



PALESTINIAN WORKING  
WOMAN SOCIETY FOR  
DEVELOPMENT

# 100 DAYS

OF GENOCIDE WAR ON  
THE GAZA STRIP:

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**WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE THE  
MOST TARGETED**

**100,000 PALESTINIANS KILLED, MISSING OR WOUNDED**

**100 Days** of the ongoing Israeli genocide war against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, with no end in sight, and more than 23,843 Palestinians have been killed, some two-thirds of them women and children (about 10,400 children and 7,100 women). Alongside the arbitrary killing of civilians, the Israeli occupation imposed a restricted siege on the Gaza Strip denying the entry of life essentials, including (food, water, medicine, and fuel...). Wielding starvation and denying Palestinians the right to medication is used as a tool within the Genocide War against civilians in the Gaza Strip.

According to PCBS, as of 2021, the population in the Gaza Strip had reached 2.3 million individuals, including 1.06 million children under 18 years old, constituting 47% of the population of the Gaza Strip, including 339 thousand children under 5 years old, constituting 15% of the population of the Gaza Strip. More than three months after the beginning of the aggression, 40% of the martyrs were children and about 30% were women.

Furthermore, more than 117 journalists were martyred, according to the records of the Palestinian Ministry of Health. At the same time, the number of missing persons reported reached more than 7,000 persons, including 67% of children and women. Approximately 1,900,000 citizens were displaced far from their places of residence.[1]

## **DESTRUCTION AND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

Figures from the government media office in the Gaza Strip cited by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimate that about 65,000 residential units have been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. Another 290,000 have been damaged. That means that about half a million people have no home to return to.

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[1] A brief on the status of the Palestinian people at the end of 2023, by Dr. Ola Awad, President of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).

Analysis of satellite data cited by the Associated Press suggests that about two-thirds of all structures in the north of Gaza have been destroyed, and about a quarter in the southern Khan Yunis area. Across the whole territory, about 33% of buildings have been destroyed.

While 500,000 people have no home to return to, many more will remain displaced because of the scale of the devastation of Gaza's crucial public facilities. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that 23 of 36 hospitals had been rendered completely inoperable by 3 January, with a previous count of 3,500 beds down to 1,400 by 10 December amid vastly increased need. Meanwhile, water production stood at 7% of the prewar supply on 30 December, and there is only one shower for every 4,500 people and one toilet for every 220. Those conditions make the spread of disease a very urgent problem: for example, the WHO said on 21 December that more than 100,000 cases of diarrhea had been reported since mid-October, half of them among children under the age of five. That is 25 times the pre-aggression rate. The WHO says that it expects the number of deaths from the disease to eventually outstrip those killed directly by military attacks.[2]

The bombardments, damaged or non-functioning health facilities, massive levels of displacement, collapsing water and electricity supplies, as well as restricted access to food and medicines, are severely disrupting maternal, newborn, and child health services.

## **HOSPITALS IN THE GAZA STRIP**

According to WHO, 15, out of Gaza's 36 hospitals, are partially functional; nine in the south and six in the north. In Deir al Balah and Khanyounis, three hospitals — Al Aqsa, Nasser, and Gaza European — are at risk of closure due to the issuance of evacuation orders in adjacent areas and the ongoing conduct of attacks nearby. Hospitals in the north have been offering limited maternity, trauma, and emergency care services. However, they face challenges such as a shortage of medical staff, including

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[2] The numbers that reveal the extent of the destruction in Gaza | Israel-Gaza war | The Guardian

specialized surgeons, neurosurgeons, and intensive care staff, as well as a lack of medical supplies, and an urgent need for fuel, food, and drinking water. The nine partially functional hospitals in the south are operating at three times their capacity while facing critical shortages of basic supplies and fuel. According to the MoH in the Gaza Strip, occupancy rates are reaching 206 percent in inpatient departments and 250 percent in intensive care units.[3]

## RESCUE EFFORTS

Rescue efforts are hampered by ongoing airstrikes, scarcity of fuel for vehicles and equipment, and limited communication capabilities. UNRWA reports that, as of 1 January, 337 health workers and 148 UNRWA staff had been killed, while WHO and UNDP report one staff member killed respectively. As of 1 January, there have been 212 incidents impacting 128 UNRWA installations, of which 60 installations have sustained direct hits. UNRWA reports as of 1 January, that at least 315 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have been killed in their facilities, with a further 1,148 injured, due to the attacks since 7 October.[4]



[3] [Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #91 | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory \(ochaopt.org\)](#)

[4] [UNICEF in the State of Palestine Escalation Humanitarian Situation Report No.13.pdf](#)

## DISPLACED WOMEN

As of 8 January, according to UNRWA, 1.9 million people, or nearly 85 percent of the total population of the Gaza Strip, were estimated to be internally displaced, including many who have been displaced multiple times, as families are forced to move repeatedly in search of safety. Nearly 1.72 million IDPs are sheltering in 155 UNRWA facilities across all five governorates including 160,000 in the north and Gaza City; facilities are far exceeding their intended capacity.[6]



