



PALESTINIAN WORKING  
WOMAN SOCIETY FOR  
DEVELOPMENT

# 365 DAYS

OF ISRAELI ATTACKS ON PALESTINIANS  
IN THE GAZA STRIP AND WEST BANK

ANOTHER RING WITHIN THE SERIES OF THE ISRAELI  
PROLONGED HISTORY VIOLATIONS.

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THE DEVASTATING IMPACT OF GAZA'S GENOCIDE  
WAR ON WOMEN: A CRISIS OF HUMANITARIAN LAW  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS

10 PERCENT OF THE GAZA STRIP'S POPULATION WAS  
KILLED, INJURED, OR MISSING DUE

The ongoing Genocide war on in Gaza Strip, has created an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, with particularly severe consequences on women and girls. As the war enters its second year, the international community's failure to protect civilians, especially vulnerable populations like women and children, has led to a catastrophic situation with far-reaching implications.

The Israeli relentless attacks on Gaza Strip have resulted in a staggering toll on human life, with women bearing a disproportionate burden. Families, mainly those led by women, are constantly displaced, seeking shelter in increasingly precarious conditions. The destruction of homes, schools, and healthcare facilities has dismantled the very fabric of society, leaving women to navigate a landscape of rubble and devastation.

Wielding Starvation as a weapon of war, which is internationally prohibited, has hit women particularly hard. As primary caregivers, sometimes they are the sole caregivers due to the absence of men either for being killed or other reasons, they struggle to feed their families amidst severe food shortages resulting from the restricted siege imposed on the Gaza Strip since the first day of the war. Pregnant women and young mothers, for example, face acute challenges in accessing adequate nutrition, potentially leading to long-term health consequences for themselves and their children.

The healthcare crisis in the Gaza Strip has had a profound impact on women's lives. With the absolute majority of health facilities forced to shut down due to being shelled, access to essential services, including maternal and reproductive healthcare, has been severely compromised. The shortage of medical supplies, including medications for chronic conditions, puts women's health at grave risk.

The psychological toll of the war conflict on women cannot be overstated. Constant exposure to violence, loss of loved ones, and the stress of providing for their families in dire circumstances have led to widespread trauma, stress, instability, anxiety, and nightmares.

The psycho-social services in the Gaza Strip were heavily needed even before the war started as the majority of people were living under trauma and stress due to the hard living circumstances imposed on the Gaza Strip since 2007 (the year, which marked the political division and imposing Israeli siege). Civil Society organizations were associated with providing these services and due to the war, these entities stopped functioning. Such situation made women feel that they were actually left behind. No supportive resources were made available for women despite the devastating need.

Women living in Gaza have unique and urgent needs and vulnerabilities, both relating to the current war and due to structural gender discrimination, including laws in Palestine that assume women to be under the protection and guardianship of men. The act of aggression created a protection crisis for all people in Gaza Strip, elevated protection needs especially for single women, women heads of households, adolescent girls, women with disabilities, and elderly women. Women's right to protection as per the Women's Peace and Security Agenda, affirmed by the United Nations, was thrown to the wind.

Within the start of invading land, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, including women and children were displaced with some being displaced several times. Over-crowded shelters, where displaced persons were gathered, do not allow privacy for women and girls. Access to food and water is very limited, and this has severe impacts, particularly for lactating women and children. Women and girls do not have access to safe and dignified latrine and bathing facilities. Menstrual hygiene of women and girls is compromised. Women and girls need to access safe shelter, food, water, sex-segregated dignified and safe WASH facilities, and health services, including sexual and reproductive health and psycho-social support. They should have access to the essential non-food items, such as dignity kits, sanitary pads, winter clothes, and assistive devices. Gender-responsive humanitarian aid must reach the most vulnerable women including women heads of households, single women, pregnant women, women with disabilities, women with chronic diseases, and elderly women.

But the scale of the crisis is almost incomprehensible. One in every 16 people in Gaza Strip are now killed or wounded (42,112 people killed, 100,000 injured and over 10,000 missed and are presumed dead underneath the rubble).

Around 1.9 million persons – 90% of the population – are currently displaced from their homes, most of them having to move multiple times as nowhere is safe, and almost a million persons are facing catastrophic food insecurity while Gaza's critical infrastructure, housing stock, economy, farmland, and fishing fleets have largely been laid to waste. 60% of homes and 68% of roads are damaged or destroyed. 85% of schools have been bombed, hundreds of teachers killed, and 625,000 students have now been out of school for a year, with enormous implications on future generations. The relentless crisis is having a devastating psychological toll.[1]

Entire towns and neighborhoods in Gaza have been reduced to rubble, particularly in the northern region, including Gaza City. Israel's military attacks have obliterated civilian infrastructure, schools, universities, cultural sites, and cemeteries. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) and U.S. courts have indicated that Israel may be guilty of genocide, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) has called for arrest warrants for Israeli leaders, accusing them of war crimes, including the use of starvation as a weapon and mass killings.



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[1] [Israel-Gaza war in maps and charts: Live tracker](#) | [Israel-Palestine conflict News](#) | [Al Jazeera](#)

Beyond the destruction in Gaza Strip, Israel has detained thousands of Palestinians, many of them without trial, in what human rights groups have called unjust imprisonment. No details available about those detainees and they are categorized as forcible disappearance, another crime per the international human rights law. Since October 2023, Palestinian detainees, including women, physicians, and children, have been subjected to torture and abuse, with some reports documenting sexual assault by Israeli soldiers. At least 53 Palestinian prisoners were killed inside the Israeli prisons and interrogation centers in a case that could be termed silent execution and extra-judiciary killing.



Internationally, the United States has played a major role in supporting Israel's aggression and aligning with the occupation in its war against Palestinians. The military support of the American administration to Israel enabled the occupation to proceed in its war. Additionally, the United States provided the occupation with political coverage within the United Nations

Institutions (Security Council mainly) and banned it from resuming its responsibilities, and impose halting the aggression. Despite widespread calls for a ceasefire and the suspension of arms transfers to Israel, the U.S. government continues to provide military aid, fueling the ongoing genocide war. According to military experts, Israel relies heavily on U.S. weaponry, and a halt in arms transfers could potentially force an end to the aggression.



