



Scholasticide and Genocide in Gaza

Assessment, Testimonial and Legal Analysis



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
COI	Commission of Inquiry
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
GEDCO	Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation
GHF	Gaza Humanitarian Fund
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
IOF	Israeli Occupation Forces
GRM	Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCHR	Palestinian Center for Human Rights

PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCAT	United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or
UNCTAD	UN Trade and Development
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSR	United Nations Special Rapporteur
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WCNSF	Wounded Child No Surviving Family
WHO	World Health Organisation

INTRODUCTION

SCHOLASTICIDE AS GENOCIDE

More than two years of genocide have resulted in the systematic destruction of the Palestinian education system in Gaza, an intentional pattern of scholasticide that goes beyond the devastation of the present to destroy the future of Palestinian youth and the leadership of Palestine's academics, teachers and public intellectuals. This report builds on PCHR's 2005 report *Voices of a Genocide* to show how Israel has conducted scholasticide as an integral part of its genocide against Gaza since 7 October 2023, examining five patterns of scholasticide: killings and assassinations of university and school teachers, students, staff, and administrators; causing bodily or mental harm to university and school teachers, students, staff, and administrators; destruction of educational facilities; obstructing the creation of new educational structures; and conduct that disproportionately impacts students.

Education is critical to sustaining group identity, collective knowledge and social tradition. The term scholasticide describes Israel's intent to destroy education in the knowledge of this fundamental role in sustaining the existence of the Palestinian people.¹ According to Art II of the Genocide Convention:

genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part [...]

¹– Ameera Ahmad and Ed Vulliamy, “In Gaza, the schools are dying too”, *The Guardian* (10 January 2009) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/10/gaza-schools> accessed 21 December 2025.

“The term was coined” by Palestinian scholar Professor Karma Nabulsi.

This report shows how Israel's campaign of scholasticide in Gaza has aimed at destroying the educational system and the social and cultural foundations of Palestinian identity. It outlines the cumulative impact of scholasticide that has not only immediate repercussions on all levels of the functioning of society but also devastating implications for future generations.

In September 2025, PCHR stressed that the continued deprivation of Gaza's children of their right to education constitutes a systematic crime amounting to an act of genocide aimed at eradicating the future of Palestinian generations.² In January 2026, PCHR reported on the impact of this crime on women, disrupting their educational paths, deepening economic and social marginalization, and stripping an entire generation of its right to knowledge and to become productive and active members of their society.³

Israel's intent to destroy education in Gaza was clear from the beginning of its genocidal war on Gaza. By April 2024, United Nations human rights experts had expressed their alarm over scholasticide in Gaza, referring to "the systemic obliteration of education through the arrest, detention or killing of teachers, students and staff, and the destruction of educational infrastructure."⁴ At that time, just over six months after the beginning of the genocide, the UN experts reported that Israel had killed almost 6,300 students, 300 teachers and over 100 university professors.⁵ All twelve universities, including the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG), had been bombed by Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), resulting in the destruction of libraries, cultural centres, and archives hosting rare documentation of the forced expulsion and displacement of the Palestinian population during the 1948 Nakba. The scale of these attacks continued to escalate. By July 2026, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) had documented the killing of presumably 20,051 students by Israeli forces. Furthermore, more than 830 teachers and educational staff, as well as over 194 scholars, academics, and researchers, had also been killed during the genocide. In October 2025, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that nearly 92% / "92 per cent of schools would need "full reconstruction or major rehabilitation to be functional again".

2- PCHR, "Educational Genocide. Gaza's Children Face Third Year Without School," (11 September 2025), <https://pchrgaza.org/educational-genocide-gaza-children-face-third-year-without-school/>

3- PCHR, "Targeting Education in Gaza: A Systematic Crime of Genocide", (17 January 2026), <https://pchrgaza.org/targeting-education-in-gaza-a-systematic-crime-of-genocide/>

4- OHCHR "UN experts deeply concerned over 'scholasticide' in Gaza", (18 April 2024), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/04/2024/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>

5- OHCHR "UN experts deeply concerned over 'scholasticide' in Gaza" 18 April 2024.

6- Interview conducted by PCHR With Dr Ismail Al Thawabata on 2026/7/16.

7- OCHA, "Reported Impact Snapshot. Gaza Strip" (29 October 2025), <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-29-october-2025>

The genocidal nature of this scholasticide is evident in the importance of education as the foundation upon which the Palestinian people has cultivated its collective identity particularly since the 1948 Nakba. Israel's destruction of Gaza transcends the destruction of physical infrastructure and harm to persons to demonstrate Israel's ideological aim and ultimate objective of denying and eliminating the Palestinian people's existence, sever its historic connection to its homeland, and eradicate its future. By erasing historical and institutional records and blocking opportunities for restitution and restoration, Israel's conduct undermines the conditions necessary for the people's continued existence in their homeland.

The importance of education is clear in the protection it has received in international law,⁸ and the lens of scholasticide shows that Israel has violated its legal obligations in a systematic and prolonged manner for decades prior to October 2023. Since the early years of the 1967 occupation, schools, universities, and other educational institutions have repeatedly been damaged or destroyed during Israeli military operations. PCHR documentation shows that between 2000 and 2004 alone, at least seventy-three educational institutions in the Gaza Strip were partially or totally destroyed in Israeli military attacks.⁹ During the 2008–2009 Gaza War, Israel bombarded or otherwise damaged numerous public and private schools, including institutions administered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).¹⁰ The UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (2009) concluded that these attacks severely disrupted the educational sector and raised serious concerns regarding violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) governing the protection of civilian objects.¹¹ The persistence of such attacks over successive military campaigns demonstrates that the destruction of education in Gaza forms part of a broader structural pattern of violence directed against Palestinian civilian life, resulting in long-term disruption to the educational system and profound harm to Palestinian society.

8– See, for example, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, “General Comment No 13: The Right to Education (Art 13)” (8 December 1999) UN Doc E/C.10/1999/12; Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted 20 November 1989, entered into force 2 September 1990): UNGA Resolution 290/64, “The right to education in emergency situations” (2010); and UN Security Council Resolution (2021) 2601. See also, PCHR, Education Denied: Israel's Systematic Violation of Palestinian Children's Right to Education (2021) at pp. 11–7, available at: https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/10/2021/education-book.pdf?utm_source=

9– PCHR, Education Denied: Israel's Systematic Violation of Palestinian Children's Right to Education (2011) at p. 18, https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/10/2021/education-book.pdf?utm_source=

10– PCHR, Targetted Civilians: A PCHR Report on the Israeli Military Offensive against the Gaza Strip (27 December 18–2008 January 116–106 (2009, <https://pchrgaza.org/targetted-civilians-a-pchr-report-on-the-israeli-military-offensive-against-the-gaza-strip-27-december-18-2008-january-2009/>.

11– UN Human Rights Council, Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict UN Doc A/HRC/(2009) 48/12 paras 1274–1268.

This report shows, firstly, that certain acts of scholasticide committed by Israel constitute genocidal acts under Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention. Secondly, it shows that scholasticide is a comprehensive and systematic pattern of conduct that evidences Israel's *dolus specialis* – the specific intent to commit genocide.



METHODOLOGY

PCHR researchers in Gaza gathered forty affidavits over the period of late – 2023 2026 to document the destruction of education in Gaza and its impact. These testimonies are the primary source for this report, illustrating five patterns of scholasticide. Witness statements from earlier PCHR reports and from open-source documents are also presented. The report also draws on reports and statements of other Palestinian and international human rights NGOs, of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (UN COI) and other UN bodies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), OCHA and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Academic articles and studies evidence Israeli acts preceding the genocide that underpin arguments on intent, and clarify the intergenerational impact of Israel's crimes on learning outcomes.

In addition, public statements by Israeli government and military officials are used to establish the genocidal intent underpinning Israel's crimes. Jurisprudence from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), as well as from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) – including the Provisional Measures ordered in *South Africa v Israel* – is presented in support of this report's arguments.

This report presents the evidence of Israel's conduct of the genocide insofar as it includes a campaign of identifiable acts of scholasticide. Section One below considers the patterns and acts of scholasticide that come under the definition of genocidal acts identified in Article II of the Convention: Section Two then sets out evidence for Israel's intent to commit genocide in its destruction of education facilities (Section 2A) and its obstruction of the creation of alternative or new educational facilities (Section 2B). Further evidence of intent is examined through a consideration of the disproportionate impact of probably "certain Israeli policies and conduct" on students, including the destruction of the energy infrastructure and blocking of online access (Section 2C). An examination of the impact of Israel's policy of scholasticide on future generations completes this section (Section 2D). A Conclusion ends the report.



I. Patterns of Scholasticide and Acts of Genocide

A. Killings and Assassinations of University and Schoolteachers, Students, Staff, and Administrators

During its genocide in Gaza, Israel has intentionally targetted and killed a large number of academics and students as part of its campaign of scholasticide on Gaza. Palestinian students, academics, teachers and administrators, as members of the Palestinian national group, are members of a protected group under the Convention.

An academic assistant at Al-Quds Open University described to PCHR the systematic targeting of medical and academic personnel in Gaza since the start of the genocide:

“ We have observed clear targeting by the occupation of medical personnel and educational staff, especially given that we are among the most educated peoples, with high literacy rates and academic degrees. It’s evident that this educational system was deliberately targetted. The occupation targetted a large number of scientists, academics, university presidents, and department heads, including Dr. Sufyan Tayeh, as well as the director of the Khan Yunis branch of Al-Quds Open University, Dr. Jihad Abu Nasr, and Dr. Anwar Nassar from the main branch. In addition, administrative and academic colleagues were also targetted.”¹²

In August 2025, the head of the Government Media Office in Gaza, Ismail Al-Thawabta, stated that “[t]argeting scholars and academics is a systematic policy to create a long-term intellectual and cultural vacuum, weaken national institutions, and deprive future generations of accumulated expertise and knowledge.”¹³

¹²– Interview conducted by PCHR on 2025/7/8 in Central Gaza.

¹³– Government Media Office (2025) Press Release No. 734. Available at: <https://t.me/mediagovps/3431> (Accessed: 29 May 2025). See also Nour Mahd Ali Abuaisha and Tarek Chouiref, ‘FACTBOX – Erasing Gaza’s minds: Israel kills 193 academics amid genocidal war’ Anadolu Agency (25 August 2025), <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/factbox-erasing-gaza-s-minds-israel-kills-193-academics-amid-genocidal-war/3668860>

By July 2026, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) had documented the killing of approximately 20051 students by Israeli forces. Furthermore, more than 830 teachers and educational staff, as well as over 194 scholars, academics, and researchers, had also been killed during the genocide.¹⁴ Those murdered in the university sector have included university presidents and deans: the IOF killed three university presidents in the first three months of the genocidal campaign. These included the above-mentioned 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 former President of the Islamic University, Dr Mohammed Shubair (77 years old) 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; and 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 2023.¹⁵

Among other particularly prominent casualties was Rifaat Al-Ara'ir, a university professor, writer, translator and poet whose wife, 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.

14- Interview conducted by PCHR With Dr Ismail Al Thawabata on 2026/7/16.

15-PCHR, *Voices of the Genocide* (2025) pp. 83-82.