Hundreds of thousands of civilians in the Gaza Strip have spent months living under unbearable conditions. Nearly 1 million women and girls have been displaced, and more than 12,000 women and children have been killed. The UNICEF spokesperson highlighted the dire lack of adequate sanitation,

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[6] [Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #91 | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory \(ochaopt.org\)](#)

pointing out that in the Gaza Strip, there is one toilet for 700 people on average.[1] UNICEF has called the Gaza Strip the "most dangerous place to be a child". The people of the Gaza Strip are in the midst of an epic humanitarian catastrophe. Four in five Gazans already face hunger and starvation, according to the World Food Programme, and there is a risk of famine.[7] A child is killed every 10 minutes. Pregnant women are undergoing C-sections with no anesthetics.



Women and girls are facing growing risks of gender-based violence in overcrowded shelters. As is often the case in humanitarian crises, women and children are suffering disproportionate impacts from the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip.[8]

[7] 'Ten weeks of hell' for children in Gaza: UNICEF | UN News.

[8] Facts and figures: Women and girls during the war in Gaza | UN Women – Headquarters.

## PREGNANT WOMEN

There are an estimated 50,000 pregnant women in the Gaza Strip, with more than 180 giving birth every day. Fifteen percent of them are likely to experience pregnancy or birth-related complications and need additional medical care.

By January 14, will mark one hundred days since the beginning of the current Israeli aggression. Within that period, approximately 17,000 women have given birth in horrific circumstances – with increased reports of births in which women and their children could have potentially died or suffered serious damage and cases of sepsis. Maternity, trauma, and emergency care services are highly limited. Moreover, the killing of at least 310 medical staff, hundreds of attacks on health facilities, and a lack of supplies are further exacerbating an already impossible situation.[9]

These women are unable to access the emergency obstetric services they need to give birth safely and care for their newborns. With 14 hospitals and 45 primary healthcare centers closed (as a result to the heavy shelling), some women are having to give birth in shelters, in their houses, in the streets amid the rubble, or in overwhelmed healthcare facilities, where sanitation is worsening, and the risk of infection and medical complications is on the rise. There is no doctor, midwife, or nurse to support women during labor. There is no pain medication, anesthesia, or hygiene material when women give birth.

Maternal deaths are expected to increase given the lack of access to adequate care. The psychological toll of the Israeli genocide war also has direct – and sometimes deadly – consequences on reproductive health, including a rise in stress-induced miscarriages, stillbirths, and premature births.

[9] 100 days of darkness in Gaza: Urgent Focus on Maternal and Reproductive Health Needed - occupied Palestinian territory | ReliefWeb

Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN-Women, said: "Every day, 180 women are giving birth without water, painkillers, anesthesia for Caesarean sections, electricity for incubators, or medical supplies, she said. Mothers, meanwhile, mix baby formula with contaminated water — when they find it — and go without food so that their children can live another day".[10]

Pregnant women are terrified of likely complications from war, malnutrition, and disease outbreaks. They are afraid of the ongoing trauma they experience and the shock of losing loved ones will cause them to go into labor too early. They know there will be no help if something goes wrong. The psychological and physiological stress thousands of pregnant women are under is unbearable and will continue to impact an entire generation of young mothers and their children.

The reproductive violence inflicted by Israel on Palestinian women, newborn babies, infants, and children could be qualified as violations of the human right to life under Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and as acts of genocide under Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention of Genocide, several articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and Article 6 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.[11]

## NEWBORNS

The lives of newborns also hang by a thread. If hospitals run out of fuel, the lives of an estimated 130 premature babies who rely on neonatal and intensive care services will be threatened, as incubators and other medical equipment will no longer function.

According to initial assessments by UNRWA, 4600 displaced pregnant women and about 380 newborns living in these facilities require medical attention. Already more than 22,500 cases of acute respiratory infections have been reported along with 12,000 cases of diarrhea, which are particularly concerning given the high rates of malnutrition.

[10] [Two Thirds of Gaza War Dead Are Women and Children, Briefers Say, as Security Council Debates Their Plight | UN Press.](#)

[11] [Women bearing the brunt of Israel-Gaza conflict: UN expert - occupied Palestinian territory | ReliefWeb.](#)



Noor Rihan[12], living in Beit Lahiya, Gaza City, experienced a tragic event on Oct. 15 when her house was bombed by Israeli forces. Half of her family members died, and she, eight months pregnant, was injured. She underwent surgery at Al-Shifa Hospital, where her premature baby was saved. Due to the Israeli attack on Al-Shifa Hospital, she evacuated to an UNRWA-run school. Learning her son was alive, she faced obstacles in meeting him.

Then, 28 babies were moved from Rafah across the Gaza Strip border to Egypt (The youngest war evacuees forever). Rihan's tiny boy was among them.

