innocents-in-gaza-says-israeli-defense-minister-549173> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

335 X (2023) *Statement of Ariel Kallner, Member of the Knesset for the Likud*. 7 October. Available at: <https://x.com/ArielKallner/status/1710769363119141268> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

336 X (2023) *Statement of Ariel Kallner, Member of the Knesset for the Likud*. 10 October. Available at: <https://x.com/TallyGotliv/status/1711678420235534705> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

337 X (2023) *Statement of Ariel Kallner, Member of the Knesset for the Likud*. 29 October. Available at: <https://x.com/galitdistel/status/1719689095230730656> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

*done nothing. With penetrating bombs. Without mercy! Without mercy.*³³⁸ Gotliv never hesitated to repeatedly issue the gravest genocidal statements when she called to wipe out Gaza: *“May your village burn”!! Yes, yes, as far as I’m concerned, it’s great morale to wish Gaza to be wiped out and set on fire. I have often said revenge is a value.*³³⁹

One of the most egregious statements of incitement to genocide against Gaza’s civilians was made by Ketli Shitrit, Member of the Knesset for Likud, when she rudely declared that all the citizens of Gaza were the enemy: *“If you ask me on a personal level - I flatten Gaza, I have no sentiments. Because the killers of the women and children should not be separated from the citizens of Gaza! It’s the same thing.*³⁴⁰

Finally, Meirav Ben-Ari, Member of Knesset, Yesh Atid, directly accused Palestinian children and framed them as guilty. This kind of rhetoric fosters a genocidal mindset, where children are unjustly designated as the enemy. In her speech before the Knesset, she declared: *“The children of Gaza, the children of Gaza brought it upon themselves!*³⁴¹

STATEMENTS BY ISRAELI SOLDIERS

Multiple videos surfaced on social media showing Israeli soldiers proudly expressing their genocidal intent. One video depicted soldiers cheering and chanting for the “occupation of Gaza”, even boasting about the desire to *“wipe off the seed of Amalek”, echoing the dangerous rhetoric that “there are no innocent civilians.*³⁴²

Other videos showed Israeli soldiers celebrating the immense destruction they had caused in Gaza, likening it to the devastation seen in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II.³⁴³

338 Facebook (2023) *Live broadcast of the Knesset*. 16 October. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/KnessetTv/videos/3497251110531404> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

339 Official account of Tally Gotliv, Member of the Knesset for the Likud, on Twitter (2023) *Statement*. 29 October. Available at: <https://x.com/TallyGotliv/status/1718676748542296207> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

340 X (2023) *Statement of Ketli Shitrit, Member of the Knesset for Likud*. 1 November. Available at: <https://x.com/Now14Israel/status/1719834297832526215> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

341 Facebook (2023) *Live broadcast of the Knesset*. 16 October. (Minutes: 02:30:47–02:30:52). Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/KnessetTv/videos/3497251110531404> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

342 YouTube (2023). *Video of soldiers*. 7 December. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZYb1nXj-uA> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

343 X (2023) *Videos published by Middle East Eye and Younis Tirawi*. 15 September. Available at: <https://x.com/MiddleEastEye/status/1733116719668113618> and <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1835331007240655224> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

Additionally, in a report, based on the interviews with individuals who were detained and subjected to torture, PCHR collected several genocidal statements made by IOF soldiers deployed in Gaza or within detention facilities.³⁴⁴ The destruction of Gaza, the eradication of its people, and their dehumanisation were often cited in the testimonies.

As the war in Gaza continues, a growing number of former Israeli soldiers have also begun to speak out about what they witnessed during their military service. Their testimonies raise serious ethical and legal concerns about the conduct of the war—particularly in relation to the treatment of Palestinian civilians, the use of indiscriminate weaponry, and the apparent normalisation of mass civilian casualties.

On 1 August 2024, during an exclusive interview, Yuval Green, a former IDF paratrooper who served in Gaza, made shocking and disturbing remarks. He revealed the Israeli army's callous disregard for Palestinian civilian lives and its categorisation of civilians as legitimate targets, stating: *“We don't care enough about the lives of Palestinians. Palestinian homes were destroyed for revenge. It is just morally wrong to believe that killing so many innocent people, the Gazan population, is suddenly becoming something legitimate.”*³⁴⁵

Similarly, in an exclusive interview on 24 May 2024, Avner Gvaryahu, a former IOF soldier, spoke candidly about the Israeli army's use of indiscriminate bombing, describing the devastating impact of “dumb bombs”. He noted, *“We've been at this war for almost eight months, the death toll and the bodies and the destruction, is just something that I feel I can't be silent about anymore. I fear that this government is drunk with revenge... when you use “dumb bombs”, you're basically using a bomb that works on statistics, right in order to eliminate the specific target, you have to shoot a big number of bombs in order to make sure that the explosion around each bomb will eventually destroy your target. That promises not necessarily intentional killing. But yes, the indiscriminate bombing.”*³⁴⁶

344 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2025) Torture and Genocide: The Shattered Futures of Former Palestinian Detainees in Gaza. May. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/pchr-releases-report-on-torture-and-genocide-against-palestinians-from-gaza/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

345 CNN (2024) Exclusive interview of Yuval Green with CNN. 1 August. Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/08/01/middleeast/israeli-soldier-alleges-serious-misconduct-gaza-intl/index.html> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

346 CNN (2024) Exclusive interview of Avner Gvaryahu with CNN. 24 May. Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/videos/tv/2024/05/24/amanpour-gvaryahu-gaza-breaking-silence.cnn> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

02

LEGAL ANALYSIS

This section provides a legal analysis of the patterns and related incidents described above and assesses whether they constitute acts of genocide, namely “killing”, “causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group”, “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”, and “imposing measures intended to prevent births”. Finally, this section examines the genocidal intent of Israeli officials by analysing the actions and words of Israeli Senior Officials and direct perpetrators to determine whether the legal threshold for genocidal intent has been met.

A. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Genocide was first defined in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention or Convention), which codifies the prohibition of genocide as a non-derogable peremptory norm (*jus cogens*). Under both the Genocide Convention and customary international law, the obligation to prevent and punish genocide is an *erga omnes* obligation, meaning it applies to all states regardless of whether they are party to the Convention. This binding obligation compels all states to take proactive measures to prevent genocidal acts and to ensure the prosecution and punishment of those responsible. According to Article I of the Genocide Convention, “the Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.”

Article II of the Genocide Convention defines the crime of genocide by establishing two main elements: specific intent (*dolus specialis*) and genocidal acts. The specific intent refers to the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. It is the essential characteristic of genocide and distinguishes it from other international crimes. Additionally, the Convention provides an exhaustive list of acts which constitute the *actus reus* of genocide:

- » Killing members of the group;
- » Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- » Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- » Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and
- » Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Article 6 of the Rome Statute also defines genocide as one of the four core international crimes within the jurisdiction of the ICC. This article mirrors the text of Article II of the Genocide Convention.

B. ACTS OF GENOCIDE

I. KILLING MEMBERS OF THE PALESTINIAN GROUP

“Killing” is the first act listed in the Genocide Convention. Such act constitutes genocide if the perpetrator intentionally killed one or more members of the protected group, without the necessity of premeditation.³⁴⁷ In armed conflicts, the ICJ ruled that the killing of civilians during an attack not limited to military objectives, but also directed at the civilian population, constitute killing falling within the scope of the Genocide Convention.³⁴⁸

From the very outset of the Israeli military aggression on the Gaza Strip, Palestinian civilians have been in the eye of the storm, directly targeted by the IOF. Between October 2023 and January 2025, a total of 61,182 people have been killed, with 46,960 bodies brought to hospitals, while 14,222 are still missing.³⁴⁹ They were victims of aerial bombardments, shelling, direct executions, sniper fire, drones, and quadcopters, as well as torture and ill-treatment.