. 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 said, "Peace be upon you." Following that, the apartment was bombed. The bombing resulted in the martyrdom of Rifat Rafiq 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 AlaaAhmed Al-Mamlouk (14), Muhammad (13), Yahya (11), and Nada (9)."



schoolchildren have frequently been killed alongside their academic parents or other family members. Abdurahman Abd al-Ghafour 17-year-old student described as follows an Israeli airstrike on his family home that killed his father, who was an assistant professor at the Al-Dawa Islamic College, as well as his mother and his four school-age siblings:

“

Before dawn on Monday 23rd October 2023, I woke up with the rest of my family to eat the suhour meal, as we were determined to fast, and my mother was preparing to get the bread ready. The 18-year-old son of my paternal aunt [...] was with us in the house. I asked how long was left till the dawn prayer and they told me five minutes. It was about 5:13 in the morning. I stayed in bed. Then my father came to wake us up to pray and I said I'm going to doze till the time of prayer has come. When I woke up, I found myself in the Nasir Hospital in Khan Younis. It was the afternoon of Tuesday 24th October 2023. I learned that our house had suffered a direct hit by the occupying forces moments after I fell asleep. I noticed that I couldn't move and was in poor health, and I saw that my face and hands were burned (...) I learned that the bombing had completely destroyed our house and killed my family members: my father, Dr. Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghafour, an assistant professor at the College of Islamic Da'wah; my mother, Aisha Fayaz 'Abd al-Ghafour; and my siblings: Baraa, 18, a university student studying computer science; Jana, 13; Hudhaifa, 11; and Nada, 7.¹⁶ ”

A bereaved father told PCHR of his grief at the killing of his daughter Ayah, a high school student:

“

Ayah was the first of my joys, she was the first born, and she remained her mother and father's only child for a long time before her brother came; she was the darling girl and the happiness of the house. She was a high school student and dreamed of going to university and having a bright future. She made me happy every day, growing up and maturing in front of my eyes, I saw the dream getting closer step by step. But on 18 October 2023, in the very days of the war on Gaza, they snatched away our dream. Ayah was martyred, and she left an emptiness in our hearts that cannot be filled to this day. It feels as if she went on a journey and will be back soon. Her mother is still in a nightmare, in the darkness of yearning and being vanquished by loss; she doesn't really talk [anymore]. It's been more than a year and a half, but the pain hasn't changed. It's like yesterday, the house has become miserable without her, and every time we hear high school news, the wound opens up again.¹⁷ ”

16- Interview conducted by PCHR on 19/1/2024.

17- Interview with A.Kh.J conducted by PCHR on 9/8/ 2025.

The targetted killing of schoolchildren continues to be reported in the ceasefire. In April 2026, nine-year-old Ritaj Raihan was shot and fatally wounded by an IOF sniper inside the learning tent in Beit Lahia where for the first time in more than two years she had been able to go ‘back to school,’ and while she was standing waiting to get her work corrected.¹⁸

B. Causing Serious Bodily or Mental Harm to University and Schoolteachers, Students, Staff, and Administrators

Another underlying act of genocide is causing serious mental and bodily harm to members of the protected group. As a manifestation of scholasticide, the Israeli genocidal war has left tens of thousands of students, schoolchildren, teachers, academics, and university administrators severely wounded, bodily disfigured, and psychologically traumatised. According to a WHO report published in September 2024, the genocide had by then caused devastating physical and psychological harm to students with over 22,000 students injured and many suffering from long-term disabilities. They reported thousands of patients including children and adolescents, suffering from severe trauma, burns, amputation and permanent disabilities.¹⁹

A student described to PCHR how on 7 October 2023, an Israeli missile targetted her house, leaving her with a broken back, a broken leg and punctured lungs:

“While we were sleeping, suddenly the wall of the room fell on top of me, and I started screaming at my parents to get me out. After several attempts, they managed to get me out. My father was injured, as was my mother. The moment we left the house, the occupation army targetted the house, destroying it completely. We then realized that the first missile was a reconnaissance missile that caused the wall of the house to collapse, followed by an FI6 missile that completely destroyed the house. (...) They found that I had suffered a broken spine, two fractures in my right foot, an abdominal injury, and a head injury. They immediately took me to the intensive care unit (...) where the doctors completely removed my spleen and part of my lungs. They then fitted an external plate to my right foot, which had two fractures. I stayed in the hospital for three months, including a full month in intensive care.²⁰”

18- Ohood Nassar, “The Last Day of School”, Palestine Deep Dive (2 June 2026).

19- World Health Organization (WHO), “Over 22,500 have suffered ‘life changing injuries’ in Gaza, estimates WHO” (UN Geneva, 12 September 2024) <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/news/97441/09/2024/over-22500-have-suffered-life-changing-injuries-gaza-who>

20- Interview conducted by PCHR on 2024/12/3 in Khan Younis [RM]

A 14-year-old girl described to PCHR the events that led to her forearm being amputated:

“ From the beginning of the war, we were displaced to my paternal grandfather’s house in Zaytun, because our house is situated at Kuwait Roundabout which is a dangerous area with occupation forces in it. On 13 December 2023, we were sitting in my grandfather’s house, and the bombs were coming from all over and falling in all directions and it was a situation of great fear and terror. When the call to the evening prayer came, I was sitting with my family next to my maternal uncle’s children and the house was hit by a missile that landed three metres away from me. I was hit in the right arm below the elbow, the wound cut my hand off below the elbow and my forearm was attached by the skin, the bone was broken and my arm was hanging off, and my back was hit by shrapnel and streaming blood. I didn’t lose consciousness when I saw the situation, I felt great fear and shock when I saw my arm hanging down. My maternal uncle F. came and bound my hand up with gauze and took me on a trolley which he and his sons pushed to the Baptist [hospital] and after the evening call to prayer I was operated on, and they amputated my right arm below the elbow. They had to give me several units of blood during the operation. After the operation I was in a state of shock: I had never imagined my arm would be amputated. I left the Baptist hospital the second day after the operation, the hospital was full and it wasn’t possible for me to stay any longer. Now I suffer from pins and needles in my amputated forearm. My mother helps me with everything and looks after me. I got a transfer at Al-Shifa Medical Clinic for treatment abroad and to have an artificial limb fitted: I’m following up on artificial limbs and I’m doing rehabilitation to use an artificial limb in the event that I am able to travel and leave [Gaza]. I feel distressed and depressed as a result of the amputation of my arm, I can’t play, I can’t write, and now there’s an obstacle to me continuing my education. I cry a lot of the time. I wish that I could get an artificial limb fitted.²¹ ”



21- Affidavit taken by PCHR team in Gaza City on 10 February 2024.

A 17-year old school girl, Shams Oweid sustained injuries from shrapnel fired by an Israeli missile in Al-Bureij Refugee Camp on 23 July 2024, resulting in the loss of her eyesight. She stated the following:

“

I was injured by shrapnel from an Israeli missile that spread throughout my entire body, from my feet to my face and head, causing me to lose my vision. Doctors were unable to open one of my eyes due to the severe disfigurement it sustained, while the other eye lost its cornea. Our home in Gaza was bombed during the early months of the war, and my books and school bag were burned. My dream was to complete secondary school, graduate, and attend university to study speech therapy so that I could help children. I hope to be transferred abroad for medical treatment so that I may regain my sight and continue the education from which the IOF have deprived me.²²

”

Another child, Hanan Radi 13 years old, told PCHR of the series of events that led to her complete exclusion from education as a result of her injuries:

“

I was in fifth grade when the war began. We were displaced from our house a month later and I took my schoolbag with me so that I wouldn't be cut off from education. After a while we went back home, but we were bombarded inside it and I suffered extreme injuries to my head and my foot. I also lost my schoolbag. After that I used to go for treatment in Al-Shifa hospital. The Israeli tanks surrounded us when I was in the hospital for treatment and my father got me out of the hospital to the industrial zone just before they stormed the hospital. A few months ago, the tent next to ours in the displacement centre suffered an Israeli strike and shrapnel from the Israeli rockets caused the loss of my right eye and bits of the shrapnel lodged in my intestines. I feel a great sadness at the loss of my eye and I don't know how I will continue my studies. I miss my school days and I miss my classmates and my teachers, and I want to get back to education quickly. I haven't attended any educational initiative since the start of the war. I spent the past months of the war in hospitals getting treatment and with continued displacement. I feel terribly sad when I see the girls going to the educational initiatives in the displacement centre. I haven't been accepted into this initiative as I am a special case and I need supervision due to my injuries. I don't have notebooks or pens or a schoolbag. I wish I could go back to school and make new friends and meet my friends and my teachers, complete my education and become a teacher teaching children.²³

”

22- Affidavit taken by PCHR team at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah, on June 2024 ,23.

23- Affidavit taken in the Yarmuk Camp displacement centre in Gaza City centre, 28 July 2025.

Israel has also inflicted serious harm through torture. PCHR's 2025 report, *Torture and Genocide*, documented how acts of torture committed by the IOF against Palestinians in Gaza constitute acts of genocide.²⁴ Dr. Muhammad al-Agha, a lecturer in accounting at the Faculty of Commerce at the Islamic University of Gaza, was detained with others by the IOF from a family home to which he had been displaced. Dr al-Agha told PCHR that he was subjected to torture by the occupation forces during his incarceration, and witnessed the torture of other detainees. This included beatings that lasted for hours, dog attacks, starvation, sleep deprivation, and verbal abuse:

“The raid begins with sound bombs being thrown into the barracks. The soldiers order us to lie on our stomachs on the ground with our hands above our heads. They bring dogs into the barracks, which walk over us. Then they select a number of detainees, take them aside and assault them with batons and clubs. They set the dogs on them to tear at them with their claws and scratch their skin until they bleed. My sister's husband (...) was attacked by the dogs in his eye, which was red and blue for a month.”²⁵

After about a month's detention, al-Agha describes his transfer to – as he found out later – a military detention centre in Jerusalem:

“The soldiers came and called out 15 detainees, I was one of them but none of my relatives were. They put us on a bus that drove us for three hours. My feet and hands were tied to the back and we were blindfolded. My head was lowered between my knees. We were beaten and electrocuted with an electric baton. The soldiers demanded that we sing “321 Gifati My Life”, “123 Golani is the Best”, “Tuta, Tuta, Sinwar is a Sharmuta”, “A Plate of Hummus, a Plate of Foul, we all Love Shamarek Fool”. Anyone who refused was beaten.”²⁶

24- PCHR, *Torture and Genocide: The Shattered Futures of Former Palestinian Detainees in Gaza* (May 2025) <https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/05/2025/Torture-and-Genocide-The-Shattered-Futures-of-Former-Palestinian-Detainees-in-Gaza.pdf>

25- Interview conducted by PCHR on 2025/11/5 in Mawasi Khan Younis.

26- Ibid

Sexual violence and rape are also part of the pattern of Israel's infliction of serious harm. Sexual violence includes "any act of a sexual nature which is committed on a person under circumstances which are coercive". In March 2025, the UN Commission of Inquiry reported that there had been a sharp increase in "sexual, reproductive and other gender-based violence" against Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), carried out by IOF and – in the West Bank – Israeli settlers since 7 October 2023. The COI found that these acts included forced public stripping, threats of rape and sexual assault, acts carried out on the explicit orders of, or implicit encouragement from, Israeli civilian or military leadership.²⁸ The COI report confirms that sexual and gender-based violence was used to "terrorise, dominate, oppress and destroy the Palestinian people".²⁹ The findings include abuse of boys clearly of school-age, as well as men and women. Earlier, in July 2024, OHCHR reported that Israel had arrested over 14,000 Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank since October 2023 and was holding them in Israeli prisons: both male and female detainees had reported sexual and gender-based violence by their Israeli captors while in detention.³⁰ In May 2026 it was reported that for the first time, the UN had added Israel (along with Russia) to a 'blacklist' of countries for sexual violence in conflict, in a report by the Secretary-General.³¹

27- Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu (Trial Chamber) ICTR-4-96-T, Judgment, 2 September 1998, para 596.

28- A/HRC/58/CRP.6 Report of the COI, More than a human can bear: Israel's systematic use of sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender based violence since 7 October 2023 (13 March 2025) page 46 para 224 <https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/03/2025/Report-of-Independent-International-Commission-of-Inquiry-on-the-Occupied-Palestinian-Territory-13-March-2025.pdf>

29- Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, More than a human can bear: Israel's systematic use of sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender based violence since 7 October 2023 (13 March 2025) page 46 para 223 <https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/03/2025/Report-of-Independent-International-Commission-of-Inquiry-on-the-Occupied-Palestinian-Territory-13-March-2025.pdf> accessed [December 2025]

30- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Detention in the Context of the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza (October 2023–June 2024) (Report, 31 July 2024) para 40, at 12 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/opt/20240731-Thematic-report-Detention-context-Gaza-hostilities.pdf> accessed [January 2026]

31- Emma Graham-Harrison "UN Adds Israel, Russia to blacklist for sexual violence in conflict", The Guardian 29 May 2026: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/may/29/un-israel-russia-blacklist-sexual-violence-conflict>; Emir Nader, "Israel put on UN sexual violence in warzones blacklist for first time" BBA New, 29 May 2026 at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2lle869nlo>

In a report issued in November 2025, PCHR presented a selection of harrowing testimonies from both men and women describing their rape and sexual torture in Israeli detention since the genocide began.³² Among the other testimonies collected was one from an 18-year-old high school student who was detained by the IOF in Mawasi Khan Younis when going to an aid centre to queue for food for his family. He was forced to strip naked and left in the late June sun for four hours: then he was taken elsewhere and questioned and beaten to the extent that a nail on his right hand came off and “then they ordered me to put my foot out and tore off two nails using pliers.” He described to PCHR how he and others held at Sde Teiman detention camp were subjected to sexual violence and torture including anal rape with a bottle:

“

They ordered me to get down on my knees, six others and me, and they sodomised us with a glass bottle, in and out. This happened to me four times. The in-out happened about ten times and I and those with me would scream. We were all under 25. In the four times this was done to me, I was alone twice, and for the two other times, once I was with six people and once it was me and 12 people. I saw what they were doing to the other people, the same thing they were doing to me, and I discovered it was a glass bottle and I saw it.... behind us there was a dog and it was as if the dog was raping us. They violated our dignity and destroyed our morale as well as our hopes in life. I used to wish to finish my education and go into administration, economics and accounting, but I am lost now, after what happened to me.³³”

The Istanbul Protocol recognises the long-term suffering resulting from torture, noting that avoidance behaviours can severely limit survivors’ ability to participate in daily activities and social interactions. “For many survivors, torture represents a profound rupture in their lives”, accompanied by a subjective sense of irreversible damage and permanent personality change.³⁴

32- PCHR, “PCHR Documents Testimonies of Systematic Rape and Sexual Torture in Israeli Detention against released Palestinian detainees” (10 November 2025).