The situation in the Gaza Strip has deep roots due to decades of Israeli occupation and oppression of Palestinians and their national and human rights. Since 1967, Palestinians in Gaza Strip and the West Bank, have been living under Israeli military occupation,

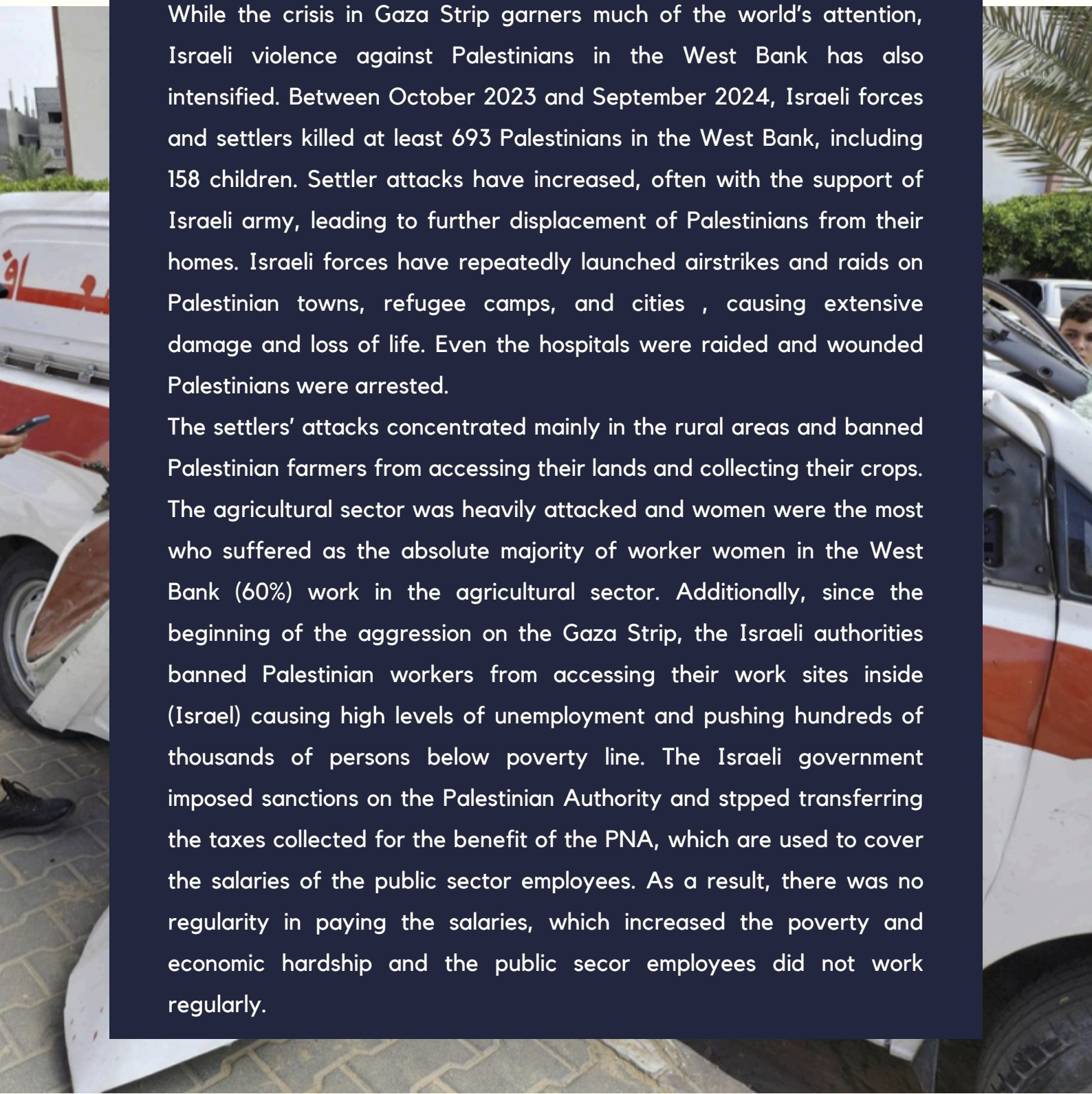
[7] 'Ten weeks of hell' for children in Gaza: UNICEF | UN News.

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

which persisted even after Israel's withdrawal of settlers in 2005. Since 2007, Gaza Strip has been subject to a crippling siege, condemned by the international community as illegal and a form of collective punishment. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the absolute majority of them are refugees who were uprooted from their hometowns during the 1948 Nakba, have endured decades of oppression under this ongoing occupation.

While the crisis in Gaza Strip garners much of the world's attention, Israeli violence against Palestinians in the West Bank has also intensified. Between October 2023 and September 2024, Israeli forces and settlers killed at least 693 Palestinians in the West Bank, including 158 children. Settler attacks have increased, often with the support of Israeli army, leading to further displacement of Palestinians from their homes. Israeli forces have repeatedly launched airstrikes and raids on Palestinian towns, refugee camps, and cities, causing extensive damage and loss of life. Even the hospitals were raided and wounded Palestinians were arrested.

The settlers' attacks concentrated mainly in the rural areas and banned Palestinian farmers from accessing their lands and collecting their crops. The agricultural sector was heavily attacked and women were the most who suffered as the absolute majority of worker women in the West Bank (60%) work in the agricultural sector. Additionally, since the beginning of the aggression on the Gaza Strip, the Israeli authorities banned Palestinian workers from accessing their work sites inside (Israel) causing high levels of unemployment and pushing hundreds of thousands of persons below poverty line. The Israeli government imposed sanctions on the Palestinian Authority and stopped transferring the taxes collected for the benefit of the PNA, which are used to cover the salaries of the public sector employees. As a result, there was no regularity in paying the salaries, which increased the poverty and economic hardship and the public sector employees did not work regularly.



For example, teachers worked two days and three days education was virtual meaning that student had to stay at home and this increased the burden on mothers. The spread of poverty and unemployment was accompanied by the spread of other negative phenomenon, including GBV. Women in particular, lost the sense of security, which affected their role in the community. The Israeli settlers spread on the roads stoning Palestinian cars and that prevented Palestinians, including women, from accessing their daily life potentials. Students could not access their educational institutions as a result to closing the roads and restricting freedom to mobility. At the heart of the ongoing violence is the Israeli regime of apartheid and oppression, which has been in place since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. This system, based on the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, has been recognized as apartheid by international bodies such as the ICJ and numerous human rights organizations. As long as this regime persists, peace and stability in the region remain elusive. Ending the apartheid system embodied in the Israeli occupation and recognizing Palestinians' rights to self-determination, freedom, independence, and dignity is essential to resolving this injustice.

As we delve deeper into this report, we will explore the multifaceted ways in which the ongoing genocide war in the Gaza Strip has impacted women's lives, from their physical safety to their economic stability, and from their roles as caregivers to their prospects for the future. This examination underscores the urgent need for a ceasefire, humanitarian aid, and a renewed commitment to upholding international law to protect the rights and lives of women in armed-conflicted zones.