Within just three weeks of the military attack, the death toll already exceeded the combined total of casualties from the four previous Israeli wars in Gaza.³⁵⁰ UN Secretary-General António Guterres reported that more children had been killed in Gaza in the first weeks of the Israeli war than in any of his annual reports on children and armed conflict in the past seven years.³⁵¹ He described the scale of death and destruction as unprecedented in

³⁴⁷ ICJ (2015) *Croatia v. Serbia*, Judgment, para. 156; ICTR (2001) *Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana*, Appeals Judgment, ICTR-95-1-A, para. 151; ICTR (2003) *Prosecutor v. Semanza*, Judgment, ICTR-97-20-T, para. 319; ICTY (2005) *Prosecutor v. Blagojević and Jokić*, Judgment, IT-02-60-T, para. 642.

³⁴⁸ ICJ (2015) *Croatia v. Serbia*, Judgment, paras 218-224.

³⁴⁹ Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

³⁵⁰ Al Mezan Center for Human Rights (2023) *Initial reporting on the ongoing Israeli retaliatory attacks on Gaza: (Reporting Period, 7-28 October 2023) based on preliminary documentation*. Available at: <https://www.mezan.org/public/en/post/46305/Initial-reporting-on-the-ongoing-Israeli-retaliatory-attacks-on-Gaza-%28Reporting-Period,-7-28-October-2023%29-based-on-preliminary-documentation#:~:text=Al%2DHaq%2C%20Al%20Mezan%20Center,immediately%20preceding%20the%20ground%20invasion> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

³⁵¹ UN News (2023) *Gaza: 'Thousands of children killed' within a few weeks, says UN's Guterres*. 20 November. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/11/1143772> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

his tenure as UN Secretary-General.³⁵² This unprecedented loss of life has affected every corner of society, especially women and children - among the dead are 12,316 women and 17,861 children, almost 50% of the casualties.³⁵³ In addition, 205 journalists, 150 academics, professors, and researchers, 986 medical personnel, 94 Civil Defence workers, over 12,800 students, and 760 teachers have been killed.³⁵⁴

PCHR found that, in the instances of killings it documented, civilians were mainly killed while in their homes or shelters, bombed without warning, with no opportunity for escape. According to PCHR's field investigations, these attacks, carried out by the IOF, specifically targeted civilian objects and the civilian population. The targeted areas were exclusively residential, commercial, and service-oriented, with no military sites, signs of combat, or evidence of rocket launches, or any military activities observed. Hundreds of civilians were killed in these attacks, resulting in grave suffering for the Palestinian population. Additionally, some attacks took place in the so-called "safe" humanitarian corridors and IOF-designated "safe zones", despite the IOF ordering civilians to evacuate there. Consequently, PCHR concludes that the attacks were primarily directed at civilians and lacked any legitimate or apparent military objectives.

PCHR also found that unarmed civilians were directly shot and summarily executed by soldiers, snipers, drones, or quadcopters, especially in hospitals, homes, shelters, and on the streets, even while waving white flags or attempting to find food. For example, civilians, including medical personnel, were executed during IOF-imposed sieges of hospitals, particularly in Al-Shifa and Nasser hospitals, turning the courtyards of Palestinian hospitals into mass graves (for more details, see Section 1.c.viii.). Witnesses also described horrific scenes in which quadcopters and snipers relentlessly hunted civilians, including children, in their homes and on the street, indiscriminately executing them. They also provided testimonies recounting how they saw the bodies of hundreds of Palestinians, including women and children, scattered across the streets, left to rot and scavenged by dogs and animals.

As part of its investigation, PCHR documented the killing of at least 1,212 Palestinians:

- » 283 civilians killed at home
- » 671 civilians killed in hospitals
- » 97 civilians killed in schools
- » 6 civilians killed in tents
- » 6 civilians killed on the street
- » 128 civilians killed while attempting to get food
- » 21 civilians killed in Israeli custody.

352 The Times of Israel (2024) *UN chief calls death and destruction in Gaza the worst he's seen during tenure*. 9 September. Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-chief-calls-death-and-destruction-in-gaza-the-worst-hes-seen-during-tenure/amp/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

353 Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

354 *Idem*.

In this context, PCHR finds that the killings of at least 1,212 Palestinians, members of a protected group under the Genocide Convention, were deliberate and constitute the acts of “killing members of the group”, as prohibited under Article II(a) of the Genocide Convention.

II. CAUSING SERIOUS BODILY AND MENTAL HARM TO MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

In international criminal law, to amount to genocide, the bodily or mental harm caused

- “
- *must be of such a serious nature as to contribute or tend to contribute to the destruction of all*
- *or part of the group. While the harm need not be permanent or irreversible, it must inflict grave*
- *and long-term disadvantages to a person's ability to lead a normal and productive life. It must go*
- *beyond temporary suffering, embarrassment, or humiliation.*³⁵⁵”

Serious bodily harm has been defined as harm that “seriously injures the health, causes disfigurement or causes any serious injury to the external, internal organs or senses.”³⁵⁶ Serious mental harm has been interpreted as requiring more than minor or temporary impairment of mental faculties such as the infliction of strong fear or terror, intimidation or threat.³⁵⁷ More particularly, the persistent refusal to provide relatives of individuals who disappeared in the context of an alleged genocide with information in their possession, which would enable the relatives to establish with certainty whether those individuals are dead, and if so, how they died, is capable of causing psychological suffering.³⁵⁸

355 See, for example, ICTR (2003). *Prosecutor v. Kajelijeli*, Appeal Judgment and Sentence, No. ICTR-S8-44A-T, para. 814; ICTR (2008). *Prosecutor v. Seromba*, Appeal Judgment, No. ICTR-2001-66-A, para. 46; ICTY (2006). *Prosecutor v. Krajišnik*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-00-39-T, para. 862; ICTY (2015). *Prosecutor v. Tolimir*, Appeal Judgment, No. IT-05-88/2-A, para. 201; ICTY (2016). *Prosecutor v. Karadzic*, Judgment, No. IT-95-5/18-T, para. 543; ICJ (2015). *Croatia v. Serbia*, Judgment, para. 157.

356 ICTR (1999) *Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana*, Trial Chamber Judgment, ICTR-95-1-T, para. 109; ICTR (2004) *Prosecutor v. Ntagerura et al.*, Judgment, No. ICTR-99-46-T, para. 664.

357 ICTR (2001) *Prosecutor v. Bagilishema*, Judgment, No. ICTR-95-1A-T, para. 59; ICTR (2003) *Prosecutor v. Semanza*, Judgment, No. ICTR-97-20-T, para. 321; ICTR (2003) *Prosecutor v. Seromba*, Appeals Chamber Judgment, para. 46; ICTR (2004) *Prosecutor v. Ntagerura et al.*, Judgment, No. ICTR-99-46-T, para. 664; ICTR (2005) *Prosecutor v. Muhimana*, Judgment, No. ICTR-95-1B-T, para. 502.