33- Interview conducted by PCHR on 2025/11/6 in Khan Younis. [M. Al-J.]

34- Istanbul Protocol: Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Revised 2022) para 501.

These long-lasting effects directly impair students' ability to access education in the future. This access is severely hindered by the infliction of conditions of collective trauma. As Dr Samah Jabr, Chair of the Palestinian Ministry of Health's Mental Health Unit in 2024, describes, trauma in Palestine is "collective and continuous" and is thus best understood as a form of "chronic" traumatic stress disorder.³⁵ There is also evidence that children whose parents experienced torture and war are more likely to perform worse in schools, even when they did not experience it themselves, showing the inter-generational impact of torture.³⁶ For school-age children, exposure to violence has been demonstrated to significantly impair ability to perform in school and retain knowledge.³⁷

According to OCHA, continuous exposure to hostilities, forced displacement and loss has resulted in widespread psychological distress among children, including acute stress reactions, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).³⁸ Dr. A.A., a psychiatrist with the Gaza Mental Health Programme, told PCHR:

“Most children in the Gaza Strip exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, acute and chronic anxiety disorders, and depression, as well as symptoms of developmental delay. Children as old as five years are still clinging to their parents, and symptoms of withdrawal have appeared due to insecurity and malnutrition, and the lack of educational institutions has affected the behaviour of boys and girls in education. Some of them have shown signs of social withdrawal, such as not playing with their peers and avoiding the places and people around them, or the emergence of aggressive or violent behaviour.”³⁹

35- Bethan McKernan, "Chronic traumatic stress disorder": the Palestinian psychiatrist challenging western definitions of trauma', The Guardian (14 April 2024) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/14/mental-health-palestine-children>

36- Line Bager, Thomas Munk Laursen, Niels Skipper and Esben Agerbo, 'School performance of children whose parents suffered torture and war — a register based study in Denmark' (2021) 31 European Journal of Public Health 755–749 (30 August 2021), available at: <https://pure.au.dk/ws/files/293802963/ckab108.pdf>

37- Fan, L., & Kang, T., "Early childhood trauma and its long-term impact on cognitive and emotional development: a systematic review and meta-analysis", Annals of Medicine, (2025) (1)57, <https://doi.org/07853890/10.1080/2025.2536199>; Perkins S. & Graham-Bermann S., "Violence Exposure and the Development of School-Related Functioning: Mental Health, Neurocognition, and Learning", Aggression and Violent Behaviour (2012) 98–89:(1)17, doi:10.1016/j.avb.2011.10.001

38- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Gaza Humanitarian Response Update (21–8 June 2025) (OCHA) <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-humanitarian-response-update-21-8-june-2025>

39- Interview conducted by PCHR on 2025/10/16 in Deir Al Balah.

School-aged children are severely impacted by the lack of a stable learning environment, and parents – particularly mothers – feel inadequate in the face of the challenges of feeding their families and trying to help their children to keep learning. A mother of three children told PCHR:

“

My children used to go to school every day, we had a stable life, but since the start of the war everything has changed. The schools aren't working, my children have stopped thinking about studying and instead are helping us get fresh water, salt water, and meals and standing in queues for aid or collecting plastic to burn. When we were first displaced, I carried with me all my children's notebooks and books to make their education possible but the circumstances were bigger than that, the circumstances have prevented my children from focusing on education, they are all dependent on educating themselves through me, and I don't have adequate practical or scientific experience to educate them properly. My young son is now nine years old, he's not in school and he can't read or write at all. The child will never accept education in view of the psychological situation they're living in the war. The school environment is undoubtedly better for education than the environment of a tent.⁴⁰”

C. Inflicting Destructive Conditions of Life: Forcible Displacement, Destruction of Schools-Shelters, and Starvation

Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention identifies as a third genocidal act the deliberate infliction on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about the group's physical destruction in whole or in part. This section presents evidence for Israel's commission of this act in three areas particularly relevant to scholasticide: forced displacement, the deliberate destruction of schools and educational facilities being used as shelters for displaced people, and the intentional infliction of conditions of malnutrition and starvation on Palestinians in Gaza.

40-Affidavit taken by PCHR team on 7th September 2025 in Deir Al Balah.

C.(i) Forced displacement

While displacement or “ethnic cleansing” is not considered as a standalone act of genocide, it may be part and parcel of the acts of genocide of causing serious bodily and mental harm and the infliction of destructive conditions of life that are calculated to bring about physical destruction. It can also indicate an intent to destroy the protected group.⁴¹ In Gaza, Israel has forcibly and on multiple occasions displaced the majority of the population, including students and teachers and their families, under conditions that are unfit for human survival, such as the systematic destruction to a large part of the health care system, and living in shelters that are highly vulnerable to flooding, extremely cold temperatures and winter storms, and regular Israeli attacks on schools that served as shelters for the displaced population.⁴² A father of four children who was previously displaced in Al Zeitoun’s Preparatory Girls School recalled the overcrowded conditions that he experienced and witnessed on his first day at the school-shelter:

“ (...) we couldn’t find any empty classrooms because the school was overcrowded with displaced people and many displaced families. There was no space for my family, so my wife, my children, and I had to sleep in the schoolyard.⁴³”

In its genocidal war on Gaza, Israel has destroyed entire neighbourhoods and towns, ordered Palestinians to relocate to designated “safe zones,” and then subjected those zones and evacuation routes to large-scale attacks. A 17-year-old teenage boy from Khan Younis described his ordeal to PCHR:

“ (...) there was a bombing in front of the house, which led to the martyrdom of my 49-year-old father. This was a tragedy for us because he was the pillar of our home and family. We did not have time to mourn my father because the morning after his death, Israeli occupation army tanks surrounded us, so we fled to Mustafa Hafez School. We stayed there for two days, then the Israeli occupation army ordered us via a quadcopter to evacuate and head west to Mawasi Khan Younis via Al-Halabat. We headed to Al-Halabat. They ordered the women and children to enter separately from the men (...).⁴⁴”

41– Al-Haq, How to Hide a Genocide: The Role of Evacuation Orders and Safe Zones in Israel’s Genocidal Campaign in Gaza (2025); Jinan Bastaki, “Gaza, Forced Displacement, and Genocide”, EJIL Talk! (5 April 2024), <https://www.ejiltalk.org/gaza-forced-displacement-and-genocide/>; William Schabas, Genocide in International Law (2nd edn, Oxford University Press 2009).

42– UNRWA, “Unrwa Situation Report #205 On The Humanitarian Crisis In The Gaza Strip And The Occupied West Bank, Including East Jerusalem” (UNRWA 2026) <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-205-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>; UNICEF, “Regular attacks put Gaza schools-turned-shelters on the “frontlines of war” (8 November 2024) <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/regular-attacks-put-gaza-schools-turned-shelters-frontlines-war>

43– Interview with A.S. conducted by PCHR.

44– Interview with O.S. conducted by PCHR on 2025/II/I in Khan Younis.

With lack of housing and learning spaces due to intense bombardment by Israel, less than 40 per cent of Gaza's school-aged children were receiving temporary learning support in September 2025 and January 2026.⁴⁵ A 15-year-old boy described to PCHR the impact of conditions of destruction and repeated displacement on his education:

“ Before the war, I used to live in ‘Izbat Bayt Hanoun. From the first day we were displaced to Tell Az-Za’atar then to Al-Mashru’, after that to Khan Yunis and then to Bayt Hanoun and then to Tell Az-Za’tar and after that to Deir al Balah where my family and I are currently displaced. The biggest thing that has prevented me from education is the repeated displacements, we left all our educational possessions, means and books in the house, we left with just a backpack and since I got to Deir al Balah my education has completely stopped. Right now, I’m meant to be in tenth grade, but I’ve lost two years of education, and I can’t follow electronic education because of the displacement and the unavailability of the internet, and I can’t communicate with the teachers.⁴⁶ ”

L.A., a schoolgirl in the eighth grade, described to PCHR the travails of her family's displacement from ten days after the war started when they fled south into a life of continual and repeated displacement for the next two years. Now in Khan Yunis, she continued:

“ On 25 October 2025, I enrolled at an educational centre about one kilometre south of my place of displacement. There is no other educational facility in the area of my displacement besides the one I mentioned. It was established by some teachers who took the initiative to set it up, but it has led to severe overcrowding, as the centre is insufficient to accommodate all the displaced students in the area. Consequently, the teachers at the educational centre have organised classes in three sessions: from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. for grades 1 through 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for grades 7 through 9, and the third session from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. for grades 10 through 12. Each class lasts 30 minutes, and we study only four subjects: Arabic, English, science, and maths. There are 39 students in the class. I go to the learning centre three days a week—Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

45- UNRWA, “UNRWA Situation Report #187 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem” (5 September 2025), <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-187-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>; UN, UN says Gaza crisis remains dire, children hardest hit” (27 January 2026), <https://news.un.org/en/story/1166842/01/2026>

46- Affidavit taken by PCHR team in Deir al Balah 10 September 2025.

At first, the classroom was a small tent with no desks: we sat on the sandy floor of the tent. Of course, the tent offers no protection from the summer heat or the winter cold. As for school supplies, students must pay for them themselves—textbooks, notebooks, and other materials. Once, they gave us two notebooks, two pens, and a set of geometry tools, and every time they give us biscuits with dates. Three months ago, they received assistance from supporting organisations, particularly UNICEF, so they expanded the classrooms by bringing in a large tent and dividing it into two classrooms, and we now sit on mats instead of on the ground. Since class time is insufficient to cover all the material for the lessons taught in class, I have had to turn to the internet to supplement my learning and understand the lessons so I can maintain my academic average at %85. Here I face many problems, including power outages and my cell phone running out of battery, the poor quality of the internet connection and its cost, and on top of that, the stress I feel, the chaos and overcrowding at the displacement site, the absence of peace and quiet due to the large number of displaced people and the sounds of trucks, shouting, and arguments over water trucks, and people shouting at the food stalls and market stalls. On top of all this, the lack of a suitable place to study and the lack of stability and comfort in the tent, as well as helping my family with their daily household chores—all of which negatively affected my academic performance and educational level compared to what it was before the war on Gaza.⁴⁷ ”

The child’s father, who was present during her testimony, stated as follows:

“ As for my children’s return to school at the learning centres that have been opened—whether by private initiatives, UNRWA, or the government—my [eldest] daughter was able to enrol in a centre [...] one kilometre south of us. This centre is not sufficient to accommodate all the displaced students in the area. I still have my nine-year-old daughter, who is in fourth grade, and my son who is six years old and is supposed to enrol in first grade. Due to overcrowding, the distance of the school from our home, and the lack of other schools or educational centres in the area where we were displaced, I was unable to enrol them at the school. I have contacted the Ministry of Education to enrol my son in the I School e-learning programme, and I am currently awaiting their response.⁴⁸ ”

47- Affidavit taken by PCHR team the southern Al-Mawasi area of Khan Younis, 15 May 2025.

48- Affidavit taken by PCHR team the southern Al-Mawasi area of Khan Younis, 15 May 2025.