## **SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA**

The US vetoed a UN Security Council resolution on Oct. 18 that urged for a "humanitarian pause" in the Gaza Strip to allow aid delivery. Similarly, on Oct. 25, separate draft resolutions presented by the US and Russia on developments in the conflict were mutually vetoed.

The West also refrained from condemning Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip and refused to call for a clear "cease-fire" for an extended period. The US vetoed a Security Council resolution on Dec. 8 that demanded an immediate humanitarian cease-fire.



At a UN General Assembly special emergency session on Palestine on Dec. 13, a draft resolution presented by Egypt and co-sponsored by nearly 100 countries, including Turkey, which called for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire, was adopted in a 153 - 10 vote. The US, Austria and the Czech Republic were among the countries voting against.

It was not until March 25 that the Security Council adopted a resolution demanding an immediate cease-fire during the holy month of Ramadan to lead to a permanent and lasting cease-fire. The resolution, prepared by temporary members of the Council, passed with 14 "yes" votes and an abstention from the US.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the US Congress in July. Despite protests and condemnations, many US lawmakers gave Netanyahu multiple standing ovations during his 52-minute speech.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz described Israel as a democratic state with humanitarian principles and said he believes the Israeli army will comply with the rules of international law in everything it does. He also said Germany will immediately examine and fulfill requests for support from Israel.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen pledged "unconditional support" for Israel. She was among the first leaders to visit Israel in a show of "support" after Oct. 7, consistently emphasizing Israel's "right to self-defense" despite civilian casualties. Von Der Leyen has become the target of protests in the European Parliament and on the streets as well, due to her stance. Western countries continue to refrain from condemning Israel, as they continue to reaffirm their commitment to support Tel Aviv in any way possible at the slightest attack on Israel.



## INTENSE MILITARY SUPPORT[2]

Western military support for Israel has remained substantial since the start of the current war. The US provided 70.2% of Israel's conventional weapons imports from 2011-2020, followed by Germany at 23.9% and Italy at 5.9%, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Weapons supplies to Israel continued during the genocide war committed against Palestinians.

In April, the American Congress approved a \$95 billion foreign military aid package, allocating \$17 billion to Israel. An investigation by the Haaretz newspaper in Israel found that 173 military and civilian cargo flights from the US and American military bases transported weapons and ammunition to Israel from Oct. 7, 2023, to July 2024.



Moreover, on September 26, 2024, the Israeli Defense Ministry announced that the Director-General of the Ministry, Eyal Zamir signed an agreement in Washington for Tel Aviv to receive a \$8.7 billion American war aid package. European countries' arms exports to Israel have reached billions of euros in the last decade. Between 2014-2022, the value of export licenses granted to Israel from EU countries was approximately €6.3 billion (\$6.91 billion).

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[2] [Gaza war: Where does Israel get its weapons? \(bbc.com\)](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67484848)

The German government approved at least €1.4 billion (\$1.5 billion) worth of arms sales to Israel between 2015 and 2020, according to the Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) database, a group working to eliminate international arms sales. During that period, the UK exported €426 million in military equipment to Israel, including spare parts for fighter jets, missiles, tanks, light weapons, and ammunition.

Germany increased arms sales to Israel tenfold in 2023 compared to the previous year, delivering weapons worth €326.5 million. Berlin approved 185 additional export license applications for arms supplies from Israel in the weeks following Oct. 7, 2023.

The UK has been selling military equipment to Israel since 1967. In the last 10 years, the scale of military equipment and arms trade from the UK to Israel has reached £495 million (\$650 million), according to CAAT data.

Italy, one of Israel's largest suppliers in Europe, made sales to Israel in the last quarter of 2023 despite the government's "assurance to prevent arms sales under laws prohibiting exports to countries that violate human rights." France sends parts used in military defense equipment to Israel, including those used for the Iron Dome defense system. Civil society organizations have sued France to stop arms sales to Israel. Hungary and Sweden also signed arms production and sales agreements with Israel in 2023.

On the other hand, despite the stances of the US and some European governments that aligned with the occupation, some other international governments declared clear rejection of the Israeli crimes. Among these countries, there was the brave stance of the South African Republic to lodge a case against the Israeli Occupation State in the International Court of Justice. Several Arab and International Countries (from various cotenants) joined South Africa in its case to the ICJ. The masses in the streets of Europe and the USA itself, marched protesting against the genocide war, creating an unprecedented case of solidarity with Palestinians and representing a blow to the governments that aligned with the occupation. The international solidarity movements played a vital role in publicizing the occupation's crimes and Women's Movements in particular, were in the first line of the front to protest against the Israeli crimes and lobbying their national governments to halt their support to the occupation.

## **ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF THE GAZA STRIP'S POPULATION WAS KILLED, INJURED, OR MISSING DUE TO THE ISRAELI GENOCIDE WAR[3]**

About 10% of the Gaza Strip's population has been killed, injured, or missing due to the 365-day genocide carried out by Israel in the Gaza Strip, which started on October 7, 2023.

Euro-Med Monitor's preliminary statistics indicate that more than 50,000 Palestinians have been killed. This number includes those reportedly trapped under the rubble of destroyed buildings, or whose bodies are either stuck on roads or in border areas that have been completely destroyed and thus cannot be recovered. More than about 100,000 others, meanwhile, have been injured. The majority of these victims were civilians, mostly women and children, while about 3,000 additional Palestinians have simply disappeared after being arrested from the Gaza Strip, with their fate remaining unknown.

Data and statistics indicate that at least 51,000 people have died as a result of the Israeli blockade of the entire Gaza Strip; denial of medical care; collapse of the health sector due to Israel's targeting and blockade; insufficient ambulance services due to said targeting and blockade, as well as a severe shortage of basic medicines, particularly for patients with chronic illnesses and cancer; prevention of the ability to travel abroad for treatment; and the spread of infectious diseases and epidemics. Accordingly, the natural death rate increased from an estimated 3.5 per 1,000 persons before the start of the genocide war, to 22 per 1,000 persons during the year of genocide war.



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[3] [10% Of Gaza Strip Residents Have Either Been Killed, Injured, or Reported Missing, \(Report\) - AL24 News](#)

"As part of the ongoing genocide carried out by the Israeli occupation army with full American support, the occupation army has exterminated 902 Palestinian families, erasing them from the civil registry by killing all their members during a year of genocide in Gaza," said the government media office in Gaza Strip. In staggering figures, the office clarified that the Israeli army "exterminated 1,364 Palestinian families by killing all their members, leaving only one individual per family, and similarly wiped out 3,472 Palestinian families, leaving just two individuals per family."<sup>[4]</sup>

As a form of retaliation and collective punishment against the people of the Gaza Strip, Israel has steadily targeted civilians, civilian objects, and UN-flagged shelter centers in an effort to cause as many casualties as possible. This constitutes full-fledged war crimes and crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute, which governs the International Criminal Court, as well as violations of international humanitarian law and the 1949 Geneva Conventions.