After being transferred across borders, Rihan finally reunited with her son in Egypt on Dec. 5. Despite this, challenges persist, including her husband's separation and the uncertain future for the rescued babies from the Gaza Strip.

**"It was like a dream to meet my son,"** Rihan told CBS News, but she added that her joy is still only partial: **"I wish my husband could be here to see his son"**.



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[12] [Gaza mother "lost hope" that her son, born in a war zone, had survived. Now they're finally together. - CBS News.](#)

## HYGIENE KITS ARE ANOTHER LAYER OF SUFFERING: MENSTRUATION HAS BECOME A MONTHLY HUMILIATION

Women in the Gaza Strip are struggling in ways that are difficult to openly talk about in this traditional society. But basically, pads and toilet paper are in short supply. Ruba Akkila [13]- a gender and child protection expert in Gaza- said: "If you search in all the pharmacies here, the pharmacies that - you know, you're not going to find anything at all. Like, and if found, it's five and six times the price."



Not only are pads more expensive to buy, putting them out of reach for most of Gaza's impoverished and now unemployed households, but they're nowhere to be found a lot of the time. That's because of Israel's near-total siege of Gaza for the past three months. Another challenge is finding a bathroom and running water.

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[13] [Women in Gaza are desperately in need of washrooms, privacy and pads](#) : NPR.

Akkila said: "You cannot clean quite well in this regard, so it's messy. It's terrible, and nobody speaks about it." Some women wake up early and line up at hospitals to shower and use the bathroom. This is especially hard, though, for pregnant women facing pressure on their bladders and women who've just given birth and are going through weeks of postpartum bleeding. Women are cutting up towels, secondhand clothes, and even the corners of their tents to use as pads, some of them are taking pills to prevent their periods because there are no pads. Women use a garbage basket and plastic rectangular buckets as toilets.

## **FAMILIES HAVE NO HOUSES TO GO BACK TO:**

1.9 million people, nearly 85% of the entire population, have been displaced since 7 October, ordered to move, desperate to escape the violence and destruction and find the necessities to survive. Most people have no home to go back to as around 60% of all houses in Gaza are estimated to have been either damaged or destroyed.[14]

Israel's indiscriminate bombardment across the Gaza Strip has damaged over 250,000 housing units, with an additional 50,000 units entirely destroyed. Consequently, more than 1 million people in the Gaza Strip lack a safe and secure home to return to.[15]

There are currently only 155 UNRWA shelters that house about 1.3 million Palestinians. The majority of Palestinians fled to shelters in middle and southern areas of the Gaza Strip, where Israeli military operations were progressing, and these shelters are typically housing over four times as many people as they can accommodate. In addition to increasing the danger of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, and abuse against women and girls, overcrowded shelters lack privacy and the means to maintain dignity. Others have sought safety with family, frequently lodging in cramped quarters with up to thirty others. Families are increasingly erecting tents in public spaces, but a great number of people have lost everything and are left with no other option except to sleep on the streets.

## EDUCATION? A FORGOTTEN DREAM OF THE PAST;

608 THOUSAND STUDENTS IN THE GAZA STRIP WERE DEPRIVED OF THEIR RIGHT TO SCHOOL EDUCATION.

Almost half of the 2.3 million people in the Gaza Strip are under the age of 18. In the current war, none of these children can receive any education at school, with many forced to use school buildings as a shelter. So, all schools in the Gaza Strip have been suspended or closed as of the beginning of the aggression, depriving about 608 thousand students of their right to school education.[16]

Additionally, 70% of all school buildings, 342 in total, have been damaged by Israel, including those sheltering children and their families. Therefore, children mourn dead parents and siblings and collect firewood to keep them warm instead of playing or going to school. "Education is a forgotten dream for children terrified this day might be their last," says Aaron Brent, CARE's Acting Country Director for the West Bank and Gaza. "Psychological trauma has reached unprecedented highs. Mothers are telling us their children have stopped speaking or eating because of what they have seen and lived through. Others are crying and screaming with every loud sound they hear." [17]

A report from the State of Palestine Ministry of Education indicated that 4,156 students and 221 teachers were killed in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank from 7 October 2023 to 2 January 2024, with an increase of 119 deaths among students and 12 deaths among teachers and administrative personnel in the reporting period. For the same period, a total of 7,818 students were reported injured in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and 708 teachers and administrative personnel were injured.[18]



[16] Press Release on the Impact of the Israeli Occupation Aggression on the Right to Education in Palestine.

[17] [7 things you need to know about the humanitarian situation in Gaza | CARE International \(care-international.org\)](#)

[18] [UNICEF in the State of Palestine Escalation Humanitarian Situation Report No.13.pdf](#)

## RISK OF FAMINE AND DEADLY DISEASES



More than one in four households in the Gaza Strip currently faces extreme hunger, and there is a risk of famine unless access to adequate food, clean water, health, and sanitation services is restored, according to a new Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report. The report confirmed that the entire population of Gaza—roughly 2.2 million people—is in crisis or has worse levels of acute food insecurity.[19]

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) indicated that no less than 40% of the population of the Gaza Strip is at risk of famine, which means that the population of the Gaza Strip is suffering from catastrophic hunger, and this indicates that Gaza Strip is now considered one of the most starved regions in the world.