Mohammad Al-Kafarneh, a young man who describes himself now as a labourer, had been in his final school year when the war started and managed against considerable odds to complete his high school exams in 2026, although not to the level he had expected to achieve before the war. He told PCHR of the impact on his studies and on his plans for his future of successive Israeli attacks and forced displacements:

“

The high school academic year began on 29 August 2023 and was scheduled to end in June 2024; however, the war that broke out in the Gaza Strip prevented me from completing my studies and taking the high school exams on schedule. The repeated displacements that my family and I experienced led to a loss of stability and a complete disruption of the educational process, compounded by the fact that no schools were officially operating during that period.

I also faced significant difficulties in continuing my studies remotely due to constant internet blackouts, in addition to the electricity crisis, which was one of the biggest obstacles to my ability to continue studying or access educational materials.

The Ministry of Education decided to postpone the academic year until further notice due to the circumstances in the Gaza Strip. Following the declaration of a ceasefire on 19 January 2025, the educational process was resumed on an exceptional and intensive basis for high school students during February 2025, in an effort to make up for lost learning and enable students to take their exams. Consequently, I enrolled to continue my studies to make up for what I had missed, and I also attended a number of private tutoring sessions to prepare for the high school exams. However, after the war resumed on 18 March 2025, it was decided to postpone the high school exams once again until 25 April 2025, which increased the amount of stress and psychological and educational instability I was already experiencing due to the difficult security and living conditions.

On 10 April 2025, the Ministry of Education issued a statement announcing the postponement of the high school graduation exams due to the expansion of military operations in northern Gaza City and Gaza City, with the exams rescheduled for June 2025. As the security situation subsequently escalated, the occupying forces ordered all residents of the northern Gaza Strip to evacuate towards the west of Gaza City, which led to an unprecedented deterioration of humanitarian and living conditions.

During that period, food supplies and basic necessities began to gradually disappear from the markets, and signs of famine began to appear in various areas of the Gaza Strip, with a severe and evident shortage of food stocks and a massive rise in the prices of basic commodities. These conditions also directly affected students, due to psychological and living instability and the difficulty of meeting even the most basic daily needs.

As a result of these harsh conditions, the Ministry of Education decided on 15 June 2025, to postpone the high school exams once again until August 2025, without setting an official and final date for the exams.

During that period, due to the severe hunger and famine we endured, I was forced to completely set aside my studies, as my priority became securing food for my family and trying to meet their basic needs for survival, while studying became secondary given the harsh humanitarian conditions we were living under.

I was also forced to go to the Zikim and Nabulsi areas—where humanitarian aid trucks were arriving—in an attempt to obtain some food. I risked my life and went there more than 12 times, but I was only able to get a bag of flour once.

During one of those attempts, I sustained a laceration on my right foot while in the Zikim area in early July 2025. The wound took a long time to heal due to severe malnutrition and the lack of necessary medical treatments and care during that period.

During that time, I also lost nearly 10 kilograms due to hunger and food shortages, which significantly affected my physical and mental health and my ability to concentrate and continue my studies, as all my attention was focused on trying to provide food for my family and meet the basic necessities of daily life.

During that period, the Occupation authorities allowed limited quantities of humanitarian aid and some commercial goods entering through the crossings, which led to a partial availability of some goods in the markets; however, their prices were significantly high, exceeding citizens' ability to purchase them. We also suffered severe financial strain as a result of repeated displacement and the absence of income sources, in addition to a cash flow crisis, where money, when available, was withdrawn subject to high commissions of up to about 55%, which made daily life extremely difficult and harsh.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education issued an official statement announcing that the first-round exams for high school students born in 2006 would begin on 25 August 2025. At that time, I prepared myself to take the exams, hoping to continue my education despite all the hardships I had endured.

However, on 20 August 2025, the Occupation Forces ordered all residents of Gaza City to evacuate to south of Wadi Gaza, coinciding with the launch of the military operation known as “Gideon’s Chariots 2,” which aimed to fully occupy the city of Gaza, causing a massive wave of displacement that included large numbers of high school students and their families.

As a result of these dangerous security conditions, the forced displacement, and the instability I experienced, I was forced to postpone taking my high school exams, and I was among the students who were unable to sit for the exams due to the difficult humanitarian and military conditions.

We were forced to flee to Deir al-Balah on 15 September 2025, where we lived in tents in the Abu Huli area of the Central Governorate, amid extremely difficult humanitarian and living conditions that lacked even the minimum requirements for a dignified life and stability.

During that period, the Ministry of Education announced that it would hold a second and third exam session for high school students who were unable to take the exams, promising to set the exam dates at a later time. Following the announcement of a ceasefire on 9 October 2025, the Ministry of Education issued a statement setting the date for the second-round exams as 25 October 2025; however, they were subsequently postponed to 8 November 2025, and then postponed again to 8 December 2025, due to poor internet services within the Gaza Strip, which would have deprived hundreds of students of their ability to take the online exams.

I began taking the high school exams as part of the second session on the scheduled date; however, some exams were affected by a technical glitch in the Ministry of Education’s online exam administration system, which led to the postponement of a number of exams to later dates. I finished taking my last exam on 17 December 2025, and the results were released on 16 January 2026, where I scored %73.4 in the humanities track.

I had hoped to study Arabic at university, but the difficult economic circumstances my family faces in the aftermath of the war prevented me from enrolling and realising this ambition.

The year I lost due to these forced circumstances and the war also had a profound impact on me, as I had hoped to be in my second year of college by now, especially since our financial situation before the war was much better and would have allowed me to attend any university I desired.

To this day, we still live in tents under harsh living conditions that are unsuitable for life or study, enduring extreme heat in the summer and bitter cold in the winter, in addition to severe overcrowding and the daily struggle to secure basic necessities, foremost among them safe drinking water, which makes it even harder to continue my education or plan for the future in a normal way.⁴⁹



49- Affidavit taken by PCHR staff in the Al-Mazra'a area of Deir al-Balah ,15 May 2026.

C.(ii) Destruction of Schools-Shelters

With thousands of Palestinians displaced by Israeli attacks on their homes seeking shelter in what had been, before the genocide, the safe spaces of schools and other educational facilities, Israeli targeting of these spaces, filled with displaced and desperate civilians, serves as further evidence of genocidal acts under article II(c) of the Convention, depriving them of the ability to survive. Furthermore, as discussed below (see section 2.A) the destruction of these educational facilities, combined with acts of mass killing, harming, and displacing of teachers and students, is an attack on the people's identity and its ability to maintain its identity in the future.⁵⁰

Israel's attack on the compound of Al Taba'in School of Islamic Sciences early in the morning of 10th August 2024 is an emblematic case. The horror of this attack, which the Gaza Health Ministry estimated to have killed around 100 people sheltering in the compound and gathering for the dawn prayer, drew outrage from across the world including from the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Gueterres, who condemned:

“the continued loss of life in Gaza, including women and children, as we witness yet another devastating strike by Israel on the Al-Tabeen [sic] School in Gaza City, sheltering hundreds of displaced Palestinians families, with scores of fatalities, amidst continued horror, displacement, and suffering in Gaza.”⁵¹

For its part, the UN Human Rights Office condemned “the increasing frequency of Israeli [sic] Defense Forces (IDF) strikes on schools where hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced Palestinians have sought shelter, conducted with apparent disregard for the high rate of civilian fatalities” and underlined that “this is at least the 21st strike on a school, each serving as a shelter, that the UN Human Rights Office has recorded since 4 July. These strikes have resulted in at least 274 fatalities, including women and children.”⁵² By 25 February 2025, Israel had directly targetted 62 per cent of school buildings that were used as shelters after October 2023.⁵³

50- Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, A/HRC/60/CRP.3 (16 September 2025), at para. 146

51- <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session60/advance-version/a-hrc-60-crp-3.pdf> “UN Chief condemns ‘devastating strike’ on Gaza School” (12 August 2024) at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/1153101/08/2024>

52- UN OHCHR, “The UN Human Rights Office Condemns Israeli Defense Force’s Strike on Al-Tabaeen School on Gaza city” (10 August 2024) https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-un-human-rights-office-condemns-israeli-defense-forces-strike-al-tabaeen-school-gaza-city?_gl=13*Igp4du*_ga*MTM3MDIwNjc4My4xNjQ0NTI0NDM4*_ga_E60ZNX2F68*MTcyMzQ0ODYINC4yMjguMS4xNzIzNDg4NjYyLjUyLjAuMA

53- Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel A/HRC/26/59 (6 May 2025) at para. 7.

Al-Taba'in school complex, located in the Old city of Gaza, comprised a four-storey school building with an internal courtyard and a two-storey mosque along one side of the yard.⁵⁴ The imam of the mosque had called on worshippers to attend the dawn (fajr) prayer that morning, and the IOF used three guided bombs against the mosque in their attack.⁵⁵ A Gaza Civil Defence spokesperson told al-Jazeera that "rescue teams were not able to find a single body with full limbs at the site."

PCHR was able to secure eyewitness testimony from survivors of this atrocity. In her testimony to PCHR, Najah Al-Safadi, states that the school complex was sheltering approximately 250 families and up to 2,500 displaced civilians at the time of the attack. She describes the targeting of the women and children's section during the dawn prayer:

“ (...) I heard a very loud explosion, and we rushed out of the basement to the schoolyard to find out where the explosion had occurred due to its strange force. When we left the basement, there were about 25 families, approximately 100 people, most of whom were women and children. And there we saw the tragedy and disaster. The first thing my eyes saw was a large mass of flames and fire burning inside the prayer hall and scattered and severed body parts everywhere in the schoolyard and between the corridors. I saw many torn and severed hands and feet of worshippers scattered everywhere in and outside the school.⁵⁶ ”

J. Q., a 44-year-old single-parent, had to flee her house in Gaza with her children after it was hit on the second day of the war and they went from place to place looking for safe shelter until they arrived at al-Shifa medical complex. On 12 November 2023 Israeli tanks moved up to surround the medical complex, and everyone started moving inside "because there were strikes and shooting at everyone who was outside the complex". After some five days of total siege (nobody in or out, no electricity, no food or drink) the IOF ordered everyone to leave the complex before they raided it. J.'s children were displaced south with their father while she took refuge in the Taba'in School of Islamic Sciences:

“ I was staying in the upper floor ("the attic") of the prayer room located inside the school: this had been designated for women to stay in and there were around 25 families there. At day break on Saturday 10 August 2024 I began preparing for the dawn prayer [...] it was about 04.40, the imam of the mosque began the prayer

54- Al-Haq, "Al-Taba'een Genocidal Attack: Israel's Deliberate targeting of Gaza School Shelter" (22 August 2024) at: <https://www.alhaq.org/FAI-Unit/23717.html>

55- Ibid.

56- Interview conducted by PCHR 2024/6/9 in Gaza.

and when he got to the middle of Surat al-Fatiha in the first Rakkah, all of a sudden everything changed. In those moments I felt something strange in my body, I felt the heat of fire and flames licking my left hand and burning it. On opening my eyes I saw tongues of fire and flame burning the place, and people were screaming and crying out for help inside the upper prayer room, tens of women and children among the wounded and martyred, torn apart [...]. I tried to flee the place to get away from the fire that was consuming the bodies of women worshippers and to leave the upper floor of the mosque and as soon as I got out I found a small child called Umar who was burned. I tried with difficulty to pull him out of the place and get out with him and all the while we were burning from the heat of the floor and the burning of the place. I got to the northern entrance to the mosque ("the steps") which were full of rubble, there were tens of bodies and body parts strewn over the steps and the wounded crying out for help. And then some citizens came and helped us and saved us and took us to the Baptist hospital (al-Ma'madani).. And hardest of all was when we got to al-Ma'madani Hospital, there was another injured person with us, the doctors found the head of a martyr in his clothes. [...] How can I forget the fire burning the bodies of women and children who were on the upper floor, or the sight of one of the women who might have been [staying] with us, looking for the body of her disabled son and finding only his hand, or the women who had lost their children and relatives without finding their bodies or any trace of them because the corpses had vaporized.⁵⁷”

These accounts are corroborated by M.B., Official Spokesperson of the Palestinian Civil Defence, who detailed the extensive civilian casualties, severe burn injuries, and the deployment of an MK-series air-burst munition, which detonates prior to ground impact and causes widespread incineration.⁵⁸

In another terrible attack two days before (8 August 2024), Israel bombed Al-Zahra' School on Al-Wihda Street in Gaza City. The testimony of one survivor, 52-year-old Lina Mahani, tells the harrowing story of loss from targetted Israeli bombing suffered by one family in under a year of the genocide. Lina had been taking shelter in al-Zahra' School after months of successive displacements. Early in the war, the mother of eight (five girls and three boys, aged from 5 to 20 years) had been staying in a residential building when it was targetted and eleven members of her family killed, including her husband Yusuf Mahani (43 years old) and three of her children (Ismail aged 6, Nadi aged 18 and 'A'isha who was 8).⁵⁹ Lina spent two days in hospital with shrapnel in different parts of her body. Months of further displacements followed, often spent in school-shelters, until she and her remaining children, and the families of three of her husband's siblings, found refuge in a classroom on the first floor of al-Zahra' School that had been designated for the displaced. Lina continued:

57- Affidavit given to PCHR team 17 August 2024.