According to the reported figures, more than 747 medical workers were killed, including over 50 highly specialized doctors. The genocide war has also impacted aid workers and journalists, with at least 278 aid workers, including 201 UN staff members and up to 140 media workers reported killed. At least 34 Palestinians, mostly children, are reported to have died from malnutrition. Reports indicate that 539 internally displaced persons have reportedly been killed while sheltering in UN facilities. Additionally, there are reports of at least 40 Palestinians dying while in Israeli military custody, including medical professionals who were allegedly subjected to mistreatment.<sup>[5]</sup>

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[4] 902 Palestinian families wiped out in Gaza by Israel over past year: Media office ([aa.com.tr](http://aa.com.tr))

[5] [unfpa-opt-hro-august-2024\\_0.pdf](#)

## FORCE DISPLACEMENT-ISRAEL'S DEADLY ASSAULT ON GAZA'S SAFE HAVENS



According to the UN, at least 1.9 million persons- or about 90 percent of the population- across the Gaza Strip are internally displaced, including people displaced up to nine or 10 times in sequence. In a devastating campaign, the Israeli army has intensified its attacks on schools sheltering displaced civilians in Gaza City, resulting in hundreds of casualties. These strikes, coupled with forced evacuation orders, appear to be part of a systematic effort to destabilize and displace the Palestinian population. Despite claims of targeting military objects, the widespread destruction of civilian shelters, particularly UNRWA schools, suggests a strategy aimed at depriving Palestinians of security and stability.

This ongoing military offensive, now in its 13th month, has seen Israeli forces consistently bombing civilian targets and displaced persons centers, many housed in UN facilities. These actions, which have led to mass casualties among civilians, are being widely condemned as crimes against humanity and war crimes. Israel's approach, characterized by a blatant disregard for international humanitarian law, includes targeting designated humanitarian zones and essential infrastructure, seemingly as part of a broader policy of forced relocation and destruction of vital resources in the Gaza Strip.

A rapid analysis carried out by UNDP indicates that 37% of women who are internally displaced in the southern Gaza Strip are living in tents on streets and empty areas, 31% in overcrowded UNRWA schools, and 15% seeking shelter with relatives. A striking 94% of surveyed women report a lack of privacy and safety in their current living situations. The war has also taken a heavy toll on families, with 51% of surveyed women having lost at least one family member, and 6% having lost their husbands.[6]

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[6] [Gaza-War-Insights-displaced-women-1.pdf](#) (kvinnaatillkvinna.org)

## DESTRUCTION

Israel's fierce military assaults have caused over 70% of the Gaza Strip's buildings to be destroyed or severely damaged [7], forcing over two million Palestinians (out of roughly 2.3 million) to evacuate. The majority of these people have been forced to relocate multiple times, leaving them to live in filthy, uncomfortable temporary tents that are susceptible to the elements, and rendering them especially vulnerable to infectious diseases that spread quickly in crowded areas.

Israel has systematically destroyed large portions of agricultural land in the Gaza Strip, particularly in the northern areas. According to the Euro-Med Monitor [8], this destruction is part of a broader strategy that has eliminated nearly 80% of Gaza's agricultural land since October 2023, either through direct destruction or by incorporating it into a "buffer zone." These actions have severely impacted food security for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, contributing to what it describes as a humanitarian crisis. Israel has destroyed agricultural lands along the eastern and northern borders of the Gaza Strip to a depth of about two kilometers, amounting to approximately 96 square kilometers. The report alleges that these actions, combined with restrictions on food and aid entering, have led to severe food shortages and famine-like conditions in parts of the territory.

According to the UNCTAD, Gaza's "unprecedented destruction will take tens of billions of dollars and decades to reverse". A UNDP report states "The level of destruction in Gaza is such that rebuilding public infrastructure would require external assistance on a scale not seen since 1948", the report also states that the Gaza Strip needs approximately 80 years to restore all the fully destroyed housing units, following the same reconstruction patterns as the last two escalations.[9]

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[7] [Israeli bombardment destroys more than 70% of civilian infrastructure in Gaza: UN agency – Middle East Monitor](#)

[8] [Gaza: Israel's destruction of hundreds of dunams of agricultural land is expression of its insistence on committing genocide \(euromedmonitor.org\)](#)

[9] [Scorched-earth: making Gaza uninhabitable for generations to come - Greenpeace Aotearoa](#)

In a joint report by the World Bank and the United Nations, prepared with financial support from the European Union, the estimated cost of damage to buildings and critical infrastructure in the Gaza Strip is around \$18.5 billion, equivalent to 97% of the total GDP of the West Bank and Gaza combined for 2022. The damage affects every sector of the economy, with housing accounting for 72% of the costs, public service infrastructure (water, health, and education) accounting for 19%, and commercial and industrial buildings accounting for 9%. The destruction has left an estimated 26 million tons of debris and rubble, which is expected to take years to remove.[10]

The report highlights severe damage to essential services. In the health sector, 84% of facilities have been damaged or destroyed, severely limiting access to healthcare, medicine, and life-saving treatments. The water and sanitation system has nearly collapsed, delivering less than 5% of its previous output. Power networks, including solar-generated systems, have been heavily impacted, resulting in an almost total power blackout since the first week of the conflict. Additionally, 92% of primary roads have been destroyed or damaged, and communications infrastructure has been seriously impaired, making the delivery of humanitarian aid extremely challenging.

## HYGIENE AND HEALTH CHALLENGES

The ongoing genocide war in the Gaza Strip has had a devastating impact on the healthcare system and civil infrastructure. The statistics paint a grim picture of the situation, with 986 health workers reported killed, while the occupation has detained 310 others, injuring hundreds. Additionally, the Israeli occupation forces have destroyed 130 ambulances and 1,012 attacks on the health sector recorded - 492 in Gaza and 520 in the West Bank.[11] This has severely compromised the ability to provide medical care to those in need. The healthcare infrastructure in the Gaza Strip has been hit hard. Out of 36 hospitals in the Gaza Strip region, only 16 are partially functional, with a mere 8

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[10] [Joint World Bank, UN Report Assesses Damage to Gaza's Infrastructure](#)

[11] [One year of devastation: Gaza's ongoing struggle for survival \(wafa.ps\)](#)



hospitals and 4 field hospitals are were still able to provide maternal health services. The situation is equally dire for primary healthcare, with just 49 out of 119 primary healthcare centers remaining partially functional. This dramatic reduction in healthcare capacity has left the population vulnerable and without adequate access to essential medical services.[12]

The number of beds available in operating hospitals and field hospitals across the Gaza Strip is down to less than 1,500, which is insufficient to accommodate the needs of over two million persons. This is in contrast to the 3,500 beds that were available before 7 October 2023.[13] The scarcity of medical supplies and equipment is making the bed shortage worse, as is the Israeli army's ongoing, systematic, and widespread destruction of hospitals and health facilities. Additionally, there has been a notable rise in the number of wounded and sick, which has resulted in a weak medical response and serious health complications for these individuals, as well as avoidable deaths among the elderly.