Up to 1.2 million people are experiencing emergency levels of acute food insecurity. As the risk of famine conditions continues to increase, all children under five—an estimated 335,000 children—are at high risk of severe malnutrition and preventable death. In the coming weeks, it is expected that at least 10,000 children under five years old will suffer severe wasting and will need therapeutic foods. More than 80 percent of young children are experiencing severe food poverty.

Over 155,000 pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers, as well as over 135,000 children under two, are at the highest risk. Reports imply that dietary diversity has worsened; the vast majority of children aged 6–23 months (80 percent) received only two types of food, while another 10 percent received one type of food,

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[19] [Gaza grapples with catastrophic hunger as new report predicts famine if conflict continues | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](#).

meaning that 90 percent of the surveyed children aged 6–23 months live in severe child food poverty. Most families said their children are only getting grains – including bread – or milk, meeting the definition of “severe food poverty”. The dietary diversity of pregnant and breastfeeding women is also severely compromised, since 25 percent consumed only one type of food daily and almost 65 percent received only two types of food.[20]

## **A SEVERE WATER CRISIS AND LIMITED ACCESS TO WATER**

### **THREATEN THE LIVES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE GAZA STRIP**

Gaza Strip suffers from a severe crisis in accessing water, where under normal conditions in the times before October 7th, the average per capita consumption of water in the Gaza Strip was estimated at approximately 82.7 liters/person/day. With the outbreak of the aggression, estimates indicated that the population of Gaza Strip can barely reach between 1-3 liters/person/day only, as the percentage of supplies from water sources has decreased by 90%, and therefore the percentage of water consumption has decreased by 92% compared to what it was before the Israeli aggression, as there is only one pipeline that supplies the southern areas only with about 1,100 cubic meters per hour, while the northern governorates of Gaza Strip suffer from a complete lack of access to safe water.[21]

This scenario has forced Gazan communities to turn to unsafe drinking water supplies, including brackish water and polluted water from wells, or to collect water in jerrycans and buckets from rooftops during rain or from standpipes, with women and children being called upon to fetch water to meet basic needs.

[19] [UNICEF in the State of Palestine Escalation Humanitarian Situation Report No.13.pdf](#).

[20] A brief on the status of the Palestinian people at the end of 2023, by Dr. Ola Awad, President of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

Without energy, all five of Gaza's wastewater treatment plants and most of its 65 sewage pumping stations were forced to shut down by mid-November. As many as 70 percent of Gazans now resort to drinking salty and contaminated water straight from wells.

Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, said: "Israel must stop using water as a weapon of war. Under Article 7 of the Rome Statute, intentionally depriving the civilian population of conditions of life, calculated to bring about their destruction, is an act of extermination and classified as a crime against humanity".[21]

The breakdown of Gaza's water systems risks prolonging a deepening social and public health disaster even after the conflict ends. The damage to sanitation infrastructure is causing untreated wastewater and sewage to overflow into the streets and the sea. Over time, wastes can leach into the groundwater supplies, polluting wells and nearby agricultural areas. Common diseases caused by contaminated water include diarrhea, viral hepatitis, liver and kidney diseases, methemoglobinemia (blue baby syndrome), and anemia. UNICEF reports that during protracted conflicts, children under five are over 20 times more likely to die from diarrheal diseases linked to unsafe water and sanitation than from violence.[22]

## **ECONOMIC EFFECTS:**

At least 66% of employment in the besieged Palestinian enclave of the Gaza Strip has been wiped out by the ongoing war, the UN labor agency said. This is equivalent to a loss of 192,000 jobs since Oct. 7, the International Labor Organization (ILO) said, citing a joint bulletin published with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).

Regarding the effect on the West Bank, the estimates showed that around 32% of employment has been lost, equivalent to 276,000 jobs. In total, 468,000 jobs are estimated to have been lost across the occupied Palestinian territory as of Nov. 30. These job losses represent \$20.5 million in lost daily labor income.

According to reports, the unemployment rate in the occupied territories is projected to increase from 24% in the fourth quarter of 2022 to a staggering 46.1% by the beginning of 2024.[23]

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[21] [War on Gaza: weaponizing access to water, energy and food \(unescwa.org\)](https://www.unescwa.org/)

[22] [The Siege of Gaza's Water \(csis.org\)](https://www.csis.org/)

[23] [Ongoing hostilities wiped out 66% of employment in Gaza: UN labor agency \(aa.com.tr\)](https://www.aa.com.tr/)

## IMPEDED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION[24]

Before the current war, and despite the effects of Israeli restrictions, Gaza's food production allowed self-sufficiency in most fruits and vegetables. It also allowed the export of high-value products, including tomatoes, strawberries, cut flowers, eggplants, and potatoes. However, as a result of the war, Palestinian women and farmers are unable to access their lands or harvest their crops owing to the bombardments, tank incursions onto agricultural lands, forced displacement, and the inability to irrigate due to a lack of fuel and water.