58- Interview conducted by PCHR on 2024/6/9 in Gaza.

59- Ages at the time the affidavit was given to PCHR staff: 6 September 2024.

“

On 8 August 2024, at around 3.30 in the afternoon, approximately just before the afternoon prayer, Israeli Occupation planes targetted al-Zahra' School with three rockets. Two rockets exploded in the class where we were living. The rockets fell between the section where we were staying and the steps to the northwest entrance which connect the northern building to the western building. The class where we were living was the first section when you go up. At that moment I was sitting on the steps with my daughter Maram and my sister-in-law [...] and her children. All of a sudden I felt as if I was flying from my place to the steps to another place, revolving lumps of fire were circling me from all directions and wrapping round me at a mad speed and I was screaming: stones and rubble were flying round my body and it was as if it was pouring with rain. I couldn't see for the dust and the smoke! I could only see the fire that was consuming my hands and my face and my feet. I was wearing the clothes that I use to cover myself for prayer and I tried to pray in and I tried to take it off to put out the fire and the flames that were burning my body, because of the extreme pain and unbearable agony. I tried to flee on the rubble that was strewn on the steps and the building which was on the point of collapse, and the fire was consuming my feet. When I went down the steps – I was burning – my eyes fell on a small child sprawled on the middle of the steps, completely ablaze and fire eating up his body. I managed to pick him up in my hands although I was burning, and it never occurred to me that this child was one of martyred children of my husband's brother. I was screaming and fleeing and crying out for help from the steps... Till displaced youths came from inside the school to save me and they wrapped me in a blanket and I was taken to al-Ma'madani Hospital. I sustained third degree burns all over my body and I still receive endless treatment and supervision from a team of doctors. ”

The Israeli strike on al-Zahra' School-turned-shelter killed twelve members of Lina's family, including three more of her children (Fatima al-Zahra' aged 11, Zainab aged 8, and 'Abd al-Qadir who was 14).

The UN COI reported in June 2025 that from the beginning of the war till 25th February 2025, Israel “403 of a total of 564 school buildings were directly hit and sustained damage. Of those hit, 85 schools were fully destroyed, and 73 schools lost at least half of their structures.”⁶⁰ The two cases presented here show the horror of traumatized, wounded and displaced communities sheltering in their thousands in schools-turned-shelters only to be relentlessly targeted and bombed by Israeli rockets.

60- “Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel”, UN Doc A/HRC/26/59 (16th June 2025) at para. 7.

C.(iii) Malnutrition and Starvation

Since October 2023, the Gaza Strip has been subjected to an unprecedented and systematic pattern of starvation, following public declarations by Israeli officials. In a widely reported statement, the Israeli Defense Minister, Yoav Galan, declared: “We are imposing a complete siege on Gaza. No electricity, no food, no water, no fuel – everything is closed.”⁶¹ This statement was reinforced by the Israeli Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, who stated: “So long as Hamas does not release the hostages – the only thing that should enter Gaza is hundreds of tons of air force explosives – not an ounce of humanitarian aid.”⁶² These declarations formalized starvation as an explicit policy, used as a tool of military pressure and collective punishment. Upon these decisions, all crossings into Gaza were completely closed, resulting in the rapid depletion of food stocks within the first weeks of the military aggression. The closure of border crossings and the obstruction of humanitarian assistance led to the collapse of food security and the widespread emergence of famine and malnutrition, particularly among children. On 26 January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Israel to take immediate and effective measures to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Gaza. On 28 March 2024, the Court reaffirmed that the risk of famine had become a reality requiring additional urgent measures. It subsequently issued a further order on 24 May 2024, directing Israel to adopt immediate measures, including halting military operations in Rafah that impeded the delivery of humanitarian aid. Despite these binding orders, Israel continued to restrict humanitarian relief, target aid convoys, undermine the work of UNRWA, and ultimately established distribution centres operated by the so-called Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF).⁶³



61- Channel (2023) 14, a video on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLXj9C3Fgs>

62- Ben-Gvir, Itamar (2023). Itamar Ben-Gvir on the X platform, 17 October 2023. <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1714340519487176791>

63- For further details, see: GHF Aid Distribution Centers in Gaza: Starvation, Killings, and Humiliation of Women, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), 9 January 2026, pp. 10–6, <https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/01/2026/Aid-Distribution-Report-EN-Final.pdf>

From late May 2025, the GHF, a non-governmental organisation established by the Israeli occupation authorities in February 2025 with direct United States support outside the United Nations humanitarian framework, assumed responsibility for aid distribution in the Gaza Strip through a mechanism operating entirely under the control of the IOF, bypassing the role of the United Nations and UNRWA. The United Nations condemned this mechanism as contrary to the principles of international humanitarian law and humanitarian action, noting that it subordinated the distribution of humanitarian assistance to military considerations and transformed food into an instrument of coercion and control over the civilian population. Aid distribution was limited to a small number of centres located within areas under Israeli military control, forcing thousands of Palestinians to travel long distances and cross active combat zones in order to reach them. Upon arrival, civilians were subjected to stringent security procedures and, in many cases, came under direct fire while waiting for or attempting to obtain food assistance. Rather than serving as humanitarian safe points, these centres became widely known as "death traps", where 2,615 Palestinians were killed while attempting to obtain food, exemplifying the use of humanitarian assistance as an instrument within Israel's policy of starvation and genocide against the population of the Gaza Strip.⁶⁴

International organisations repeatedly warned against acute famine and acute malnutrition and acute food insecurity conditions in light of Israel's siege and policies.⁶⁵ In July 2025, WHO warned that "malnutrition is on a dangerous trajectory in the Gaza Strip" following "74 malnutrition-related deaths in 63,2025 occurred in July – including 24 children under five, a child over five, and 38 adults".⁶⁶ In August 2025, famine was confirmed in Gaza.⁶⁷ This situation was compounded by the cold weather and lack of proper shelter for the displaced. In January 2026, nine Palestinian children had died from hypothermia.⁶⁸

64- Ibid., pp. 14–11.

65- See, e.g., "GAZA STRIP: Famine is imminent as 1.1 million people, half of Gaza, experience catastrophic food insecurity" (18 March 2024), <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/alerts-archive/issue-97/en/>; "Gaza Strip: Acute Malnutrition Situation for 16 October – 30 November 2025 and Projection for 1 December 15 – 2025 April 2026" (19 December 2025), <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1159821?iso3=PSE: and> "Gaza Strip: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for 16 October – 30 November 2025 and Projection for 1 December 15 – 2025 April 2026" (19 December 2025), <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1159820/?iso3=PSE>

66- WHO, "Malnutrition rates reach alarming levels in Gaza, WHO warns" (27 July 2025), <https://www.who.int/news/item/2025-07-27-malnutrition-rates-reach-alarming-levels-in-gaza--who-warns>

67- Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), Famine Review Committee, Gaza Strip August 2025: Conclusions and Recommendations (22 August 2025), https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Famine_Review_Committee_Report_Gaza_Aug2025.pdf

68- UN News, "Cold kills another infant in Gaza as West Bank displacement intensifies" (21 January 2026), <https://news.un.org/en/story/1166804/01/2026>

The ICJ has issued three orders of provisional measures in the South Africa v Israel case, concerning South Africa's allegations that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. In March 2024, the Court stated that "Palestinians in Gaza are no longer facing only a risk of famine [...] but that famine is setting in".⁶⁹ In May 2024, the Court emphasised famine and starvation in its affirmation of Israel's obligation to "take all necessary and effective measures to ensure, without delay, in full co-operation with the United Nations, the unhindered provision at scale by all concerned of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance, including food, water, electricity, fuel, shelter, clothing, hygiene and sanitation requirements".⁷⁰ In its Advisory Opinion of October 2025, the Court noted that "Israel's consent to the operations of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) since 27 May 2025 and to other limited humanitarian aid has not significantly alleviated the situation" and "the local population in the Gaza Strip has been inadequately supplied."⁷² Doctors without Borders declared that the GHF aid distribution sites are "sites for orchestrated killing",⁷³ and Amnesty International determined that this militarized aid distribution is an act of genocide.⁷⁴

This genocidal weaponization of starvation impacted all ages. F., a mother of three, said that for her, her husband and her children (aged 10, 8 and 2 and a half): "the biggest challenge was securing food." She further noted that this is "especially since [her] husband worked on a daily rate and his work was completely suspended because of the war."⁷⁵

69- International Court of Justice, Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v Israel) Request for the Modification of the Order of 26 January 2024), para 21, <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/20240328-I92/I92-ord-00-01-en.pdf>

70- International Court of Justice, Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v Israel) (Request for the Modification of the Order of 28 March 2024) (Order of 24 May 2024) [2024] ICJ Rep. <<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/I92/20240524-I92-ord-00-01-en.pdf>> p.653.

71- International Court of Justice, Advisory Opinion, Obligations of Israel in relation to the Presence and Activities of the United Nations, Other International Organizations and Third States in and in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, International Court of Justice (22 October 2025), at para. 145, <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/20251022-I96/I96-adv-00-01-en.pdf>

72- Ibid., at para. 109.

73- Doctors without Borders, "US-backed aid distribution points in Gaza are sites of orchestrated killing" (7 August 2025), <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/us-backed-aid-distribution-points-gaza-are-sites-orchestrated-killing>

74- Amnesty International, "Gaza: Evidence points to Israel's continued use of starvation to inflict genocide against Palestinians" (3 July 2025) <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/07/2025/gaza-evidence-points-to-israels-continued-use-of-starvation-to-inflict-genocide-against-palestinians/>>

75- Affidavit given to PCHR team 12 November 2025 at Al-Salam Camp in the Al-Zawaida area.

Dr. N.A., medical chief with the Gaza branch of an international health NGO, described to PCHR the impact of malnutrition on students' physical and mental development and their learning abilities:

“

Before the war in Gaza, there were only rare cases which could be classified as malnutrition because of certain childhood diseases. But after the start of the war, with the severe siege that was imposed, the situation in Gaza became one of famines in the fifth degree. In August 2025, it was certified that there was famine in the Governorate of Gaza, and more than half a million persons were classified as suffering from extreme hunger and abject poverty. Many families spent days and weeks without bread. Equally, the shortage of food and severe chronic malnutrition results in many health problems, most prominent among them loss of immunity which renders children more susceptible to cases of contagious diseases, and the prolongation of periods of recovery from disease and severe loss of weight. Malnutrition also results in delay of physical and mental development in children and symptoms of physical weakness and delayed physical maturity in children, so the child becomes unable to match their peers in physical and mental activities even at the level of concentration. There is also a strong connection between malnutrition and psychological feelings and behavioural disorders amongst children. A lack of essential nutritional elements such as iron, zinc and vitamin B results in us getting [cases of] anxiety, depression and manifestation of hostile behaviour in children, or them being driven to withdrawal and social reclusiveness. We were approached by the management of a school in Gaza requesting us to obtain supplements for their students because this affects the child's absorption of information. Without a doubt this matter has long term consequences on academic achievement of the coming generations: the healthy mind in the healthy body, and if shortage of food and starvation continue for a long period then this will motivate students not to go to their classrooms, which will create a knowledge gap among children through a lack of basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic which constrains their future academic and economic opportunities.⁷⁶”

76- Interview with PCHR team, Deir Al Balah, 16th October 2025.