The intense heat and accumulation of solid waste also attract insects such as mosquitoes. Communities often burn waste piles in an effort to stop the spread of insects and diseases, but the release of toxic fumes poses additional health risks.

Medical evacuations of critically ill and injured patients outside the Gaza Strip remain generally suspended since the closure of the Rafah crossing on 7 May, with few exceptions allowed in recent months. World Health Organization (WHO) reports that on 15 August, 11 children suffering from cancer, alongside 17 companions, were evacuated to Jordan through Karem Abu Salem Crossing Point. Five other children with cancer and two who had suffered amputations, alongside their 10 companions, were evacuated from the Gaza Strip on 26 August. Overall, only 124 patients and 137 companions have been evacuated from on four separate occasions since 7 May, while an estimated 12,000 patients have been unable to leave and receive urgently needed medical care abroad since then.[14]

[12] [unfpa-opt-hro-august-2024\\_0.pdf](#)

[13] [Humanitarian Situation Update #193 | Gaza Strip | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory \(ochaopt.org\)](#)

[14] [Humanitarian Situation Update #214 | Gaza Strip | United Nations Office for the Coordination](#)

More than 1,100 kidney failure patients suffer from not being able to obtain dialysis services. Additionally, cancer diagnostic services are rendered unavailable. Notably, over 2,000 people typically receive a cancer diagnosis each year in the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, 225,000 individuals with high blood pressure, 45,000 patients with cardiovascular illnesses, and 71,000 individuals with diabetes face a severe lack of medications and treatments, in addition to malnutrition.[15]

More than 162,000 women suffer from or are at risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as hypertension, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. Women, in particular older women, in the Gaza Strip have historically been at a higher risk of NCDs. There are over 30,841 women at risk of diabetes, 107,443 women at risk of hypertension, 18,583 women at risk of cardiovascular diseases, and 5,201 women with cancer. Disruption in basic care for these diseases can result in long-term complications or death.[16]

Personal hygiene has become a significant challenge, with 96% of women unable to meet their basic hygiene needs. Access to clean water is severely limited, affecting both personal and menstrual hygiene. Alarmingly, 38% of women report showering only once every three weeks or less. The lack of menstrual hygiene supplies and privacy compounds these issues, with 94% of women citing lack of clean water as a key challenge for menstrual hygiene.[17]

There is limited privacy for menstrual hygiene management for over 690,000 women and girls in the Gaza Strip. Women and girls in Gaza are resorting to the use of desperate coping mechanisms including using improvised sanitary cloth or sponges as sanitary pads to compensate for the lack of menstrual items. 10 million disposable menstrual pads are needed each month to cover the needs and preserve the dignity of women in the Gaza Strip.[18]

[15] [Ongoing genocide in Gaza: Six indicators of Israel's failure to comply with ICJ ruling \(euromedmonitor.org\)](https://www.euromedmonitor.org)

[16] [Gender Alert: Gaza: A War on Women's Health | Publications | UN Women – Arab States](https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2024/10/gender-alert-gaza)

[17] [Gaza-War-Insights-displaced-women-1.pdf \(kvinnatillkvinna.org\)](https://www.kvinnatillkvinna.org)

[18] [unfpa-situation-report-5\\_0.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa-situation-report-5_0.pdf)

## MATERNAL AND NEONATAL HEALTH[19]

The ongoing genocide war in the occupied Palestinian territory has severely impacted the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls, particularly in Gaza Strip. There are currently 1.32 million women of reproductive age across the region, with 525,000 in Gaza Strip and 798,000 in the West Bank. Among these, approximately 122,000 women are pregnant, with 48,000 in Gaza Strip and 74,000 in the West Bank. On average, there are 450 deliveries daily, with 180 occurring in Gaza Strip and 270 in the West Bank.

The situation in Gaza Strip is particularly dire, with 500,000 women of reproductive age, including 155,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women lacking access to crucial healthcare services. These include antenatal and postnatal care, family planning, and management of sexually transmitted infections. The impact of this lack of access is evident in the alarming increase in pregnancy complications and maternal mortality. Since October 2023, miscarriages in Gaza have increased by a staggering 300%, and six out of ten women who are or have been pregnant have reported pregnancy complications. Most concerning, pregnant women are now three times more likely to die during childbirth than before October 2023.



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[19] [unfpa-opt-hro-august-2024\\_0.pdf](#)

The health of both mothers and newborns has been significantly compromised. A substantial portion of births now consists of preterm and low birth-weight babies, indicating the severe stress and lack of proper care during pregnancy. Malnutrition is rampant among expectant mothers, with 76% of pregnant women suffering from anemia and urgently needing prenatal vitamins and supplements. The challenges extend beyond the pregnancy, as 72% of mothers in Gaza Strip face difficulties in breastfeeding due to malnutrition and anxiety. Furthermore, for those unable to breastfeed, the situation is exacerbated by the scarcity and unaffordability of milk formula.

These statistics paint a grim picture of the reproductive health crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in Gaza Strip. The lack of access to essential healthcare services, coupled with the dire living conditions and ongoing conflict, has created a perfect storm of health risks for women of reproductive age, pregnant women, and newborns. Urgent intervention is needed to address these critical health needs and prevent further deterioration of maternal and child health in the region.

The shortage of anticoagulants, crucial for pregnant women at risk of blood clots, and the interruption of treatments for chronic conditions like HIV and cancer have further compromised women's health. The scarcity of clean water and sanitation facilities in overcrowded shelters has increased the risk of infections and other health complications. Access to clean water is critical for breastfeeding mothers. Pregnant and lactating women have higher daily water and caloric intake requirements. Pregnant and lactating women need 7.5 liters of water a day to keep themselves and their babies healthy and hydrated, or five times the amount presently available. Dehydration during breastfeeding induces lack of energy and fatigue, reduces breast milk supply, and has negative consequences for infants. UNFPA reports that more than 7,000 deliveries took place in the first 47 days of the war.[20]

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[20] [Lives in Peril: Gaza's Pregnant, Nursing Mothers, and Children Face Imminent Danger Amid Desperate Water Shortage](#) | ActionAid International

Most health Facilities like the Emirati Hospital, which used to handle 20 deliveries a day, are now delivering over 100 babies per day, far beyond their capacity. Women are giving birth under unsanitary and unsafe conditions, with inadequate medical supplies and often without trained health professionals.[21]

## **IMPACT ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS**

The war has severely limited access to comprehensive sexual education and SRH services. The lack of privacy in overcrowded shelters and the scarcity of menstrual hygiene products have created additional challenges for women and girls. The absence of safe spaces and the increased risk of gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and early forced marriages, have further compromised the SRH rights of women and girls in Gaza Strip.