The disruption of seasonal harvesting and planting is expected to reduce food production in the coming months. The loss of income from unharvested and unprocessed olives in October and November 2023 could reach \$45 million. Gazans were anticipating a date harvest of 15,000 tons between October and mid-November 2023. The citrus and strawberry harvests were also scheduled to start between November and December 2023. Moreover, potato planting was due to begin in late October or early November 2023.

Farmland and agricultural infrastructure have experienced significant damage due to Israeli bombardment. Satellite data shows that by 17 November 2023, 15 percent of arable land in Gaza had suffered a significant decline in health and density. In North Gaza Governorate, 35 percent of agricultural land has been impacted. Damage to agricultural infrastructure, including irrigation systems and storage units, could take years to recover, affecting agricultural production in the medium term. In addition, the destruction of vegetation cover and compacting of soil from strikes and tank movements have increased land degradation and contributed to desertification risks.

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[24] War on Gaza: weaponizing access to water, energy and food ([unesco.org](https://unesco.org)).



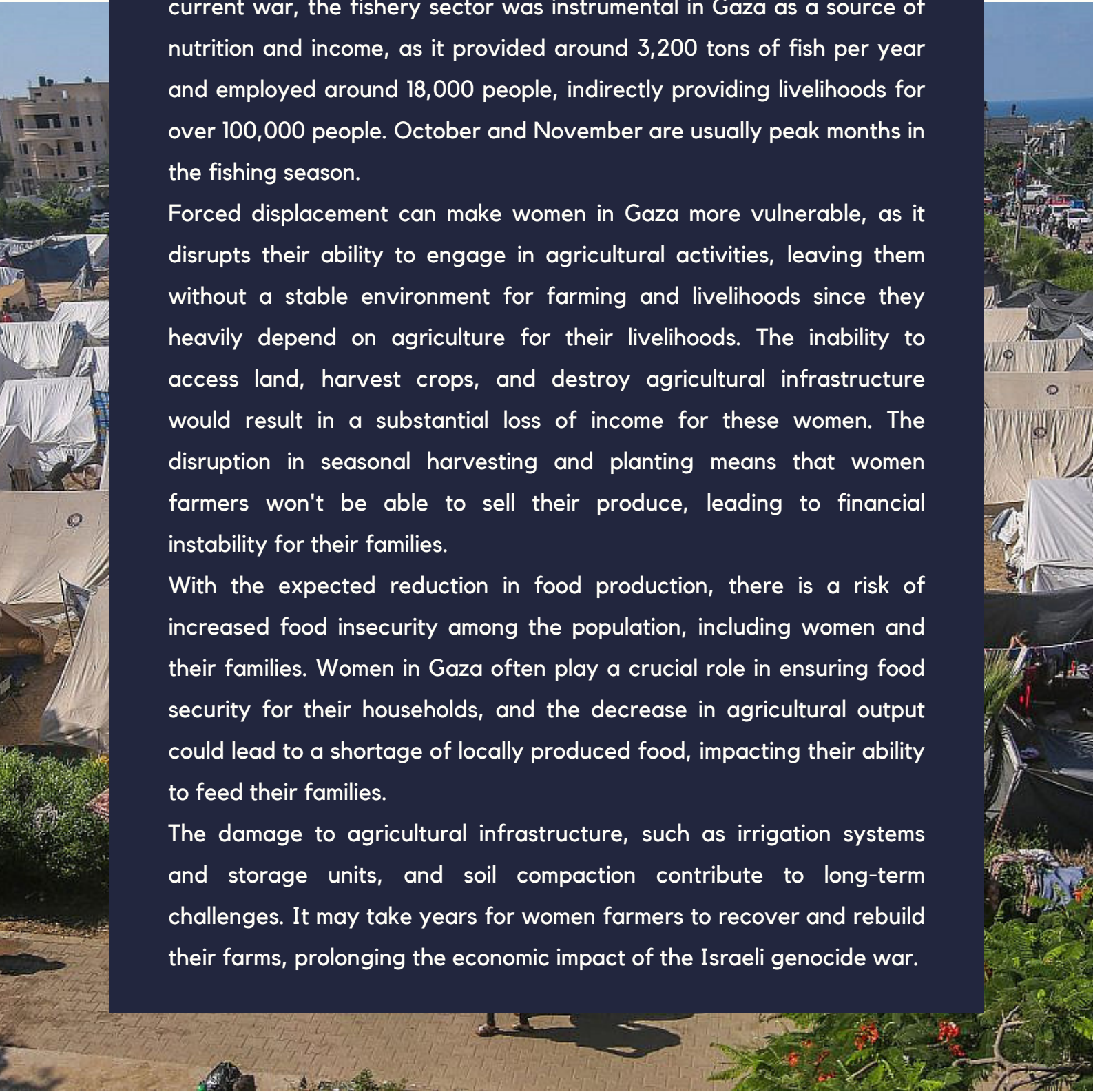
Livestock has also been devastated by bombardments impeding grazing and by a lack of feed. Dairy and egg production have been severely disrupted, whereas sheep and cattle are being prematurely slaughtered. The fishing sector has come to a standstill owing to airstrikes on the port of Gaza, and because of fears of being targeted while at sea.