UNICEF reported that in May 2025 alone, “5,119 children between the ages of six months and five years in Gaza were admitted for treatment for acute malnutrition, including 636 children who reached severe acute malnutrition (SAM).”⁷⁷ Studies have shown that malnutrition has a long-term, “irreversible impact on brain development”, resulting in reduced cognitive abilities in school-aged children.⁷⁸

To conclude, the testimonies and information provided in this section illustrate that scholasticide provides evidence for Israel’s commission of acts of genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza: the killing of students and teachers with their families: the infliction of serious mental and bodily harm on students and teachers: and the infliction of conditions that are calculated to destroy the Palestinian population in Gaza. The following section discusses the question of intent.



77- UNICEF, “More than 5,000 children diagnosed with malnutrition in the Gaza Strip in May” (19 June 2025), <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/more-5000-children-diagnosed-malnutrition-gaza-strip-may>

78- Bilal Hamamra and others, “Childhood under siege: battling malnutrition, disease, and despair during genocide in Gaza” (2025) *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition* 321 : (1) 44; Pacifique Mwene-Batu et al, “Long-term effects of severe acute malnutrition during childhood on adult cognitive, academic and behavioural development in African fragile countries: The Lwiro cohort study in Democratic Republic of the Congo”, *PLoS One* (31 December 2020), <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0244486>

2. Scholasticide as a Pattern of Conduct Indicating Genocidal Intent

Israel's commission of genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza has occurred against a backdrop of decades-long unlawful occupation, apartheid, and siege.⁷⁹ These conditions, including the crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution, make the Palestinian people, especially in Gaza, vulnerable to genocide: apartheid aggravates the risk of genocide,⁸⁰ and persecution can escalate to genocide.⁸¹ This section presents evidence for Israel's genocidal intent in three patterns of conduct constituting scholasticide since 7 October 2023: the destruction of educational and cultural facilities and resources; obstruction of attempts to reconstruct educational structures and resume education; the disproportionate impact of Israel's policies on students. A final section looks at the impact on future generations.



79- Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004, p. 136 <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/2004/0709-131/131-ADV-00-01-EN.pdf>; Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, ICJ (19 July 2024) <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/186/advisory-opinions>

80- Victor Kattan and Gerhard Kemp, "Apartheid as a form of genocide: Reflections on South Africa v Israel", EJIL: Talk! (25 January 2024), <https://www.ejiltalk.org/apartheid-as-a-form-of-genocide-reflections-on-south-africa-v-israel/>

81- The blockade/ siege is a form of persecution considering that it targets Palestinians in Gaza as a group and disproportionately harms them. See: PCHR, "Investigate Persecution Arising out of Ongoing Gaza Closure, Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Urge ICC Prosecutor" (22 November 2016), <https://pchrgaza.org/investigate-persecution-arising-out-of-ongoing-gaza-closure-palestinian-human-rights-organizations-urge-icc-prosecutor/>. In Kupreškić et al., the ICTY held that genocide represents an extreme form of persecution, and that persecution may escalate to genocide. ICTY, Prosecutor v Kupreškić and Others (Trial Judgment) IT-16-95-T (14 January 2000), <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/kupreskic/tjug/en/kup-tj000114e-5.htm>, at para 636

A. Destruction of Educational and Cultural Facilities and Resources

Israel's systematic, targeted, intentional attacks on educational buildings, including UNRWA and other schools and all universities in Gaza, provide evidence for an intent to destroy Palestinian life in Gaza since October 2023. Witness accounts collected by PCHR illustrate how the destruction of schools and the constant threat of attack have made education impossible in Gaza and how students' educational aspirations have been extinguished amidst ongoing bombardment and displacement. One such testimony was provided by 17-year-old Farah Ahmed from Khan Younis:

“

I am a high school student in the science stream. I had great hopes and ambitions to complete my studies, so I began self-learning during the summer of 2023. However, when the war began on 7 October, my life completely changed and all my dreams collapsed. I tried to continue studying on my own, hoping the war would end soon so I could return to school. But the bombing did not stop, and I could no longer study under such conditions.⁸²”

Another student told PCHR how the war and displacement have permanently disrupted his anticipated educational trajectory:

“

I was a hardworking student before the war and dreamed of continuing my education with excellence. Since our displacement, my education has completely stopped. Instead of sitting in a classroom, I now work to support my family. What I fear most is that my future will be trapped between a job I did not choose and an education I have lost.⁸³”

Mahmud 'Asim Mahmud Abu Hadayid, an 18-year-old school student, who was on his way to school when the genocide began on 7 October 2023 told PCHR of his arrest on 2025/6/26 at Al-Shakoush aid distribution point. He was taken to Sde Teiman prison in Israel where he was beaten, tortured and interrogated. He was released on 2025/7/24 and found his mother and young siblings living in a displacement tent with his mother's family in Khan Younis.

82- Testimony of Farah Ahmed, Khan Younis: see also <https://pchrgaza.org/800000-students-deprived-of-their-right-to-education-amid-ongoing-destruction-of-schools-and-universities/>

83- PCHR, “Educational Genocide: Gaza Children Face Third Year without School” (11 September 2025), <https://pchrgaza.org/educational-genocide-gaza-children-face-third-year-without-school/>

From that moment on, I started looking for work to support my mother and siblings and provide for them, but I couldn't find anything. I worked for two days chopping firewood, but the employer told me he didn't need any workers. Still, I'm searching with all my might so I can provide anything to feed my mother and my younger siblings. At a time when I was supposed to be preparing for college, here I am looking for a job with no future ahead of me, and I've taken on a responsibility far greater than I can handle. All I hope for now is that this war will end, and that I'll be able to provide for my family so they don't have to ask strangers for help.⁸⁴

Israel's attacks on the higher education sector began two days into the genocidal campaign on 9 October 2023 when strikes destroyed the central library of the Islamic University of Gaza. In an extensive interview,⁸⁵ Dr Mamduh Khadr Firawneh, Director of the Central Library, spoke of the history of the library, which started with the founding of the University in 1978 as a single room and by the time of Israel's 2023 bombing was housed in a purpose-built five-storey building, with each floor approximately 900 square meters. Over the decades, Dr Firawneh continued, the library had become:

“one of the university's cornerstones, serving as a vital centre of learning dedicated to supporting students and researchers by providing a wide and varied range of resources, developing its online services through an integrated digital portal, and forging international partnerships to promote the exchange of knowledge.”

Dr Firawneh noted that these were not Israel's first attacks on the library:

“The Central Library at the Islamic University of Gaza has suffered severe and repeated damage as a result of successive attacks and wars. In 2007, the ground floor of the library building was set on fire, and part of the press archive was damaged. During the 2008 war, the library suffered severe damage due to the complete bombardment of the adjacent Science Building, which caused extensive damage to its facilities and infrastructure.”

84- Affidavit given to PCHR 31 July 2025 at the Al-Mawasi area of Khan Younis.

85- Dr. Mamduh Khadr Firawneh, Director of the Central Library at the Islamic University of Gaza, interview with PCHR, 11 December 2025..

In 2012, the damage was limited to partial damage, but it recurred and was more severe during the 2014 war, when the library suffered extensive destruction, including the complete destruction of its two computer laboratories, one for male students and the other for female students.

In October 2023 the destruction was total:

the library was completely burned and destroyed: not a single book or item inside the building survived, and the building was reduced to a burnt-out, crumbling shell, with its roof destroyed by direct shelling, resulting in the total loss of its collections and infrastructure. [...]

The library “suffered heavy losses in human terms, having lost four of its staff members who were team leaders before the outbreak of the war and were killed during it, representing a significant loss of qualified personnel and library expertise.” These last remarks of Dr Firawneh were made as he discussed a “rehabilitation plan” for the library:

“

The refurbishment of the Central Library is a key component of the reconstruction plan for the Islamic University of Gaza. The library’s future vision centres on further enhancing its digital capabilities, whilst not overlooking the importance of physical libraries and books, with a focus on expanding the spaces dedicated to research and reading should the library be rebuilt, as well as developing extracurricular and cultural activities to serve the university’s students and the research community. ”

The particular challenge posed by the loss of qualified and expert academic and library personnel, killed by Israel, is repeated across the academic and educational sector.

Two days later, on 11 October, Israel bombed the Gaza campus of the Islamic University of Gaza, “destroying its mosque and most of its main buildings.”⁸⁶ The same day, it began its onslaught on Al-Azhar University in attacks that were to culminate in controlled explosions to obliterate the university as Israeli soldiers cleared out of positions they had taken up there.

86-See Scholasticide in Palestine: Documenting Colonial Violence and Educational Resistance (timeline) at <https://voices.uchicago.edu/scholasticide/timeline/>

The libraries at Al-Azhar University, also established in the early 1990s, similarly developed alongside the growth in faculties and academic programmes of the university. The central library was established in 1991 and by 2024 had grown to occupy 1750 square metres, with additional specialist sections in faculty buildings. Extracts from an interview conducted by PCHR with Rami Al-Hindawi:

“

Al-Azhar University's libraries were distinguished from other university libraries in the Gaza Strip (...) as they are not limited to a specific discipline, but provide diverse resources on humanities, applied sciences, medicine, and engineering, alongside a relative focus on classical texts and heritage sources (...). The libraries housed a number of relatively rare books and resources, particularly older publications dating back to the second half of the 20th century, as well as some printed scientific encyclopedias that are difficult to replace. They also contained an archive of university theses that represent an important research record for the university. Before the war broke out, the university libraries were not merely spaces for borrowing and reading books: they also played a cultural role where extracurricular activities, such as book fairs, and workshops introducing scientific research were held. This contributed to the development of critical and cultural thinking among students and strengthened their connection to the library as a vibrant space on campus. As the aggression against the Gaza Strip escalated, university facilities, including libraries, sustained severe damage. Both on-the-ground observations and reports indicate that some library buildings were completely destroyed, specifically the libraries on the new university campus in Al-Maghraqa (the libraries of the Faculties of Agriculture and Law, and the Faculty of Education and Arts), while the main library on the Al-Katiba campus sustained very significant damage as a result of direct shelling or violent blast waves. ”

The patterns of destruction ranged from the complete collapse of buildings to the burning of their contents and the damage to furniture and equipment. This resulted in widespread destruction of library collections, including tens of thousands of books, reference materials, and periodicals, as well as the loss of computer equipment (more than fifty computers with their accessories, three printers, three photocopiers, a scanner... etc.), electronic archiving systems, and digital databases used to manage library operations. In addition to the loss and destruction of all furniture (more than 300 bookcases, 500 chairs, 120 single, double, and multi-person tables, and other furniture and equipment).

The destruction of the technical infrastructure also led to the loss of a large amount of metadata, circulation records, and catalogs, constituting a significant loss of knowledge and organizational capacity. (...) It's important to note that the destruction also affected the technical infrastructure, including internal networks, servers, and office software, which hindered any rapid attempt to resume services.⁸⁷

On the impact of all this destruction and devastation on the lives and learning of staff and students, the report continued:

“ This destruction was reflected in the academic process at the university at the beginning of the war, as library services stopped and students and researchers were unable to access the necessary sources of knowledge and that contributed to deepening the state of academic deprivation, especially in light of the cutting off of electricity and the internet and the difficult in accessing digital alternatives. ”

On the level of human resources, the libraries sustained painful losses with one worker killed and others injured, in addition to cases of repeated displacements of all the workers. This left a deep psychological impact on the workers who were still alive, who had lost the places they had worked in for years and who had emotional ties to the libraries that had been destroyed. The destruction of the libraries also had a huge effect, as their targeting represented a blow to the collective memory and intellectual identity and gave rise to general feelings of loss and deprivation of the right to knowledge.

Leaders of other universities in Gaza have also spoken to their losses. In an interview with PCHR staff, Dr. Jabr Al-Daour, President of the University of Palestine, described the impact on his university and students:

“ (...) when we arrived at the university during the truce, we found that all of the university buildings had been completely destroyed (...) all students were displaced, had lost their homes, and lost family members, which had a significant negative impact on their academic achievement.⁸⁸ ”

87- Rami Al-Hindawi, Director of the Monitoring and Audit Department, Office of the Presidency of Al-Azhar University, interview with PCHR, 21 December 2025.