The current crisis is likely to have medium to long-term consequences on women's SRH that extend beyond immediate trauma. The lack of access to healthcare, nutrition, and education makes women and girls vulnerable to a range of negative outcomes, including increased maternal and newborn deaths, sexually transmitted infections, and limited control over their reproductive choices. The destruction of healthcare infrastructure and the loss of medical personnel will have lasting impacts on the ability to provide adequate SRH services in Gaza Strip.

## **A SEVERE WATER CRISIS AND DEADLY DISEASES**

The lack of clean water, extreme overcrowding, breakdown of sanitation infrastructure, build-up of waste, scarcity of cleaning and sterilization supplies, and frequent forced evacuations all contribute to the rapid spread of infectious diseases.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), data, 990,000 cases of acute respiratory infections—574,000 of acute watery diarrhea, 107,000 of jaundice syndrome, and 12,000 of bloody diarrhea—were recorded as of 7 July 2024, with

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[21] [Main maternity hospital in Rafah stops admitting patients](#) | Reuters

the actual number of infections likely much higher.[22] Rashes and skin infections, particularly among children, are also on the rise. This trend correlates with a drop in routine vaccination rates and a higher chance of vaccine-preventable illnesses like the poliovirus, which was recently found to be present in the Gaza Strip's wastewater.

Women and girls face a heightened risk of exposure to Hepatitis A due to their traditional domestic responsibilities and roles in caregiving , including caring for sick family members. More than 150,000 persons in the Palestinian territory have contracted skin diseases in the squalid conditions into which displaced people in the enclave have been forced since the start of Israel's war on Gaza Strip, according to the World Health Organization.[23]

## FOOD INSECURITY

An international report warned in late June of the ongoing high risk of famine throughout Gaza due to the continuation of the war and restrictions on humanitarian access. The report stated that nearly 96% of Gaza's population (2.1 million people) faces high levels of acute food insecurity as a result of Israel's persistent efforts to obstruct the entry of aid supplies. In addition to a lack of infant formulae, few tests available to identify malnutrition, and uneven distribution of nutritional supplements, women struggle to breastfeed their babies as a result of psychological trauma, stress, and malnourishment.[24]

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report classified the entire Gaza Strip as being in an emergency state, which is the fourth phase of classification preceding famine (the fifth phase). The report noted that over 495,000 people (22% of the population) face catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity in the fifth phase, where families experience severe food shortages, starvation, and exhaustion of their coping capacities.[25]

[22] [Fact Sheet: 288 Days of Israel's Genocide in Gaza: By the Numbers | IMEU](#)

[23] [Dangerous skin diseases spreading among children in Gaza | Israel-Palestine conflict News | Al Jazeera](#)

[24] [One year of devastation: Gaza's ongoing struggle for survival \(wafa.ps\)](#)

[25] [GAZA STRIP: Risk of Famine as 495,000 people face catastrophic acute food insecurity \(IPC Phase 5\) | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](#)

As a result of these conditions, which have led to malnutrition, dehydration, and a lack of medical supplies, more than 36 children have died, and dozens continue to suffer from malnutrition and starvation, especially in the northern sector.[26]

UNRWA's Commissioner-General posted on his official X account: "In Gaza, over 1 million people did not receive food rations in August. In September, the number climbed to more than 1.4 million. Meanwhile, over 100,000 metric tons of food supplies, are stranded outside Gaza due to access restrictions, insecurity, damaged roads + the breakdown of law & order. Again & again hunger is spreading in Gaza. It is entirely man-made. Nearly 70 per cent of crop fields have been destroyed. An entire population is forced to exclusively rely on humanitarian aid. Restrictions and delays in aid deliveries only worsen an already dire situation for displaced families. With winter approaching and weather conditions deteriorating, lack of adequate humanitarian supplies will only generate more suffering." [27]

With the entire Gaza Strip classified as experiencing either emergency or catastrophic levels of food insecurity (IPC Phases 4 and 5), families are resorting to harmful coping mechanisms. Women, in particular, have been reported to fast for several days to ensure their children have enough to eat. Reports of bartering essential items, begging, and scavenging under rubble are widespread.

The crisis has forced children, including boys and girls, into labor. Many children work on the streets, either selling goods or begging to contribute to their families' survival. This exploitation exposes them to further risks of violence and abuse.

Older women and female heads of household face significant barriers when trying to access food and humanitarian aid, including security risks at distribution sites and challenges navigating overcrowded shelters.

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[26] [Children are dying of starvation in their parents' arms as famine spreads through Gaza | CNN](#)

[27] [In Gaza, over 1 million people did not receive food rations in August | UNRWA](#)

## SHIFTING GENDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As displacement forces families into survival mode, traditional gender roles are shifting. Women, who were already burdened with caregiving responsibilities, now also bear the weight of finding food, water, and safety for their families. Men, many of whom have lost their jobs due to the conflict, are increasingly contributing to domestic tasks, although key decisions around family mobility and relocation remain predominantly male responsibilities.

The unrealistic expectations placed on women to manage the family's needs in a situation of extreme scarcity have increased incidents of verbal and physical violence from male partners. Women are being blamed for the hardships faced by families, leading to more instances of intimate partner violence.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

The ongoing violence, displacement, and loss have caused widespread mental health crises, particularly among children. 99% of women report experiencing fear, anxiety, and panic attacks, while 95% report loss of appetite and numbness. For children, the trauma is even more severe, with reports of increased regressive behaviors, such as bedwetting, and children as young as five expressing a wish to die to escape the conditions.[28]

The constant exposure to violence is expected to have long-term psychological impacts on children and youth, leading to intergenerational trauma. Caregivers, many of whom are also dealing with their mental health issues, are struggling to provide adequate emotional support for their children.

The psychological toll of the war on displaced women is immense. Reports reveal a high prevalence of fear, anxiety, despair, anger, and sleep issues among the respondents. The prolonged exposure to violence and inhumane living conditions has led to an erosion of coping mechanisms, raising concerns about increased gender-based violence risks, particularly in overcrowded shelters and makeshift camps.

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[28] [Gaza-War-Insights-displaced-women-1.pdf](#) (kvinnaatillkvinna.org).