The aquaculture sector, which had recorded impressive growth in recent years, is also being affected by a lack of feed. Before the current war, the fishery sector was instrumental in Gaza as a source of nutrition and income, as it provided around 3,200 tons of fish per year and employed around 18,000 people, indirectly providing livelihoods for over 100,000 people. October and November are usually peak months in the fishing season.

Forced displacement can make women in Gaza more vulnerable, as it disrupts their ability to engage in agricultural activities, leaving them without a stable environment for farming and livelihoods since they heavily depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. The inability to access land, harvest crops, and destroy agricultural infrastructure would result in a substantial loss of income for these women. The disruption in seasonal harvesting and planting means that women farmers won't be able to sell their produce, leading to financial instability for their families.

With the expected reduction in food production, there is a risk of increased food insecurity among the population, including women and their families. Women in Gaza often play a crucial role in ensuring food security for their households, and the decrease in agricultural output could lead to a shortage of locally produced food, impacting their ability to feed their families.

The damage to agricultural infrastructure, such as irrigation systems and storage units, and soil compaction contribute to long-term challenges. It may take years for women farmers to recover and rebuild their farms, prolonging the economic impact of the Israeli genocide war.



## CHILDREN HAVE LOST ONE OR BOTH OF THEIR LEGS IN THE GAZA STRIP:

According to Euro-Med Monitor figures, roughly 700,000 children have been affected by Israel's Gaza genocide, a number that includes those who were killed, injured, and internally displaced. Euro-Med Monitor further estimated that between 24,000 and 25,000 children in the Gaza Strip have lost one or both parents, and approximately 640,000 have had their homes destroyed or damaged, leaving them without a place to live.[25]

Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said: **"If there is a hell on earth, it is the lives of children in Gaza"**.

More than 10 children per day, on average, have lost one or both of their legs in Gaza since the Israeli war erupted three months ago, said Save the Children. Since 7 October, more than 1,000 children have had one or both legs amputated, according to UNICEF. Many of these operations on children were done without anesthetic, with the healthcare system in Gaza crippled by the conflict, major shortages of doctors and nurses, and medical supplies like anesthesia and antibiotics, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).[26]



[25] [Over 10,000 infants and children killed in Israel's Gaza genocide, hundreds of whom are trapped beneath debris \(euromedmonitor.org\)](https://euromedmonitor.org).

[26] [GAZA: More than 10 children a day lose a limb in three months of brutal conflict | Save the Children International](https://www.savethechildren.org).

## CHILDREN SUFFER FROM MALNUTRITION

The UNICEF spokesperson highlighted that Diarrhea cases in children are above 100,000 and combined with soaring malnutrition can prove increasingly deadly, he said. Mr. Elder added that more than 130,000 of children under two are not receiving “critical life-saving breastfeeding and age-appropriate complementary feeding” such as micronutrient supplementation.[27]

Reports also imply that all children under five in the Gaza Strip—335,000—are at high risk of severe malnutrition and preventable death as the risk of famine conditions continues to increase. UNICEF estimates that in the coming weeks, at least 10,000 children under five years will suffer the most life-threatening form of malnutrition, known as severe wasting, and will need therapeutic foods. More than 80 percent of young children are experiencing severe food poverty, and more than two-thirds of hospitals are no longer functioning because of the lack of fuel, water, and vital medical supplies or because they sustained catastrophic damage in attacks.[28]



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[27] [‘Ten weeks of hell’ for children in Gaza: UNICEF | UN News.](#)

[28] [Statement by UNICEF on the risk of famine in the Gaza Strip](#)

## PSYCHOLOGICAL CARE IS CRUCIAL FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF GAZA TO AVERT LONG-TERM TRAUMA

In Gaza, 100 days of intense military offensives have left a devastated landscape. Thousands of houses, hospitals, stores, and shops have been knocked down. However, everyone here knows that it is not only walls that will have to be rebuilt. The constant feeling of fear, the loss of beloved ones, and the atrocities seen or experienced during 100 days of conflict haunt people's minds. For the psychosocial workers, what is now at stake is to help a population in shock to regain a sense of security. Videos of five or seven-year-old children tell us how they witnessed their parents killed in front of their eyes as if they were speaking about a film or a video game.[29]

According to reports, at least 90 percent of civilians lost a child, a parent, a relative, or a friend. Those whose houses were destroyed lost everything. From the first weeks of the Israeli genocide war, the signs of emotional and psychological distress in the population are widespread: insomnia, eating disorders, hyperactivity, hypersensitivity, irritability, isolation, and physical pains. Among children, the signs are night enuresis, sleep disorders, and frequent nightmares.