358 ICJ (2015) *Croatia v. Serbia*, Judgment, para. 160.

The acts causing such harm include acts of torture, as well as other acts such as inhumane or degrading treatment, sexual violence including rape, interrogations combined with beatings, threats of death, deportation, and harm that damages health or causes disfigurement or injury.³⁵⁹

a. Serious Bodily Harm

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have suffered serious bodily harm as a result of the Israeli military aggression, enduring unprecedented levels of critical injuries that will leave lasting scars, both physically and emotionally. According to the WHO, at least a quarter of the injured in Gaza suffer from life-altering conditions requiring acute and ongoing rehabilitation now and in the future.³⁶⁰ While limb injuries are the dominant injury with about 15,000 cases, as of June 2024, there are also likely to be 3,000-4,000 amputations, over 2,000 major spinal cord injuries and traumatic brain injuries, and over 2,000 third-degree burns.³⁶¹

PCHR's investigation demonstrates that the IOF deliberately used means of warfare intended to cause further harm to civilians, including the use of weapons specifically designed to unleash widespread shrapnel, as well as phosphorus gas (For more details, see Section 1.c.v.). These weapons not only violate international law but also cause long-term health and environmental consequences.

PCHR also documented horrific physical injuries inflicted on the population of Gaza as a result of the brutal military attacks on civilians. These injuries include amputations, internal organ damage and crushed bones, especially among children and women. Many of the injured have also suffered major burns, while facial and eye injuries have resulted in disfigurement and vision loss in many cases. Cases of partial and complete paralysis due to spinal injuries have also been reported, requiring specialised medical care, which is difficult to provide in the current circumstances, exacerbating the suffering of the injured. These injuries underline the serious and long-term bodily harm inflicted on thousands of Palestinians from Gaza, especially children and young adults, hindering their ability to lead a normal and productive life.

359 ICTR (1999). *Prosecutor v. Rutaganda*, Trial Judgment, No. ICTR-96-3-T, para. 51; ICTR (2000). *Prosecutor v. Musema*, Trial Judgment, No. ICTR-96-13-T, para. 156; ICTR (2001). *Prosecutor v. Bagilishema*, Trial Judgment, No. ICTR-95-1A-T, para. 59; ICTR (2002). *Prosecutor v. Gacumbitsi*, Trial Judgment, No. ICTR-2001-64-T, para. 291; ICTY (2001). *Prosecutor v. Krstić*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-98-33-T, para. 513; ICTY (2003). *Prosecutor v. Stakić*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-97-24-T, para. 516. ICTY (2004). *Prosecutor v. Blagojević and Jokić*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-02-60-T, para. 646; ICTY (2007). *Prosecutor v. Brdjanin*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-99-36-T, para. 690; ICTY (2017). *Prosecutor v. Mladic*, Judgment, No. IT-09-92-T, para. 3434.

360 World Health Organization (WHO) (2024) *Estimating Trauma Rehabilitation Needs in Gaza using Injury Data from Emergency Medical Teams*. September, p. 3. Available at: <https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/Rehab-injury-estimate-Gaza.pdf> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

361 *Idem*.

Among the cases documented by PCHR, the story of Mo'min Mohammed Matar (16) who was shot by an Israeli soldier and left paralysed clearly illustrates the long-term harm suffered by the victims:

“
 At around 11:30, on 8 June 2024, about 10–15 giant Israeli soldiers armed with grenades and weapons stormed my grandfather's house in Al-Nuseirat refugee camp, where we sought refuge. They opened fire indiscriminately around the room, severely injuring my left shoulder and smashing the bones. Afterward, the soldier violently kicked and pushed me, then shot me in the abdomen. The bullet penetrated my back. The soldier ordered me to stand up, but I couldn't. He threatened to kill my brother Ahmed and shot his finger, but the bullet hit my aunt's foot. My mother tried to raise my right hand, but I fell due to the unbearable pain, and the soldier pushed me to the ground. My father took me to Al-Awda Hospital in Nuseirat, where the doctors tried to stop the bleeding, and during that they discovered a spy microchip implanted by the soldier under the bandage, claiming it was to stop the bleeding. I was transferred to Al-Aqsa Hospital, but because of the overwhelming number of injured and the lack of resources, I stayed there for only 15 minutes before being transported along with four others by an ambulance to the Nasser Hospital. When I arrived, I lost consciousness and woke up after I underwent surgery. During the surgery, the doctors implanted platinum plates, removed my right kidney and part of my liver. I also sustained a fractured spine, leaving my legs paralysed. I had dreamed of becoming a doctor, but everything changed after I was injured. Currently, I can't stand or sit, and I have no sensation in my legs. I must wear diapers constantly, but due to their high cost, my family struggles to buy them regularly, and I can only afford healthy food once a week. Since my injury, I have been laying in the hospital bed, and my health condition continues to deteriorate. Despite having a medical referral for treatment abroad, the crossing is closed. I am really frustrated, and my dreams have been shattered. The IOF has deprived me of the chance to have a normal future.”

Aseel Khaled Ibrahim Abu Ibtihan (20) also shared with PCHR how his entire future was shattered when his tent was targeted by the IOF:

“
 At around 01:30, on 16 July 2024, I woke up to fire engulfing the tent. My father was calling my name and asking me to come closer to him, but I felt heavy and couldn't move. I then lost consciousness for a few seconds and woke up in the ambulance and then regained full consciousness

• at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah. I learned that IOF's warplanes bombed the tent where my family and I were
 • staying, and that my mother and eldest brother Ibrahim were immediately killed. My father's health condition was critical,
 • and he was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) but succumbed to his injuries on 19 July 2024. My two brothers
 • sustained minor injuries, while I lost both legs, leaving me with a mobility impairment. I am currently receiving treatment
 • at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, where doctors daily clean my injury to prevent infection. I feel that my life is on hold, and I
 • remember the days when I could move freely, but now I can't even get from my bed to sit on the wheelchair. I dream of
 • returning to university and pursuing my ambitions. I was in my third year in the Social Service faculty at Al-Quds Open
 • University. After having my legs amputated, my dreams faded away. How would I continue my life now like this without
 • being able to move as my father was killed, and I have no one to support me in this ordeal.”

Finally, the deliberate targeting of hospitals and medical infrastructures has left already vulnerable populations without the means to receive essential treatment, leading to more injuries and further harm, sometimes death, as documented by PCHR (for more details, see Sections 1.c.i. and viii). Richard Peeperkorn, WHO Representative in the occupied Palestinian territories, emphasised the severity of the situation: *“The huge surge in rehabilitation needs occurs in parallel with the ongoing decimation of the health system. Patients can't get the care they need. Acute rehabilitation services are severely disrupted and specialised care for complex injuries is not available, placing patients' lives at risk. Immediate and long-term support is urgently needed to address the enormous rehabilitation needs.”*³⁶²

b. Serious Mental Harm

Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip have also experienced cycles of collective trauma due to the brutal Israeli military attacks and relentless bombardment that have turned their life into a daily hell. The entire Gaza community is in a state of despair, with women and children bearing the brunt of the trauma. They live in constant danger, unable to find safety. Their homes and livelihood have been destroyed, they have lost their beloved ones under the rubble, leaving an indelible scar on their hearts and minds. Entire generations in Gaza are grappling with profound psychological distress, including widespread PTSD, extreme anxiety, and terrifying nightmares.