Women and girls make up approximately 45 percent of people with disabilities in Gaza. Most shelters and water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities are not equipped for people with disabilities. Shelters often lack adequate mattresses and beds, which can cause medical complications that cannot be treated in unsterilized conditions. Women and girls are usually expected to be the primary caregivers for family members with a disability, which can add pressure and feelings of anxiety or guilt, especially where the war caused a disability or injury. In this caring role, women and girls are looked to for psychosocial support, when they are experiencing the same needs and are thus limited in their ability to support others.[29]

## PROTECTION

All displaced civilians in the Gaza Strip - women and girls, men and boys - search for safety in overcrowded shelters and makeshift camps, amidst the rubble in the streets and at relatives' homes, looking for places that might be safe from airstrikes. However, no place and no one is safe in Gaza. As the war continues, civilians suffer from an almost complete erosion of individual and collective adaptation and coping mechanisms. With the prolonged exposure to violence and inhumane living conditions, tensions are reportedly increasing within families and communities - particularly in overcrowded shelters and makeshift camps - which in turn raises increasing concerns about gender-related protection risks, including gender-based violence (GBV).[30] Due to the massive destruction and the continued warfare, there is very limited to no capacity to provide GBV response services in the Gaza Strip, including a lack of safe havens for GBV survivors as the two shelters previously operating have been destroyed. The absence of any GBV protection mechanism and services further exacerbates the vulnerability of women and girls, and it is closely linked with the expected increase in sexual and gender-based violence as the war continues.

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[29] Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #16 [EN/AR/HE] | OCHA (unocha.org)

[30] Gender alert: The gendered impact of the crisis in Gaza | Publications | UN Women – Headquarters

Throughout the participant/field observation carried out throughout this rapid analysis, a few women reported they had been exposed to violence by their husbands and/or relatives (including verbal, psychological, and physical violence) during the war, while others spoke of increased tensions and quarrels between husbands and amongst families.

In overcrowded shelters, the lack of adequate and dignified facilities for menstrual health management affects all menstruating women and girls. Daily trips searching for a bathroom and toilet pose protection risks, as women look for a minimum of water, privacy and dignity. Reports of women traveling in groups or with male relatives to avoid harassment are common. Nighttime use of toilets is particularly dangerous due to the absence of adequate lighting.

There is no safe shelter in Gaza, and many IDP centers are overcrowded and lack basic amenities. Women and children are particularly vulnerable in these environments, where the lack of privacy, proper shelter materials, and lighting contribute to heightened risks of violence and exploitation. Some shelters have transparent tents, offering little protection or privacy. With overcrowded tents, some families must share their spaces with strangers, exacerbating feelings of insecurity and discomfort.

The continued bombardment of the Gaza Strip creates constant fear among residents, especially parents worried for their children's safety. Gender-based violence is rising, with increasing reports of domestic violence and early marriages as coping strategies. As a direct consequence of the ongoing stress and scarcity, verbal and physical violence against women is escalating. The lack of GBV services and support due to the destruction of infrastructure has left survivors without access to crucial help, with many unable to access shelters or psychosocial support.



## WOMEN FROM GAZA BEING SUBJECTED TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE, AND TORTURE BY ISRAELI FORCES

Palestinian men, women, and children are subjected to rape, physical harassment, and threats of sexual violence. Reports by UNRWA disclosed sexual abuse against both men and women and the insertion of what appears to be an electrified metal stick into prisoners' rectums. In an official statement by UN experts, it was affirmed that Palestinian women are subjected to sexual assaults and rape.[31] They confirmed that at least two female Palestinian detainees in the occupation's detention centers were reportedly raped while others were reportedly threatened with rape and sexual violence.

Human Rights Organizations have documented new testimonies from female Palestinian detainees from Gaza Strip, revealing severe mistreatment by Israeli forces. These women report experiencing sexual violence, torture, and inhumane treatment during their arrest and detention. The abuse includes beatings, rape threats, forced nudity, strip searches in front of male soldiers, verbal harassment, and denial of necessities such as food, medicine, and menstrual products.



[31] [Israel/oPt: UN experts appalled by reported human rights violations against Palestinian women and girls](#) | OHCHR

Multiple women provided detailed accounts of their experiences. They described being arrested from schools sheltering displaced people, subjected to repeated strip searches, held in cage-like structures in freezing conditions, and enduring prolonged interrogations. The detainees reported being threatened with rape and separation from their children if they did not comply with orders, including filming videos attacking Hamas. Many women were transferred to Israeli prisons, where they continued to face harsh conditions and abuse.

The actual number of affected women may be higher, as many are reluctant to disclose such information due to social norms, trauma, or safety concerns. These actions are as part of a larger campaign to dehumanize Palestinians in Gaza, especially women and children. These violations amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

A report<sup>[32]</sup> produced by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), indicates that the Palestinian economy lost an estimated 8.7% of its real GDP in 2023 and is projected to lose 25.8% in 2024 compared to pre-war projections. If the war continues, GDP losses could reach 29%. All economic sectors have been severely affected, with the construction sector experiencing the most substantial decline of 75.2%.

## LABOR MARKET AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate in the occupied Palestinian territory is estimated to have reached 46.1% after six months of war, compared to 25.7% before the war. This rate could increase to 47.8% if the war continues. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) 160,000 workers from the West Bank have either lost their jobs in Israel and the settlements, at least temporarily or are at risk of losing them as a result of restrictions imposed on Palestinians' access to the Israeli labor market and the closures of crossings from the West Bank into Israel and the settlements.

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[32] [2400257e-gaza\\_war-\\_expected\\_socioeconomic\\_impacts-pb.pdf\(undp.org\)](#)

Only 8,000 temporary permits have been issued by Israel for workers from the West Bank since the current war began. [33]

The war has caused a sharp increase in unemployment in the occupied Palestinian territory, which reached unprecedented rates in Gaza Strip. Before the war, Gaza was already grappling with a “hyper-unemployment” rate of 45 percent, with youth unemployment at nearly 62.6 percent in 2022. The freeze of work permits in Israel and the destruction of physical assets, personal injuries, internal displacement, and the halt of economic activity have compounded the situation.[34]

The ILO estimates that as of 31 January 2024, 507,000 jobs had been lost across the occupied Palestinian territory. This includes 201,000 jobs lost in Gaza, with an estimated loss of 12.3 million new Israeli shekels (NIS) in total daily labor income. Given that already 89 percent of wage employees in the private sector in Gaza earned less than the State of Palestine minimum monthly wage (697 NIS) in 2022, even in the best-case scenario, a considerable share of people in Gaza will be living in extreme poverty. The Palestinian unemployment rate was estimated at 57 percent during the first quarter of 2024.[35]

## HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION AND POVERTY

All household categories have been affected, with middle-class consumption estimated to have declined by 35.6% after six months of war. This could further decrease to 38.6% if the war continues. The poverty rate is projected to surge from 38.8% to 60.7% if the war extends, potentially pushing 1.86 million people into poverty.