Children in Gaza, already familiar with traumatic experiences, are living with an activated stress system. With this conflict, the stress is expected to intensify, potentially leading to the development of Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or complex PTSD in both children and adults. This stress can also be transgenerational, impacting children for decades to come.[30]

A study prepared by the World Bank in collaboration with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) on psychological health in terms of the impact of the Israeli occupation war on Gaza Strip in 2021, where data of this study were collected in the first quarter of 2022, indicated that 71% of the population in Gaza Strip (18 years and above) suffer from depression as a result of the Israeli aggression against Gaza Strip.

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[29] Gaza: "Emotional scars will last a lifetime" | CARE International ([care-international.org](https://www.care-international.org)).

[30] [An urgent call to save and protect lives of vulnerable populations in the Gaza Strip - ScienceDirect.](#)

Accordingly, levels of depression were similar among women and men. Additionally, the psychological health stress among individuals in the Gaza Strip worsens during times of Israeli aggression, as there is nowhere safe left to go for the people of the Gaza Strip. Also, common psychological health disorders worsen too, where there is a positive correlation between extreme poverty and mental health disorders. Consequently, all children and women in the Gaza Strip have been exposed to all kinds of psychological disorders because of the Israeli aggression against Gaza. These people suffer adverse effects on their psychosocial health as a result of the difficult conditions they live in, including deteriorating psychological health, high rates of anxiety and depression, poor social relationships, and difficulty adjusting to the new situation. This means that these individuals have not yet recovered from the trauma they experienced in 2021, and they are now, living through another Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, about to worsen their psychological health situation where other people will be dragged to the same sufferings and suffer from psychological disorders, depression...etc.[31]

Mental health experts warn that the current genocide war in Gaza is exposing children to extremely traumatic episodes while stripping away options to help them cope. There is no safe place, no sense of security, and no routine, with thousands displaced from their homes. Caregivers experiencing stress are struggling to help children cope with the overwhelming emotional reactions typical of young people traumatized by violence. Under current conditions in Gaza, children are experiencing a whole host of signs and symptoms of trauma including anxiety, fear, worry about their safety and that of their loved ones, nightmares and disturbing memories, insomnia, bottling up emotions, and withdrawing from loved ones. The trauma giving rise to these symptoms is ongoing, relentless, and compounding day by day.[32]

Yousef, a Save the Children staff member in Gaza, and father of three children aged under 10, said: **"There is a lot of loss and a lot of pain. We are fearful: of what the coming hours will bring, of what tomorrow will**

[31] [PCBS | Highlighting that the children and women of Gaza Strip face an unprecedented humanitarian disaster](#),

[32] [Children's mental health in Gaza pushed beyond breaking point after nearly a month of siege and bombardment | Save the Children International](#).

bring. Death is everywhere. My children look into my eyes every day, they are searching for answers. I have no answers for them. It is very hard, especially for children. We try to pull ourselves together to support and protect children. The needs are huge."

## **HOW ISRAEL'S GENOCIDE WAR IN GAZA IS IMPACTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF PALESTINIAN CHILDREN[33]**

A report produced last year by Save the Children found that more than half of the children in Gaza had suicidal thoughts, with three out of five engaging in self-harm. Jeeda Al-Hakim, a specialist counseling psychologist with the City University of London, said that for children who had witnessed bombings, missile attacks, or the loss of family, the psychological manifestation of shock could compound or create additional physical issues. "They may shake uncontrollably, become mute or unable to speak, emotionally shut down, or have panic attacks," she told Arab News. "Inside the body, trauma triggers the release of stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. This leads to physical problems like headaches, stomach aches, rapid heart rate, and poor sleep."

Amid the conflict, it is not just exposure to violence that is affecting the mental health of Gaza's children. Events like forced displacement, lack of access to basic needs — like education, healthcare, and sanitation — or having a family member or friend experience violence directly can take a toll on a child's well-being and development. "Children who have experienced trauma can then grow up to have relationship difficulties and trouble feeling close to others," she said. "Ongoing grief and loss are extremely painful. Going through a traumatic event fractures a child's trust in foundational ideas, including their beliefs about the world's safety and their self-worth, leaving them feeling deeply alone". While the cessation of violence is the first step toward addressing these issues, scars at this tender age may remain unhealed. Al-Hakim said that post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety disorders, physical complaints like headaches, and thoughts of suicide may all emerge even after the violence ends, as she warned that "trauma can also be passed down through families over generations."