Andrea De Domenico, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Occupied Palestinian

³⁶² World Health Organization (2024) *Estimating Trauma Rehabilitation Needs in Gaza using Injury Data from Emergency Medical Teams*. September. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/12-09-2024-who-analysis-highlights-vast-unmet-rehabilitation-needs-in-gaza> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

Territory branch, said that over the past months, he has witnessed “absolute physical and psychological exhaustion of an entire population”.³⁶³ Moreover, Dr Hanan Balkhy, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, said:

“
 In light of the widespread destruction facing the Palestinian people, the psychological pressures on current generations are increasing, especially on orphans who have lost one or both parents as a result of the war. Additionally, the destruction of schools and the inability to access regular education will greatly impact the future of these children, limiting their ability to work and become self-sufficient. This issue has existed before, but now it has worsened significantly and must be addressed transparently. Furthermore, there are large numbers of injured suffering from amputations, serious disfigurements, and deep wounds leading to chronic health issues. These injuries not only affect their ability to receive education, but also hinder their capacity to become active members of society and provide support for themselves and their families.”³⁶⁴

Survivors interviewed by PCHR describe the harrowing moments of destruction, with memories that relentlessly haunt them. Children, in particular, suffer from severe symptoms such as depression in children as young as five, anxiety, regressive behaviours like bedwetting by 14-year-old children, suicidal thoughts, intense fear, chronic insomnia, and excessive nervousness. As violence persists, children have also become desensitised to violence, normalising it as part of their daily lives. The destruction of schools and the loss of two academic years have further deepened their sense of hopelessness, stripping them of their right to education and the future it once promised.³⁶⁵ These children, who should have been experiencing the innocence of childhood, are instead trapped in a brutal conflict, enduring an unimaginable psychological and physical toll (For more details, see Sections 1.c.i and xiv).

363 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2024) *Today's top news: Occupied Palestinian Territory*. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/news/todays-top-news-occupied-palestinian-territory-13> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

364 UN News (2024) *Destruction leaves orphans, deep wounds, and the situation is getting worse: UN official paints a picture of the situation in Gaza and the West Bank*. June. Available at: <https://news.un.org/ar/interview/2024/07/1132336> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

365 Jaber, S. (2024) *Gaza Children in the Rubble: Mental Health and Education Priorities*, interview with Dr. Samah Jaber, Director of the Mental Health Department at the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Al-Quds Newspaper. Available at: <https://www.alquds.com/en/posts/135587> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

Women in Gaza are also under immense psychological and physical strain, shouldering growing domestic and caregiving responsibilities in unimaginably difficult conditions. Women have faced escalating domestic and caregiving burdens, with limited access to hygiene products, healthcare, and other basic necessities due to the Israeli imposed blockade and widespread destruction-leaving them especially vulnerable.³⁶⁶ Many are forced to care for children and prepare meals using primitive methods due to the severe shortage of food, clean water, and cooking equipment, intensifying their daily struggle for survival. The constant stress, coupled with a lack of medical care, significantly increases the risk of pregnancy complications and has led to widespread depression and anxiety. These compounded hardships have pushed women into physically and emotionally demanding roles, contributing to rising levels of mental distress, physical exhaustion, and a decline in self-esteem—especially regarding sexual and reproductive health and personal hygiene.

Men have also experienced psychological suffering, such as anxiety and insomnia, as well as a sense of lost identity as they are unable to protect or provide for their families, undermining traditional gender roles. PCHR's investigation reveals that many men feel helpless, and societal taboos prevent them from expressing their emotions, exacerbating mental health issues. This lack of support, compounded by the collapse of Gaza's healthcare system, may lead to long-term psychosocial problems.

Efforts to seek psychological support are thwarted by Gaza's collapsed healthcare system, including mental health services, which have been decimated by ongoing attacks, overwork, and lack of medical supplies. As a result of the Israeli attack, the six public community mental health centres and Gaza's only inpatient psychiatric hospital ceased to function.³⁶⁷ Healthcare workers, too, are overwhelmed, experiencing burnout, trauma, and ethical dilemmas, further deteriorating their mental health due to constant attacks and a lack of resources (for more details, see Sections 1.c.i. and viii). The system's failure deepens the Palestinians suffering, leaving psychological scars untreated that will last for generations.

Before the current conflict, Gaza already faced one of the world's worst mental health crises due to the 17-year Israeli closure and repeated military aggressions.³⁶⁸ A 2022 study prepared by the World Bank in collaboration with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) revealed that 71% of Gaza's population (18+) already suffered from depression as a result of the 2021 Israeli aggression.³⁶⁹ Save the Children also highlighted the impact on children, showing that four out of five children in Gaza already suffered from depression, fear, and sadness in 2022. More than

366 *Idem*.

367 Save the Children (2024) Children in Gaza have suffered "relentless mental harm" during five months of war. March. Available at: <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/complete-psychological-destruction-children-gaza-have-suffered-relentless-mental-harm-during> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

368 DIGNITY (2024) *Psychologist: "The level of psychological trauma in Gaza is unlike anything I have seen in my lifetime"*. July. Available at: <https://dignity.dk/en/news/psychologist-the-level-of-psychological-trauma-in-gaza-is-unlike-anything-i-have-seen-in-my-lifetime/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

369 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) (2023) The children and women of Gaza Strip face an unprecedented humanitarian disaster. October. Available at: <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4614> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

half of all children have considered suicide, while three out of five have resulted to self-harm. These shocking figures reflect the tragic reality that children in Gaza had already experienced before the genocide, significantly impacting children's development, learning, and social interactions, and devastating their futures.³⁷⁰

c. Torture of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip

In addition to the harm caused by the relentless attacks, civilians have faced massive campaigns of arbitrary arrests and detention, targeting thousands of Palestinians, including women, children, and the elderly. Detainees have been dehumanised, subjected to cruel torture, and enduring inhumane treatment (for more details, see Section 1.c.iv). In a separate report, PCHR assessed 100 testimonies of released detainees and concluded that serious bodily and mental harm, through acts of torture, including sexual violence, was inflicted upon Palestinian detainees.³⁷¹

d. Conclusion

The long-term bodily and mental harm inflicted on Palestinians by Israel, particularly affecting children, compounded by the untreated trauma from previous wars, surpasses mere temporary suffering, resulting in permanent consequences that will significantly impair Palestinians' ability to lead normal, productive lives. The injuries and psychological trauma will significantly impede individuals' capacity to contribute to society and support their families, creating grave and long-term disadvantages, especially among children and young adults.

PCHR concludes that this immense physical and psychological suffering will impede the Palestinian population's ability to recover and rebuild in the long term, and was therefore of such a serious nature as to contribute or tend to contribute to the destruction of all or part of the Palestinian group.

370 Save the Children (2022) *After 15 years of blockade, four out of five children in Gaza say they are living with depression, grief and fear*. 15 June. Available at: <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/after-15-years-blockade-four-out-five-children-gaza-say-they-are-living-depression-grief-and> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

371 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) (2025) *Torture and Genocide: The Shattered Futures of Former Palestinian Detainees in Gaza*. May. Available at: <https://pchrgaza.org/pchr-releases-report-on-torture-and-genocide-against-palestinians-from-gaza/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

PCHR's investigation clearly establishes that the harm caused to civilians in Gaza by Israeli actions was deliberate, executed with full knowledge of its devastating impact. Israel's use of weapons designed to cause significant harm to civilians and its persistent disregard for repeated orders from the ICJ, alongside warnings from the UN and other international bodies, demonstrate an intent to continue inflicting harm on civilians.