88- Dr Jabr Al-Daour, President of Palestine University, interview with PCHR, 15 December 2025

Zakaria Khaled Saqaallah, Academic Assistant at Al Quds Open University, confirmed to PCHR in July 2025 that all major university campuses in Gaza—including those in Northern Gaza, Khan Younis, and Bureij—had been destroyed or rendered inoperable. Academic facilities were burned, materials obliterated, and university operations suspended indefinitely, resulting in the displacement of 280 staff members and the educational exclusion of over 70,000 students. Zakaria continued:

“As for the headquarters [of Al Quds University] in the North Gaza branch in Beit Lahia, it was 100% destroyed, as was the Gaza branch in the Al-Nasr neighbourhood west of Gaza City, which was stormed by the occupation forces, destroyed, and burned. The targeting was carried out with artillery, destroying the outer wall, then storming the lower floors and destroying the foundations of the university building. The destruction was then filmed by the Hebrew media and presented as the destruction and burning of universities in the Gaza Strip. This targeting of universities is clear and public. The university branch in the southern governorate in Khan Yunis was also completely destroyed, as was the branch in the central governorate in the Al-Bureij camp (...). This destruction is clear and systematic on the part of the occupation to end life in Gaza.”⁸⁹

As the Commission of Inquiry has shown, there is no evidence to substantiate Israeli assertions regarding military use of educational facilities that would justify the scale or consistency of attacks on educational facilities in the entirety of the Gaza Strip.⁹⁰ In June 2025, the Commission reported that:

“Between 7 October 2023 and 25 February 2025 in Gaza, 403 of a total of 564 school buildings were directly hit and sustained damage. Of those hit, 85 schools were fully destroyed and 73 schools lost at least half of their structures. Since 61 per cent of schools in Gaza had been operating on double or triple shifts, each school building destroyed has affected hundreds and sometimes thousands of students. The 403 school buildings that were directly hit had served approximately 435,290 students and 16,275 teachers. Between 7 October 2023 and 25 February 2025 62 per cent of school buildings used as shelters were directly hit, resulting in significant numbers of casualties.

89- Zakaria Khaled Saqaallah, Academic Assistant at Al-Quds Open University, Gaza, interview with PCHR, 8 July 2025.

90- “Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel”, UN Doc A/HRC/26/59 (16th June 2025) at para. 88.

Of the total number of attacks on educational facilities in Gaza recorded by the UN in 2024, the highest number – 78 incidents – occurred in October. North Gaza Governorate has been the most affected, with 100 per cent of its school buildings classified by the education cluster as either directly hit or damaged, followed by Gaza Governorate, with 92.8 per cent of its total school buildings classified as such as of March 2025.⁹¹”

The Commission also observed that:

“Israel used airstrikes, shelling, burning and controlled demolitions to damage and destroy more than 70 per cent of the school and university buildings in Gaza, creating conditions where education for children, including adolescents, and the livelihood of teachers have been made impossible. Over 658,000 children in Gaza have had no schooling for 18 months.⁹²”

Israel’s genocidal intent to destroy is evident in the case of scholasticide because of:

(1) The nature of target of destruction: systematic destruction of educational and cultural sites that are essential to the people’s identity and future, despite warning from international organizations and knowledge of the predictable impact of this destruction.

(2) Repetitive and prolonged nature of destruction for over two years since October 2023.

(3) The large scale and totality of attacks on educational and cultural facilities and on teachers and students. By January 2025, approximately 80 per cent of educational institutions had been destroyed; by October 2025, this figure had reportedly risen to 97 per cent.⁹³

(4) The methodical and consistent pattern of attack on education; and

91- Ibid. at para. 7.

92- Ibid. at para. 76.

93- UNESCO, Education Under Attack: Gaza Situation Report (2025).

(5) it has been combined with statements from Israeli soldiers, commanders, and politicians that indicate an intent to destroy Palestinians generally,⁹⁴ to destroy educational facilities, deny the existence of the Palestinian people as such, and deny the people's relation to their homeland.⁹⁵ Indeed, statements of Israeli soldiers and military officials evidence that the pattern of destruction of educational facilities is systematic, planned, and organized in advance. In December 2023, David Zoldan, First Master Sergeant of the Israeli forces and the Operational Officer of Company A of the Israeli 749 Battalion, stated in a post published on his Facebook account that “a few days later, we assembled [the mines] and booby-trapped in one of Gaza’s symbols of the future – Al-Azhar University in the northern part of the strip—and blew it up”.⁹⁶ Another soldier, Maya Radoszkowicz, recorded the controlled destruction of Al-Azhar University, “captioning it, ‘Goodbye to higher education in Gaza’ with an emoji of hands in the form of a heart.”⁹⁷ And in mid-May 2024, yet another Israeli soldier filmed himself walking in the ruins of the university, telling the camera “We are at a university in Gaza. If you want to sign up, if you want to learn, I think they’re closed... for construction. Yes, they’re closed for construction. How beautiful. Another angle of the ruins. ... [addressing another soldier] [Do] you want to sign up? We’re starting a new semester. It’ll start.... Never.”⁹⁸



94- South Africa, “Public Dossier of Openly Available Evidence on the State of Israel’s Acts of Genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza as of 4 February 2025”, transmitted to UN Security Council, 28–27 February 2025, UNSC S/I30/2025, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4079252?ln=en&v=pdf>

95- Independent International Commission of Inquiry, A/HRC/26/59 (6 May 2025), at para. 97–96

96- Quoted in Younis Tirawi and Sami Vanderlip, “Our Job Is to Flatten Gaza. No One Will Stop Us”, Drop Site website (22 October 2024), <https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/israel-749-battalion-demolition-gaza>

97- Ibid.

98- From Scholasticide in Palestine <https://voices.uchicago.edu/scholasticide/timeline/>
https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1789942261209325757?s=46&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAR3jiRdjKsSbE9GVIGA9V5aEyAkGwqGc-FMhED5EGzZOcauInfvQL8kZw_aem_ZmFrZWRIbWI5MTZieXRlcw

B. Destruction of Infrastructure and Obstruction of Reconstruction:

The existence of intent to destroy, as the only reasonable inference from Israel's conduct, is further supported by another pattern of scholasticide: the intentional obstruction of efforts to create alternative structures for the delivery of education in response to the undermining and/or devastation of existing ones. Such obstruction was already evident before October 2023 through the Israeli blockade increasing the vulnerability of the Palestinian population in Gaza to genocide.

B.(i) Blockade on Gaza:

The pre-October 2023 blockade on Gaza has effectively isolated the Gaza Strip from the rest of the oPt since June 2007,⁹⁹ while restrictions on movement of goods and people were in place from the early 1990s.¹⁰⁰ The blockade has been particularly deadly for children,¹⁰¹ a form of collective punishment, and constitutive of the crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution.¹⁰² In 2016, Palestinian human rights groups including PCHR submitted a detailed file to the Prosecutor of the ICC urging her to examine Israel's closure of the Gaza Strip as the crime against humanity of persecution.¹⁰³

A 2015 UNCTAD report found that Gaza's educational infrastructure had significantly deteriorated before Israel's attacks of 2014 due to the blockade's artificial restriction on construction materials and warned that overcrowding and related impacts could render Gaza unliveable by 2020.¹⁰⁴ The siege on Gaza since October 2023 made things worse. A September 2025 UNCTAD report described a long-term process of de-development of the Palestinian economy in Gaza turning into a total devastation because of Israel's attacks and policies after 7 October 2023.

99- UNICEF, "The Gaza Strip | The humanitarian impact of 15 years of blockade – June 2022" <<https://www.unicef.org/mena/documents/gaza-strip-humanitarian-impact-15-years-blockade-june-2022>> accessed 23 January 2026.

100- UNCTAD, "Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory", https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdb72_d3_en.pdf (30 September 2025) UN doc TD/B/3/72., para 52.

101- Human Rights Watch, "Israel: Unlawful Gaza Blockade Deadly for Children" (18 October 2023), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/10/18/israel-unlawful-gaza-blockade-deadly-children>

102- Amnesty International, "Israel's apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel system of domination and crime against humanity" (2022), <https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/01/2022/Full-Report.pdf>; Human Rights Watch, "A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution" (27 April 2021), <https://www.hrw.org/report/27/04/2021/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>; Human Rights Watch, "Gaza: Israel's 'open-air prison' at 15" (14 June 2022), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/14/gaza-israels-open-air-prison-15>

103- PCHR, AI-Haq, Al Mezan and Ad Dameer 22 November 2016 <https://pchrgaza.org/investigate-persecution-arising-out-of-ongoing-gaza-closure-palestinian-human-rights-organizations-urge-icc-prosecutor/>

104- UNCTAD, 'Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (6 July 2015) UN doc TD/B/3/62 < https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdb62d3_en.pdf > para 43.

Indeed, since 7 October 2023, Israel systematically targetted energy infrastructure, including fuel and electricity which is required for water and sanitation systems and is also critical for the functioning of health care and educational facilities. In June 2025, PCHR reported that the ongoing electricity blackout (in place at that time for over 20 months) and the continued ban on the entry of fuel supplies necessary for the operation of the energy and electricity sectors reflected a deliberate policy on the part of Israel intended to dismantle the foundations of collective life, impose the highest levels of subjugation and devastation, and strip Palestinians of the remaining essentials for their survival.¹⁰⁵ On 24 September 2025, GEDCO reported that all electricity sources supplying Gaza were completely out of service, stating that “2.3 million people had been without electricity for nearly 700 days”.¹⁰⁶

B.(ii) the effect on access to education:

In this context, Israel’s ongoing policies restricting reconstruction materials, including those needed for educational infrastructure, despite foreseeable and ongoing destruction of civilian life, constitute further evidence of genocidal intent. The conditions Israel inflicted on students and teachers and their families include: unhealthy and unsanitary conditions, lack of access to education materials, difficulty of access to online education, and lack of necessary medical treatment to injured students and teachers. To start with, Israel’s restriction on heavy machinery entering the Gaza Strip leaves Gaza with 61 million tonnes of debris and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) hidden beneath the rubble. With restrictions on heavy machinery and mine action equipment, UNDP estimates suggest that “under the right conditions” it could take seven years to remove the rubble.¹⁰⁷

105- PCHR, ‘Gaza on the Brink of Total Collapse: IOF Systematically Destroy Electricity Infrastructure and Cut Off Energy Sources’ (26 June 2025)< <https://pchrgaza.org/gaza-on-the-brink-of-total-collapse-israeli-occupation-forces-systematically-destroy-electricity-infrastructure-and-cut-off-energy-sources/> > accessed 4 February 2026.

106- Losses of the Electricity Distribution Sector in Gaza since 7 October 2023, <<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1197519642409653&set=pcb.1197519665742984> > accessed 4 February 2026.

107- UNDP, “Clearing most of the rubble in the Gaza Strip is possible in seven years under right conditions” (20 November 2025), <https://www.undp.org/stories/clearing-most-rubble-gaza-strip-possible-seven-years-under-right-conditions>

This is compounded by the targeting of water and sanitation infrastructure since 7 October 89 ,2023 per cent of which has been damaged.¹⁰⁸ The further restrictions on necessary equipment illustrate an intention to deprive survivors of water. As Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported in August 2025, only one in ten requests for water desalination equipment had been approved by Israel.¹⁰⁹

Schools and universities cannot function without adequate Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities. In March 2025, OCHA reported that “at least 85 schools/hubs [set] to host exams, [...] lack basic furniture, and many have WASH facilities in poor condition that require urgent repairs”.¹¹⁰ The report further noted that the ongoing shortage of construction materials is preventing essential minor repairs to schools damaged during hostilities including repairs to WASH facilities and the replacement of destroyed furniture and teaching materials.¹¹¹



108- OHCHR, “Thirst as a weapon”: UN experts condemn Israel’s deliberate dehydration and starvation of the Palestinian people’ (29 July 2025), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/07/2025/thirst-weapon-un-experts-condemn-israels-deliberate-dehydration-and>

109- MSF, “Israel is intentionally depriving Palestinians of water” (21 August 2025), <https://msf.org.uk/article/gaza-israel-deliberately-denying-palestinians-water>

110- OCHA, “Gaza Humanitarian Response Update | 16 February – 1 March 2025” (4 March 2025), <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-humanitarian-response-update-16-february-1-march-2025>

111- Ibid

The lack of WASH facilities has direct consequences for families and students and their access to learning and education. F.H., her husband, and her three children, for example, have faced difficulties due to unsanitary conditions. She said that: “We struggled a lot to find clean drinking water and even just water. Diseases have spread to my children due to unsanitary conditions in the displacement camp.”^{II2} Another mother stated:

“

I have seven children, the youngest is four and the oldest is 15. We were displaced two years ago from Shuja'iyya neighborhood. We first fled to the Al-Zaytoun neighbourhood on foot under shelling and gunfire, then we headed to the Gaza port and stayed there for three months in a camp on the seashore. After that, we were forced to flee south. We walked for long distances and then continued the journey by car. It took us a whole day to arrive. We moved between Rafah and Deir al-Balah, under extremely harsh conditions. We suffer daily from the accumulation of filth and dirt, which affects our lives and exposes our children to disease. My children suffer from poor hygiene due to the lack of hygiene products in the markets and the scarcity of water, which we obtain with great difficulty. Therefore, we cannot provide adequate daily hygiene for our children, and this affects all aspects of their lives and affects their right to play and learn, as they cannot go to the educational tent for fear of being criticized and ridiculed by their peers. My son tells me that one of the children told him that he smells bad and his clothes are dirty, but we have only water and cannot afford to buy cleaning supplies at the exorbitant prices offered in the markets. When we were displaced, I took my children's notebooks and books with me, hoping that they would have the opportunity to continue their education, but circumstances were stronger than our dreams. The children live in a state of shame and despair because they are unable to maintain their personal hygiene, and this affects their morale and motivation to learn.^{II3} ”

17-year-old secondary student A.A. also testified to the combined impact from the lack of electricity and difficulties in finding potable water: “Throughout the war, we suffered from shelling and the electricity crisis. From my experience, I was terrified by all the bombing and started to suffer from the water crisis and the difficulty I had in obtaining it.”^{II4}

II2- Interview conducted by PCHR on 2025/11/12 in Zwaida refugee camp.