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[33] [How Israel-Hamas war in Gaza is impacting the mental health of Palestinian children \(arabnews.pk\)](#)

## TOWARDS A JUST RESOLUTION AND PEACEFUL FUTURE

Every day that passes without a ceasefire fuels violence and drives a wider wedge through the international community. PWWSD requests to impose a comprehensive and just resolution to the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict and obligate Israel to abide by international law and end its illegal occupation of Palestine. The international community cannot stand helpless while innocent Palestinians are killed and sieged and their human rights are violated.

### A. VIOLENCE BEGETS VIOLENCE

The Israeli occupation forces have employed a wide array of armaments, including internationally prohibited munitions, resulting in one of the most severe genocides witnessed by the contemporary world. Lethal weapons such as white phosphorus and stun grenades have been indiscriminately used against Palestinian civilians and vital civil infrastructure. The Israeli forces have targeted facilities safeguarded by international law and humanitarian principles, including those belonging to the United Nations. Hospitals and worship places were targeted and demolished by the Israeli air strikes.

The protracted blockade and other increasing apartheid occupation policies, coupled with the current violent war and full siege of Gaza, will continue to perpetuate devastation and humanitarian crises, with no end in sight. While all Gazans suffer these brutalities daily, women and children in the enclave continue to be in a severely disadvantaged position compared with other women and children in the Arab region and globally.

As prior wars indicate, military escalations and war not only perpetuate a vicious cycle of violence but also entrench intergenerational harms and drive de-development, resulting in greater social divisions.

# TOWARDS A JUST RESOLUTION AND PEACEFUL FUTURE

## B. WOMEN FOR PEACE

Women should have seats at the negotiating table and lead the dialogue for peacemaking. Their voices need to be heard to ensure sustained development and true peace within Gaza and the State of Palestine in its entirety. Without women's active participation, the occupation and violence will persist and escalate, resulting in further violent extremism, and missed opportunities for a population to thrive and live decently. Women must therefore be at the Centre of all peacebuilding processes.

## C. NO RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO

Even if the war were to end today, the status quo is not a viable solution for the enclave. The international community should not aim to return Gaza to its status before the current war, where Palestinians' basic human rights were flagrantly violated daily. The international community must facilitate a situation that ensures Palestinians' total freedom of mobility and access to inalienable rights. This should start with a complete ceasefire, and ensure that international law is respected and that all civilians are protected. Urgent action is needed to secure the endurance of Gazan civilians. Humanitarian aid must flow into Gaza unconditionally and in strict accordance with international law.



## CONCLUSION:

The situation described so far tolls the bell for the necessity to end the ongoing aggression and genocide war against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The ongoing silence of the United Nations and its inability to stop the genocide raises the question of the legality of this entity and its role. The United Nations, as stated in its Charter, is responsible for protecting the peace and security of all nations and as Palestine is recognized by the General Assembly as a State, then the United Nations should take responsibility for protecting Palestinians. The silence of the United Nations is not accepted anymore. No doubt that the Occupation is violating all the principles of International Law and International Human Rights Law and consequently, there should be accountability of the occupation for these crimes. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is responsible for taking measures to ensure that the Occupation State Adheres to International Law and to stop the ongoing genocide. It is the responsibility of His Excellency, the Secretary-General to ensure the applicability of all the International Resolutions related to Palestine, including the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda. It is not acceptable to apply double standards in dealing with international questions.

We believe it is time for the government of the Swiss Confederation, as the official sponsor of the Geneva Conventions, to call for an international Conference of the Conventions to ensure that they are applicable in all cases and that all state members of the United Nations should abide by them. Otherwise, and in case of ongoing breaking of these Conventions, as in the case of the Israeli occupation, then the Security Council has no excuse, but to issue a compulsory resolution to activate Section VII of the United Nations Charter and impose sanctions on the Occupation State, to obligate it abides with the International Law and the International Humanitarian Law and end the genocide crimes as well as ending the occupation of Palestine.

The historical decision of the Republic of South Africa, to apply to the International Court of Justice, against the genocide war that the Israeli occupation is committing against Palestinians, is a step on the right track. Such a step will contribute to putting the international agencies in front of their responsibility and end the ongoing genocide.

## CONCLUSION:

All the steps in this regard, including lodging cases against Israeli war criminals in the national courts, will contribute to bringing justice to the world and curbing criminals.

The international solidarity with Palestinians is highly appreciated and thanks to the efforts of the popular movements that marched in the streets against the aggression, the stance of some Western Governments was changed. We trust that people create the change and we bet on the support of the free world to press towards ending the aggression and stopping the genocide.

It is Time to account for the occupation for its crimes and it is time to impose sanctions on the occupation's state according to section VII of the United Nations Charter to end occupying Palestine. The Ongoing Genocide crime is a clear manifestation of the occupation policy that Palestinians have been facing for 75 years. Without ending the occupation, which in itself is a violation of international law and international humanitarian law, the security of the world will remain under threat.



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