III. DELIBERATELY INFLICTING ON THE GROUP CONDITIONS OF LIFE CALCULATED TO BRING ABOUT ITS PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART

Inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction refers to methods of destruction that do not immediately kill the members of the group, but ultimately seek their physical destruction.³⁷² They include “methods of destruction apart from direct killings such as subjecting the group to a subsistence diet, systematic expulsion from homes and denial of the right to medical services.”³⁷³ It also includes the creation of circumstances that would lead to a slow death, such as lack of proper housing, clothing and hygiene or excessive work or physical exertion.³⁷⁴ Contrary to the act of killing or causing serious bodily and mental harm, this act does not require proof that a result was attained.³⁷⁵

In the absence of direct evidence, when assessing whether the “conditions of life” amounted to conditions likely to contribute to the physical destruction of a group, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has focused on the objective probability of these conditions leading to harm. This assessment takes into account the actual nature of the conditions and the duration for which individuals were subjected to them. Additionally, when available, factors such as the specific characteristics of the group members targeted by these conditions are considered.³⁷⁶

372 ICTR (1998). *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, Trial Judgment, No. ICTR-96-4-T, 2 September 1998, para. 505; ICTR (1999). *Prosecutor v. Rutaganda*, Trial Judgment, No. ICTR-96-3-T, 6 December 1999, para. 52; ICTR (2000). *Prosecutor v. Musema*, Trial Judgment, No. ICTR-96-13-T, 27 January 2000, para. 157; ICTR (2001); ICTY (2007). *Prosecutor v. Brdjanin*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-99-36-T, 1 September 2007, para. 691; ICTY (2003). *Prosecutor v. Stakić*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-97-24-T, 31 July 2003, paras. 517-518; ICTY (2010). *Prosecutor v. Popović and Others*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-05-88-T, 10 June 2010, para. 814; ICTY (2015). *Prosecutor v. Tolimir*, Judgment, No. IT-05-88/2-A, 8 April 2015, para. 740.

373 See, for example, ICTY (2003). *Prosecutor v. Stakić*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-97-24-T, 31 July 2003, para. 517; ICTY (2007). *Prosecutor v. Brdjanin*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-99-36-T, 1 September 2007, para. 691. ICTY (2015). *Prosecutor v. Tolimir*, Judgment, No. IT-05-88/2-A, 8 April 2015, paras 225-26.

374 ICTY (2003). *Prosecutor v. Stakić*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-97-24-T, 31 July 2003, para. 517. See also ICTR (1998). *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, Trial Judgment, No. ICTR-96-4-T, 2 September 1998, paras 505-506; ICTR (1999). *Prosecutor v. Rutaganda*, Trial Judgment, No. ICTR-96-3-T, 6 December 1999, 50. ICTR (2001). *Prosecutor v. Kayishema*, Trial Judgment, No. ICTR-95-1-T, 21 May 2001, paras. 115-116; See also Article 1 of the Draft Convention Prepared by the Secretariat in N. Robinson, *The Genocide Convention: a Commentary* (Institute of Jewish Affairs), New York, 1960, p. 123; ICTY (2007). *Prosecutor v. Brdjanin*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-99-36-T, 1 September 2007, para. 691.

375 ICTY (2016). *Prosecutor v. Karadžić*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-95-5/18-T, para. 546.

376 ICTY (2007). *Prosecutor v. Brdjanin*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-99-36-T, 1 September 2007, para. 906

Since 7 October 2023, Israel has inflicted conditions of life on Palestinians in Gaza calculated to bring about their physical destruction and eradicate their existence. During its investigation, PCHR identified five methods of destruction used by Israel, namely:

- » The systematic and repeated evacuations and mass displacement of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip: Israeli authorities have repeatedly issued orders for the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, continuously pushing them to move to areas described as “safe”. This forced displacement covered most of Gaza, displacing around 2 million Palestinians, over 87% of Gaza’s population, with some forced to move as much as 25 times. Displaced Palestinians were then cramped in makeshift camps and shelters without access to basic necessities, including food and water. These areas designated as safe by the IOF and the roads leading to them also became military targets and sites of Israeli attacks, instilling fear among the displaced. Despite declarations of an end to operations in certain areas, Israel has prevented displaced people from returning, particularly to northern Gaza, depriving them of going back home and finding shelter (for more details, see Section 1.c.iii.).
- » The use of starvation as a weapon of war and the deprivation of basic necessities to survive, including fuel, hygiene products, and medical supplies: Israel has implemented a complete siege on Gaza, cutting off essential supplies like food, water, and fuel, depriving Palestinians of the resources essential to survive, while deliberately destroying the food security infrastructure, especially the agricultural sector, livestock, and the fishing sector (for more details, see Sections 1.c.vi. and x). Israel’s destruction rendered the Palestinian population entirely dependent on international aid and imported goods, allowing it to weaponize starvation and famine by blocking the entry of goods and forcing people to move South. By September 2024, approximately 96% of Gaza’s population was experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity. Northern Gaza was particularly affected as food and water supplies were completely cut off, and food production facilities, such as bakeries, and water tanks were targeted. Israel’s blockade also severely limited access to hygiene and medical products, further worsening the health conditions in Gaza (for more details, see Section 1.c.vi.). The Israeli government has also repeatedly disregarded the ICJ’s orders, which called on Israel to take immediate and effective measures to enable the delivery of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian aid to address the dire living conditions of Palestinians in Gaza. The ICJ also mandated the implementation of precautionary measures to prevent hunger and famine—orders that Israel has failed to uphold.

- » The extensive destruction of Gaza's cities and infrastructure, resulting in the deprivation of proper housing, clean water, electricity, healthcare, and education across the entire Gaza Strip: A year of Israeli military aggression has left Gaza in ruins, with widespread destruction across the region. The IOF carried out attacks by air, sea, and land, systematically flattening entire neighbourhoods. In January 2025, almost 70% of all structures in the Gaza Strip had been destroyed or damaged, including 92% of all housing units, 80% of commercial facilities and 68% of the total road network.³⁷⁷ Over the course of the period investigated, an estimated 100,000 tons of high-explosive ordnance were dropped on Gaza.³⁷⁸ Essential services have been crippled, including healthcare and educational services, as well as judicial institutions. Israel has systematically destroyed Gaza's healthcare infrastructure, targeting medical facilities, personnel, and depriving residents of necessary medical treatment, including by denying their evacuation to receive treatment abroad (For more details, see Sections 1.c.vii. and viii). The IOF has also systematically targeted Gaza's educational infrastructure, depriving hundreds of thousands of students of their right to education both in the short and long term. The attacks have resulted in the deaths, injuries, and detentions of students, teachers, and university professors, while kindergartens, schools, universities, and other educational facilities have been destroyed or severely damaged (for more details, see Section 1.c.ix.). In addition, the IOF destroyed the networks of the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO), including all its infrastructure, facilities, warehouses, and machinery. Gaza's only power plant has also been destroyed, leaving 2.3 million people without reliable power. 67% of the water and sanitation facilities and infrastructure were destroyed or damaged, by June 2024. The telecommunications infrastructure was deliberately targeted, leaving 75% of mobile towers inoperable and cutting off Gaza's connection to the outside world. (For more details see Section 1.c.vii.). Such a level of destruction has left Palestinians in Gaza with nothing to sustain life or meet their basic needs. The collapse of essential infrastructure—including hospitals, electricity, telecommunications, and roads—has made it nearly impossible for civilians to obtain clean water, call for help during attacks, or access emergency medical care. The deliberate targeting of these life-sustaining infrastructure has compounded the humanitarian crisis, rendering survival itself a daily struggle.
- » Environmental destruction: Gaza's environment has also suffered extensive damage. According to the United Nations, the environmental impact is unprecedented, resulting in severe soil, water, and air pollution, as well as irreversible harm to local ecosystems. These conditions not only threaten access to clean water and agriculture but also make daily life increasingly difficult for the population, with long-term consequences for future generations (for more details, see Section 1.c.xi).
- » The deliberate engineering of a health catastrophe: The Israeli military's systematic destruction of Gaza's