II3- Affidavit taken by PCHR team 16th July 2025 Deir Al Balah.

II4- Affidavit given to PCHR 15 May 2026 in the Al-Mazra'a area of Deir Al-Balah

School WASH facilities have a direct impact on students' learning and well-being.¹¹⁵ In 2025 Gaza, Save the Children reported that, following heavy rainfall, people were waking up to find themselves covered in sewage, and estimated that approximately 700,000 children were exposed to these risks.¹¹⁶ Under such conditions, the risks of disease transmission, as well as mental and physical harm, are severe, resulting in significant negative effects on children's ability to learn.

In addition, the devastation of infrastructure and the blockade on essential materials have a considerable impact on students' ability to access education. On the one hand, Israel's policy of banning essential educational supplies and preventing them from entering Gaza because they are not classified as "humanitarian goods".¹¹⁷ As a consequence of the total siege imposed after the ceasefire in 2025, soaring prices of educational materials have effectively forced families to choose between food and education.¹¹⁸

On the other hand, it impacts access to online learning. Lilas Al-Hawajri, a student in Gaza described the difficulties she faced in accessing education online:

“ I suffered a serious head injury and received treatment in Al-Aqsa hospital. The injury completely disabled me for two months and after that it affected me a lot, preventing me from continuing my education (...) Currently there are no schools I can visit so I learn online (...), but I always face difficulties with the lack of access to internet (...) I hope to study and interact with my friends as we used to.”¹¹⁹

116- Save the Children, 'Gaza: children sleeping in clothes sodden with sewage water after heavy rains raising disease risk' (Save the Children, 18 November 2025) <<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/news/media-centre/press-releases/2025/gaza-children-sleeping-clothes-sodden-sewage-water-after>> accessed 4 February 2026.

117- Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, Centre for Lebanese Studies in partnership with UNRWA, 'Palestinian Education Still Under Attack Restoration, Recovery, Rights and Responsibilities in and through Education' (January 2026) <[Palestinian Education Still Under Attack.pdf](#)> accessed 11 February 15 ,2026.

118- Ibid., 16.

119- Affidavit taken by the PCHR team, 7 August 2025, Khan Younis.

In some cases, students have even risked their lives to access the internet and try to complete their studies. This is the case, for example, with high school student S.A., who was killed in his attempt to access the internet in a café in Khan Younis. His older brother Mohammad Al-Jumla reported the following:

“

Our family was displaced since the beginning of the aggression to the Mawasi area in Khan Younis, which we thought was safe. On 13 November 2024, my brother Siraj, who was an 18-year-old student in high school, went to a rest stop in our neighbourhood to find access to the internet and download learning materials on his phone, which were needed for school and print them out. Whilst he was at the café Israeli war planes bombed the place, killing him instantly. My brother Siraj was eager to complete his studies and was a high achiever in school. He was fluent in English and dreamt of graduating from high school and joining medical school, but the Israeli war planes bombed his dreams and ended his life.¹²⁰”

University students have sought to continue their studies through online and limited in-person initiatives. The destruction of libraries has led students to build digital archives, increasing reliance on internet access.¹²¹ Medical students, deprived of lectures and clinical training, have volunteered in the few remaining hospitals and medical centres,¹²² risking their lives daily.

Finally, the deliberate destruction of healthcare facilities and hospitals in the Gaza Strip by the occupying forces has been accompanied by a systematic policy aimed at preventing patients and the wounded from traveling abroad to receive medical treatment. This policy extends to students in need of continuous healthcare, including cancer patients, individuals suffering from kidney failure, and persons with disabilities. Furthermore, many war-related disabilities, such as amputations and loss of vision among students, require specialized treatment and rehabilitation abroad to enable them to continue their education and resume their lives in a dignified and meaningful manner.²³ The Israeli restrictions prevent this continuity of education, and this dignified life.

To conclude, Israel's pattern of conduct (the widespread and repeated destruction of energy, water and health infrastructure, and its disproportionate impact on access to education), and its restrictions on educational supplies, reconstruction efforts, and other necessities – further illustrate Israel's genocidal intent.

120- Affidavit taken by the PCHR team, 18 November 2024, Khan Younis.

121- Dalya Saleh, “Everything is gone, but Gaza's students are still learning”, University World News (14 May 2025), <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20250514120147332>

122- Ibid.

123- See: “Generation Wiped Out: Gaza's Children in the Crosshairs of Genocide”, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), 31 December 2024, pp. 36–33.

<https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/01/2025/Generation-Wiped-Out.pdf>

B.(iii) Impact on Persons with Disabilities and Orphaned Children

Particular categories of persons in Gaza face additional barriers to their access to education. This is particularly the case for those with disabilities, child-headed families and orphans. Dr. I.K. of Gaza's Working Group on Disability stated that:

“

It is clear that people with disabilities have suffered greatly, and worse still, their disabilities have worsened after the current war on Gaza. According to preliminary results, there are 43,000 new cases of disability based on World Health Organization statistics. This figure, compared to the number before the war, means that there has been a %65 increase in the number of people with disabilities in the Gaza Strip. People with disabilities live in complete isolation as a result of the destruction of accessible infrastructure. They cannot walk in the streets or get to health or educational facilities, if any exist. In addition, most shelters are located in sandy areas on the seashore or in areas where the infrastructure has been destroyed, so they cannot access educational services, health services, or rehabilitation services. This is especially true since most of the centres that used to provide them with these educational services have been destroyed, and there are currently no institutions providing educational services to persons with disabilities. In addition, persons with disabilities are psychologically fragile due to the psychological shocks they have been exposed to, especially those with new disabilities resulting from amputations and spinal cord injuries. As a result of their trauma, they are unable to participate effectively and naturally in all services. As for the educational initiatives that existed and were supported by international or local institutions, they can't provide services to persons with disabilities because they are held in simple, unsuitable tents that persons with disabilities cannot access. In addition, the occupation prevents the provision of various assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, hearing aid batteries for persons with hearing disabilities, medical glasses for those with visual disabilities, or support equipment for those with disabilities. All of this has been prohibited until now, which has greatly affected their opportunities to access education. According to estimates by the Stars of Hope Association and the Working Group for People with Disabilities, most persons with disabilities aren't receiving educational services and are unable to access them.

The destruction of the infrastructure and the roads exposes them to danger and congestion, and the lack of opportunities, malnutrition, siege, starvation, and shortage of medicines, vitamins, and nutritional supplements constitute additional burdens preventing them from enjoying this right.¹²⁴ ”

In light of the preceding discussion in this section, scholasticide provides powerful evidence that the only reasonable inference from Israel’s conduct and policy is indicative of an intent to destroy the Palestinian people in Gaza, in whole and in part.



¹²⁴- Personal interview at the headquarters on the Gaza Working Group on Disability, 16th October 2025, Deir al-Balah.

3.CONCLUSION

Education is essential to sustain and preserve the identity of a people: scholasticide is a systematic policy of destroying the education of a besieged and occupied people. This report relies on testimonies from Gaza to illustrate the different aspects of Israel's policy of scholasticide as part and parcel of its commission of a genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza. As part of its acts of genocide, Israel killed and seriously injured (both physically and mentally) students and teachers in Gaza and imposed on them conditions of starvation and displacement that are calculated to bring the destruction of the Palestinian people on Gaza. This genocidal intent is clear in other aspects of scholasticide through patterns of conduct that destroy education, destroy the ability to provide it, and prevent access to it.

The long-term effects of Israel's collective and ongoing genocide on students of the Gaza Strip are among the most serious humanitarian and developmental repercussions that may last for decades to come, given that they are not confined the destruction of the educational infrastructure but extend to encompass the psychological, cognitive and social formation of an entire generation. Students in Gaza have lived under exceptional circumstances characterised by constant bombing, the loss of security, repeated displacement, the loss of family members, friends and teachers, alongside witnessing scenes of death and destruction on a daily basis, which has created an extremely harsh environment unfit for children and young people to grow up in naturally. Circumstances such as these suggest the probability of a rise in the rates of chronic psychological disorders among students, including PTSD, chronic anxiety, severe depression, social isolation, sleep disorders and constant fear, as well as weak capacity for concentration, memory and comprehension. These disorders directly affect academic achievement as students become incapable of normal interaction in the educational environment or to continue their education in a settled and regular manner.

Furthermore, the lengthy and repeated interruption of education by reason of the destruction of schools and universities and shelters that have been turned into temporary alternatives for education has led to deep educational gaps which it may be difficult to make up in the future. Thousands of students may be deprived of their right to access a safe and stable educational environment, in addition to the lack of electricity, internet, educational materials and qualified academic staff. These adversities not only affect the current teaching level but also threaten the professional and economic future of students. Many of them face the risk of dropping out of education or lower-case “opportunity of a university education or professional training which limits their opportunity to secure stable jobs or to actively participate in rebuilding their community in the future. Similarly, the decline in the quality of education due to the war will lead in the long term to a lower level of skills and expertise in Palestinian society, weakening the overall development process and negatively affecting human capital in Gaza.

Also among the most prominent long-term effects are growing feelings of lack of stability and a loss of faith in the future among students. Many of them are at the point where they live in a constant state of anxiety and fear of losing their lives, their shelter, or members of their family at any moment. These constant feelings of being under threat can lead to disordered psychological and behavioural patterns such as social withdrawal, aggression, lack of motivation to study or work, or feelings of impotence and hopelessness. Students who have suffered permanent injuries, such as amputation, spinal cord injuries, and loss of sight or hearing, will face complex challenges relating to the possibility of their access to inclusive education and securing rehabilitation services, psychological support and social integration, especially in light of the collapse of the health sector and the weak possibilities available in Gaza. The long-term lack of supervision for these students could lead to the deepening of feelings of marginalization and social exclusion, and the contraction of opportunities for them to pursue education and a normal life.

On the social and cultural levels, the war and the genocide have contributed to the reshaping of students' consciousness and collective identity in the shadow of an environment dominated by violence, loss, and deprivation. Growing up under conditions of ongoing genocide leaves profound marks on the ways in which students perceive the world, the concepts of security and stability, and human relationships, and can lead to disturbances in personality development and trust in society and institutions. Furthermore, the loss of a large number of teachers and academics and the destruction of universities, libraries, and cultural centres not only affects the current educational process but also deprives coming generations of a cognitive and cultural environment capable of producing science, creativity, and critical thinking.

Furthermore, the continuation of these conditions without genuine interventions for psychological, educational, and rehabilitation support will lead to the perpetuation of a long-term crisis threatening the future of an entire generation. Students who experience ongoing trauma without psychological treatment or support are at risk of transmitting the effects of these traumas to their future family and social lives, creating repercussions that extend across generations. Therefore, what students in Gaza are suffering cannot be reduced to an emergency educational crisis: rather, it represents a profound humanitarian and developmental crisis that infringes upon the right to education, to a dignified life, and psychological and social stability, and that threatens the long-term future of Palestinian society as a whole.

ENDS