377 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2025) *Reported Impact Snapshot: Gaza Strip*, 8 January. Available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-8-january-2025> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

378 Gaza Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

infrastructure, combined with repeated forced evacuations and a siege that blocks essential supplies, has created the perfect environment for the rapid spread of infectious diseases. With sewage systems and garbage collection inoperative, and water supplies contaminated, Gaza is facing a surge in preventable diseases, including polio, which resurfaced in mid-August 2024 for the first time in 25 years. By August 2024, over 1.5 million cases of diseases like respiratory infections, dysentery, and scabies were reported, and with Gaza's population overcrowded and healthcare crippled, the situation is dire—particularly for the ill and injured, as well as pregnant women and newborn. Israel's deliberate actions have ignored UN warnings and worsened the crisis, exacerbating suffering (for more details, see Sections 1.c.xiii. and xiv).

Such conditions of life, taken together, have condemned Palestinians in Gaza to a slow death, gradually leading to their destruction. As Palestinians in Gaza struggle to survive, searching for a haven and forced to move from one overcrowded shelter to another, the Israeli siege has been tightening its grip on them, turning their lives into a bitter race against starvation and disease, with no medicines to alleviate their pain and no food and water to meet their basic needs. Meanwhile, electricity and water have become rare luxuries, and epidemics and diseases have spread due to unhygienic conditions and the catastrophic living conditions in the tents and shelters that do not protect them from the summer heat nor the winter cold. Sewage systems have been destroyed, waste accumulated, and access to healthcare has become impossible. Amidst such tragedy, fear and anxiety grip the survivors as they await imminent death, unable to escape the sounds of explosions or the images of death and destruction surrounding them. At the time of the report, Palestinians in Gaza continue to suffer from such conditions of life, several have already died as a result of Israel's actions during its military attacks and the risk of famine persists.³⁷⁹

Women, especially pregnant and breastfeeding women, and children pay the heaviest price, bearing the brunt of such unimaginable conditions of life in the absence of safety and security (for more details, see Section 1.c.xiv.). Families in the Gaza Strip find themselves in a state of deadly isolation; there is no longer a safe haven. Staying inside their houses is perilous, while leaving them is a gamble that could easily lead to death.

379 United Nations (2025) *WHO Regional Director's Statement for the Executive Board: Health Conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*. Available at: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/who-regional-directors-statement-for-the-executive-board-156-health-conditions-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-including-east-jerusalem/> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

As a result, PCHR concludes that Israel created conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the Palestinian group in Gaza, with individuals and communities deliberately made to live in unsafe and unsanitary conditions, experiencing the loss of loved ones and their homes and cities, the hardships of displacement, the constant anxiety of living under siege, occupation, and attack, as well as the ongoing deprivation, including starvation and chronic shortages of basic necessities.

IV. IMPOSING MEASURES TO PREVENT BIRTHS WITHIN THE GROUP

Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention addresses the act of imposing measures aimed at preventing births within a protected group, thereby targeting the group's biological existence.

As demonstrated in Section 1.c.xiv, the Israeli military attacks in Gaza have led to a catastrophic crisis, disproportionately affecting pregnant women and their unborn babies. These attacks have created conditions that have led to increased miscarriage and neonatal mortality rates, significantly undermining the group's ability to reproduce and perpetuate its biological existence.

Pregnant women in Gaza have been subjected to numerous harms and threats, including military assaults, exposure to toxic gases, destruction of healthcare services, lack of access to medical care, lack of medical resources, malnutrition, forced displacements and unsafe and inadequate living and birth conditions, all of which have significantly increased the risks associated with pregnancy and delivery.

The dire situation has led to widespread disruptions in reproductive health, resulting in maternal deaths, an alarming rise in miscarriage rates (300%), stillbirths, and premature births. Furthermore, exposure to dangerous substances, such as white phosphorus, has contributed to an increase in birth defects and miscarriage rates, which will potentially have long-lasting effects on women. In some cases, doctors were also forced to perform unnecessary hysterectomies due to the lack of resources, leaving women unable to bear children in the future.

Neonatal mortality has also surged, with many babies dying from preventable causes such as malnutrition, hypothermia and diarrhoea, due to the lack of food, medical equipment and electricity to power incubators. Some newborns have even been intentionally left to die by Israeli forces in besieged hospitals.

Moreover, the deliberate destruction of fertility centres, including the loss of over 4,000 frozen embryos, represents a

direct assault on the reproductive capacity of the Palestinian population, further demonstrating an intent to prevent births.

In light of these facts, PCHR concludes that Israel's actions in Gaza have been aimed at preventing births. The widespread nature of these actions, affecting all women and newborns in Gaza, and the resulting outcomes, confirm that these actions were not mere collateral damage but part of a broader strategy aimed at committing genocide. In November 2023, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls already highlighted the reproductive violence inflicted by Israel on Palestinian women, infants, and children, stating that these acts could constitute genocide under the Genocide Convention.³⁸⁰

On 26 January 2024, the ICJ demanded that the State of Israel, according to its obligations under the Genocide Convention, take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of the genocidal act of "imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group". In March 2024, Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory also acknowledged that "[t]here are reasonable grounds to believe that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza" adding that Israel has committed the genocidal act of "imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group."³⁸¹

380 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2023) Women bearing the brunt of Israel-Gaza conflict: UN expert. 20 November. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/women-bearing-brunt-israel-gaza-conflict-un-expert> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

381 UN News (2024) Rights expert finds 'reasonable grounds' genocide is being committed in Gaza. 26 March. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147976> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

C. GENOCIDAL INTENT

For the acts described above to amount to genocide, they must be committed with a specific intent, the intent to destroy in whole or in part the Palestinian group, as such, which has been recognised as having protected status under the Genocide Convention.³⁸²

If direct evidence of genocidal intent is absent, such intent can also be inferred from facts and circumstances, such as the general context, systematic targeting of the group, the scale of atrocities, the presence of a plan or policy, or the repetition of destructive and discriminatory acts.³⁸³ The use of “derogatory language” towards members of the targeted group can also be considered as evidence of genocidal intent.³⁸⁴ Where an inference needs to be drawn, it has to be the only reasonable inference available.³⁸⁵

Although proving genocidal intent is often complex, the evidence available, particularly the actions and statements of Israeli leaders and military personnel since the commencement of the military attack on 7 October 2023, provides an unprecedentedly clear indication of such intent. PCHR has identified 15 key factors which, taken together, provide overwhelming evidence of the intent to bring about the destruction of the Palestinian group. These factors are as follows:

1. The ideological framework of political Zionism, rooted in settler colonialism and expansionism;
2. Public statements by Israeli officials and military personnel, including dehumanising language directed at Palestinians and the use of derogatory language;
3. The systematic attacks of Palestinian civilians which led to the erasure of entire families.
4. The disproportionate number of Palestinians killed or missing (at least 1 out of 50 people killed in 15 months);
5. The nature, degree, and extent of the injuries inflicted;

³⁸² In its provisional order dated 26 January 2024, the ICJ in *South Africa v. Israel* recognised the Palestinians in Gaza as a protected group under the Genocide Convention.

³⁸³ ICTY (2013), *Prosecutor v. Karadzic*, No. IT-95-5/18-AR98bis.1, para. 80; ICTY (2015), *Prosecutor v. Tolimir*, No. IT-05-88/2-A, Judgement (8 April 2015), para. 246.

³⁸⁴ See, for example, ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana*, Trial Chamber Judgment, para. 93; ICTY (2003) *Prosecutor v. Stakić*, Appeals Chamber Judgment, para. 52.

³⁸⁵ ICTY (2007), *Prosecutor v. Brdjanin*, Trial Judgment, No. IT-99-36-T, 1 September 2007, para. 970. See also ICTR (2008), *Prosecutor v. Hategekimana*, Appeal Judgment, No. ICTR-01-64-A, 19 November 2008, para. 133.

6. The deliberate targeting of women, including pregnant and breastfeeding women, and children, who have borne the brunt of the violence (almost 50% of the total number of victims);
7. The deliberate targeting of key societal groups, including medical personnel, academics, journalists, Civil Defence and municipal crews, and humanitarian workers;
8. The pattern of attacks on Gaza, which far exceed any legitimate military objective and led to the wide-scale destruction of Gaza's cities, infrastructure, healthcare system, agricultural and fishing sectors, livestock, and the environment;
9. The forced and repeated mass transfer of Palestinians and their target within the safe zones;
10. The use of starvation as a weapon of war;
11. The engineering of a deliberate catastrophic humanitarian and health catastrophe;
12. The mass detention, systematic torture, and ill-treatment of Palestinians;
13. The systematic destruction of Palestinian cultural and religious heritage;
14. The failure to hold perpetrators accountable and to comply with the successive ICJ orders, the ICC arrest warrants, and the calls of the UN and international organisations;
15. The conduct of Israeli officials post-ceasefire, which continued to demonstrate genocidal intent, including the resumption of hostilities, imposition of a complete siege on the Gaza Strip, and the expansion of its activities in the West Bank.

These 15 factors, taken together, form a consistent pattern of conduct, from which the only reasonable inference to be drawn is that the Israeli leaders, military commanders, and other officials in positions of authority, were driven by genocidal intent.

The ideological framework underpinning the Israeli state's actions in Gaza stems from Zionism, which is fundamentally rooted in settler colonialism and territorial expansionism. Zionism, as an ideology, seeks the establishment of a Jewish homeland at the expense of the indigenous Palestinian population. It promotes not only the settlement of Palestinian lands but also the displacement and erasure of the Palestinian people. This expansionist vision is integral to Israeli state policies that aim to dehumanize and brutalize Palestinians, stripping them of their rights and justifying their ethnic cleansing. The goal of establishing an exclusive Jewish state within historic Palestine has been enacted through laws, military actions, the dehumanisation of Palestinians, and a prolonged occupation meant to erase Palestinian presence and identity. The events of 7 October 2023 served as a pretext to further these plans; with genocide appearing to be the only solution to ensure Israeli occupation of the land (For more details, see Section "Background: Israel's settler-colonial project in Palestine").

Genocidal intent is further evidenced by the statements made by Israeli officials, military personnel, and other officials in position of authority, which openly called for the eradication of the Palestinian population in Gaza, using dehumanising rhetoric, and framing Palestinians as enemies or subhuman (to find the statements collected by PCHR, see Section 1.d.). High-ranking Israeli officials have publicly declared that the entire Palestinian population in Gaza should bear responsibility for the actions of Palestinian armed groups, consistently framing them as either Hamas operatives, accomplices, or human shields – turning the Gaza Strip into a world without civilians. Such language, which has been amplified through various media platforms and by Israeli media and officials at all levels, serves as a tool to incite hatred and dehumanize an entire population, signalling to Israeli forces that the Palestinians are not to be viewed as civilians in need of protection but as legitimate targets.

One such statement came from Israeli President Isaac Herzog, who said, *“An entire nation bears responsibility, of course. These discourses about uninvolved civilians are absolutely untrue.”*³⁸⁶ In a separate statement, Netanyahu, while speaking about the attack on Gaza, said Israel is fighting **“animals”** and **“beasts”**: *“My passion for justice and truth knows no bounds, and blaming Israel, which is fighting these animals and beasts, is sheer foolishness.”*³⁸⁷ At the beginning of the military attack, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant removed all restrictions, giving free rein to the IOF to destroy everything in Gaza, stating, *“I have removed all restrictions, attack everything from the air and ground, with tanks, bulldozers, by any means necessary. Gaza will not return to what it was. Eradicate everything.”*³⁸⁸

Soldiers deployed in Gaza have also been recorded using terms such as **“terrorists,” “cockroaches,” “animals”** and **“rats”** to describe Palestinians on official social media platforms managed by the Israeli army, while boasting about the mass destruction of homes, the killing of families, and the targeting of civilian infrastructure. These actions align with the dehumanising rhetoric of Israeli leaders and serve as clear evidence that these genocidal directives were being executed systematically on the ground.

A direct consequence of these ideological and rhetorical underpinnings and another evidence of genocidal intent is the patterns of the IOF military attacks in Gaza:

The first pattern identified by PCHR is the systematic attacks of Palestinian civilians. The attacks have indiscriminately targeted thousands of civilians and have been accompanied by a high rate of casualties, with at least one out of every fifty Palestinians killed and entire families wiped out. This shockingly high fatality rate highlights the severity of the assault and its targeting of the civilian population. Entire families, especially women and children, were killed in their

386 X (2023) *Israeli President Statement on X*. 14 October. Available at: <https://x.com/SprinterFamily/status/1713064886027063584> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

387 NPR (2023) *Interview with Benjamin Netanyahu on the Israel-Hamas War*. 17 November. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0W_rQRe-I6c&t=123s (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

388 Likud Party Youtube (2023) *Minister Yoav Galant in a speech to Israeli soldiers*. 10 October. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=u-42ALeKrZ4> (Accessed: 29 May 2025).

homes and shelters, bombed without warning. Others were shot or summarily executed by the IOF, snipers, drones or quadcopters. Hospital courtyards were turned into mass graves by the Israeli army (for more details, see Section 1.c.viii.).

Additionally, the nature, extent, and degree of the injuries inflicted on Palestinians further reflect the intent to destroy the Palestinian group, with long-term injuries debilitating victims for their entire lives (for more details, see Section 1.c.i). Alongside these injuries, the destruction of the healthcare system in Gaza has left many without critical care. This destruction is a deliberate attempt to break the spirit of the population and ensure that those who survive the violence cannot heal from their wounds—both physical and psychological (for more details, see Section 1.c.viii.).

A particularly insidious aspect of this assault has been the deliberate targeting of pregnant and breastfeeding women and children, leading to the prevention of births and the sharp increase in neonatal mortality rates, and long-term consequences of the young population of the Gaza Strip. Women and children, who have borne the brunt of this violence, have faced not only the loss of family members but also the disruption of their basic survival needs. The relentless attacks have left at least 17,000 children in Gaza unaccompanied or separated from their parents. Tens of thousands of students have been forcibly displaced to shelters, where they face severe shortages of basic necessities and live under constant mental strain due to the absence of recreational and psychosocial support. The trauma inflicted by the ongoing violence, along with food insecurity and malnutrition, is evident in the children's deteriorating physical and mental health. Additionally, through the destruction of hospitals, the lack of medical supplies and basic necessities, and the overwhelming pressure on healthcare services, many women in Gaza have been unable to access necessary prenatal care, leading to devastating consequences for both mothers and newborns. Neonatal mortality rates have soared as a direct result of the collapse of the healthcare infrastructure and the ongoing violence, highlighting the long-term impact of the siege and military attacks on future generations of Palestinians (for more details, see Section 1.c.xiv).

The deliberate targeting of key societal groups, including medical personnel, Civil Defence and municipal crews, and humanitarian workers, is another indicator of genocidal intent. These groups, which are essential to the survival and wellbeing of the civilian population, have been intentionally attacked, preventing them from fulfilling their vital roles. Hospitals have been bombed, medical staff have been targeted, and the essential services provided by humanitarian workers have

been severely hindered. The deliberate disruption of these services is not just a violation of international law but a calculated strategy to incapacitate the Palestinian population. Academics and journalists have also been targeted, not only silencing those documenting the atrocities but also eliminating the intellectual foundation of Palestinian society, undermining its future growth and resilience (for more details, see Section 1.c.ii.).

In addition to deliberately targeting civilians, the patterns of military attacks clearly indicate the intent to destroy the Palestinian group and anything it needs to survive. For 15 months, the IOF has relentlessly destroyed the entirety of the Gaza strip using tens of thousands of bombs and shells, and left it in ruins, far exceeding any legitimate military objective. Entire cities, villages, and refugee camps were wiped out, with essential infrastructure for the survival of a society and its future, such as hospitals and health facilities, schools and universities, roads, water and sewage networks, as well as sources of food production, including agriculture, bakeries and factories, and the environment were systematically destroyed (for more details, see Sections 1.c.vii.; viii; ix; x; and xi).

Forced displacement has also been a cornerstone of Israeli policies during the military attack in Gaza, during which 87% of Gaza's population has been repeatedly forced to flee from their homes, to make way for military attacks and the total destruction of their neighbourhood. Such systematic forced displacement was not an incidental byproduct of military attacks but a deliberate action. Nearly the entire population of the Gaza Strip was repeatedly ordered by the Israeli military to move to designated "safe zones", only to have the designated routes and areas become targets of airstrikes and other military assaults, killing hundreds of displaced civilians. The destruction of entire neighbourhoods, with vulnerable civilians, including children and the elderly, being displaced en masse and then killed in the so-called "safe zones," is indicative of a strategy aimed at eliminating the group, not just neutralising military threats. The mass displacement left thousands homeless, with no safe shelter and access to basic necessities (for more details, see Section 1.c.iv).

This pattern of systematic and large-scale destruction and attacks on the civilian population is a clear indication of a strategy aimed at exterminating Gaza's population and ensures that those who survive the destruction are left without the means to rebuild their lives and society.

During the 15-month genocidal war, the situation in Gaza, especially in the northern region, has escalated into a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, created deliberately through the siege, military attacks, and the destruction of essential infrastructure, such as hospitals, roads, wells, sewage, and food and power sources. The lack of access to food, water, medicine, hygiene products, fuel, electricity and shelter has pushed the population to the brink of survival. Starvation has been weaponised as a military strategy, whereby hundreds of thousands of civilians were left to starve, forced to rely on animal feed. Many died, especially children, due to the famine ravaging them. Epidemics

and infectious diseases also spread across the Gaza Strip. Hospitals that were still operating were on the verge of collapse, leaving the sick, injured and premature babies to suffer and die without medicine or adequate care. This humanitarian catastrophe was compounded by the deliberate denial of aid, as the Israeli government restricted, and continues to restrict, access to necessary resources, further deepening the suffering of the population. This situation formed an integral part of a broader strategy to weaken the Palestinian from Gaza physically, economically, and socially and to impede the survival for thousands of Palestinians on a daily basis (for more details, see Sections 1.c.vi and xiii).

In addition to the destruction of life and infrastructure, the mass detention, systematic torture, and ill-treatment of Palestinians have been key components of the Israeli government's approach. Thousands of Palestinians, including children and the elderly, have been detained in overcrowded and inhumane conditions, with many dying in Israeli custody. Despite repeated interrogations and the absence of any evidence linking the detainees to resistance groups—a fact acknowledged by judges—they were held in incommunicado detention, subjected to the most brutal forms of torture and inhumane conditions, simply for being Palestinians from Gaza. Following harrowing conditions of detention, detainees were deliberately released in an obvious state of physical and psychological degradation into an active war zone, with nowhere to go and no safe refuge, strongly reducing their chances of survival. Their suffering continued as they faced constant displacement, bombings, and a lack of basic necessities and healthcare (For more details see Section 1.c.iv).

Genocidal intent becomes even more apparent when viewed in conjunction with the systematic destruction of Palestinian cultural and religious heritage. Religious sites, cultural landmarks, and symbols of Palestinian identity have been targeted and destroyed in the ongoing military attack. This cultural erasure serves not only to remove tangible reminders of Palestinian history and heritage but also to undermine the connection that Palestinians have to their land and identity, furthering the broader objective of eliminating Palestinian presence in Gaza (For more details see Section 1.c.xii).

Finally, Israel's conduct following the ceasefire agreements has continued to demonstrate genocidal intent, including the resumption and intensification of hostilities, the imposition of a total siege, and the continued expansion of activities in the West Bank.

Additionally, the failure to hold perpetrators accountable, coupled with the refusal to comply with

ICJ orders, ICC arrest warrants, and the calls from the UN and other international organisations, highlights the impunity that allows these violations to continue. The lack of accountability ensures that those responsible for the genocidal acts against Palestinians remain free from prosecution, perpetuating a system in which Israel faces no consequences for its actions. This impunity not only facilitates the continuation of the genocide but also undermines the credibility of international law and the global commitment to human rights.

In conclusion, the combination of incendiary rhetoric from Israeli officials, coupled with the actions of the Israeli military in Gaza, provides clear evidence of genocidal intent. Israeli leadership, military commanders, and other officials in positions of authority have engaged in a genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza, and eliminated all likelihood that it could ever recover, survive the attacks and the blockade, and therefore re-establish itself on that territory.

CONCLUSION

In light of above, PCHR concludes that Israel's conduct towards Palestinians in the Gaza Strip -through its state apparatus and all individuals and entities supporting it, acting under its direction, control, or influence-constitutes genocide.

Over 15 months, Israel has committed prohibited acts under Articles II (a), (b), (c), and (d) of the Genocide Convention, namely killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, deliberately inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza, conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction in whole or in part, and preventing births. These acts were committed with the specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza, as such.

Despite the ceasefire, Israel has consistently violated the terms of the agreement, maintaining its siege on Gaza and committing further acts of violence. After resuming hostilities, Israel has persisted in the killing of civilians, the destruction of Gaza, and has completely restricted the entry of essential supplies into the Gaza Strip. Humanitarian aid, including food, tents, and mobile homes, has been denied or severely limited. This blatant disregard for the life of Palestinians demonstrates Israel's ongoing intent to destroy the Palestinian population in Gaza through a combination of military violence, deprivation, and denial of basic rights