The economic impact on women has been severe. According to survey funded by UNDP indicates that before the war, 68% of surveyed women had no income, and among those who did, 81% lost their livelihoods due to the conflict. Notably, 30% of surveyed women are now the sole breadwinners for their families. The financial strain is evident, with 95% of displaced women unable to meet their basic needs. The loss of essential personal documents, experienced by 13% of the women, further complicates their access to aid and services.[36]

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[33] ILO (2024). Impact of the war in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: 1 Bulletin No. 3.

[34] [Main maternity hospital in Rafah stops admitting patients | Reuters](#).

[35] ILO (2024) estimates based on the scenario that the war will continue until end of March 2024.

[36] [Gaza-War-Insights-displaced-women-1.pdf](#) (kvinnatillkvinna.org).

In the current Israeli war in the Gaza Strip, what has garnered the attention of human rights and humanitarian actors is the extent to which civilians, including women and children, have borne the brunt of much of the direct violence. As many women who have survived thus far have been left as the sole caretakers of their remaining family members, they have directly felt the burden of attempting to find food, water, medical care, and even a secure shelter for their families. As Palestine reports one of the lowest female labor participation rates in the world, despite their high level of education, there will be significant economic barriers to these women as they attempt to rebuild their lives.

Today, after being displaced from their homes or having their homes destroyed, many families have taken shelter in overcrowded and underserviced shelters, where conditions are ripe for rapid deterioration of health and well-being, especially for women and children. When women were able to secure food, they limited themselves to one meal per day in order to prioritize feeding their children.[37]

Gender-based violence and discrimination are persistent across societies, and rates across Palestine were already unacceptable before the current crisis. Unfortunately, the societal fragmentation, economic deterioration, and living conditions of war increase the risk for women and girls in Gaza. It is well known that displaced women are at increased risk of violence and abuse in overcrowded shelter settings, and there is almost no capacity for monitoring, counseling, or first aid required to respond to incidents. Many young girls have been orphaned, leaving them extremely vulnerable if they have no surviving extended family. Further, conditions of abject poverty and marginalization increase the risk of child marriage, which was already higher in Gaza than in the West Bank.

The death toll and destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza in such a short time, coupled with an Israeli-imposed siege that has prevented the import of needed goods, has caused a humanitarian catastrophe with

[37] Gaza: After two months of war, women last to eat and children first to die | CARE International ([care-international.org](https://www.care-international.org)).

little precedent in modern times—the chief of the UN OCHA called the situation, “The worst ever... I don’t think I’ve seen anything like this before.”[38] It has become increasingly clear that there is no one and nowhere that is safe in Gaza, especially while the bombs continue to drop. Even after they stop, however, many questions remain about what type of society will be left. No community can successfully rebuild without the participation of all its members, including women. Their specific needs, including health, education, and economy, must be considered in any efforts meant to benefit those in Gaza and those displaced elsewhere.

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.

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.

## **THE CATASTROPHIC DAMAGES TO THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN GAZA: GENDER IMPACTS**

The ongoing genocide in Gaza has deprived 718,000 students in Gaza from accessing education (schools and universities) for one full year. Recent Israeli attacks have tragically led to a surge in attacks on schools, exacerbating the dire humanitarian crisis. Satellite-derived analysis from 6 September found that at least 71 schools were destroyed, with another 48 schools lost at least half of their structures. Some 161 UNRWA school buildings have either suffered a direct hit or were damaged from 7 October 2023 until 6 September 2024; this represents 86.1 per cent of all UNRWA school buildings in Gaza. UNRWA school buildings have

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[39] [Israel has utterly devastated Gaza - The Washington Post](#)

either suffered a direct hit or were damaged from 7 October 2023 until 6 September 2024; this represents 86.1 per cent of all UNRWA school buildings in Gaza. UNRWA school buildings have been used as emergency shelters to host a significant number of displaced people.<sup>[1]</sup>All of Gaza's 19 universities have been demolished, depriving over 88,000 youth of higher education and risking the future of an entire generation.<sup>[40]</sup>

Israeli military attacks on UNRWA premises and staff have been accompanied by an insidious incitement campaign by Israel aimed at smearing and destroying this humanitarian agency, which is serving as a lifeline for millions of Palestine refugees and is recognized as the indispensable backbone of international humanitarian operations in Gaza, in the midst of this catastrophe.

According to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 124 government schools have sustained severe damage due to the war on the Gaza Strip, with more than 62 government schools completely destroyed and 126 government schools subjected to bombing and vandalism.

The ministry recorded the murder of more than 11,001 students and injuries to over 17,772 others since the outbreak of the war on the Gaza Strip, while 529 educational staff members have been martyred, and more than 2,463 teachers from schools and universities have been injured.

The genocide has prevented 39,000 students from sitting for their Tawjihi high-school exams, either because hundreds of them became victims of the aggression or due to their interruption in education caused by the war and the comprehensive destruction of the educational process.

Girls, in particular, face challenges accessing education. Many are confined to their tents due to safety concerns, while boys are more often sent out to work. This situation is expected to contribute to increased school dropout rates, early marriages, and child labor, further compounding the long-term impact on children's education and development.

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[40] [40,000 Palestinians have been killed, nearly 100,000 Palestinians have been injured in Israeli attacks - Letter from the State of Palestine \(A/ES-10/1006-S/2024/599\) - Question of Palestine \(un.org\)](#)



## **WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY AGENDA: ADDRESSING GENDER-SPECIFIC NEEDS IN THE GAZA HUMANITARIAN CRISIS**

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls, exacerbating pre-existing gender inequalities and exposing them to heightened risks of violence, discrimination, and marginalization. The Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda, which emphasizes the critical role of women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, as well as the protection of their rights during and after war, offers a framework for ensuring that the rights, needs, and contributions of women and girls are prioritized in the response to the Gaza crisis.

### **1. PARTICIPATION: ENSURING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN PEACE AND RECOVERY EFFORTS**

The WPS Agenda underscores the need for women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in peace processes, humanitarian responses, and post-war reconstruction. In Gaza, however, women have largely been excluded from peace negotiations and decision-making processes related to the war and recovery efforts. Women, particularly those who are heads of households, caregivers, or leaders in their communities, must be included in all levels of planning and decision-making.

By empowering women as leaders and active participants in peace and recovery processes, the international community can harness their unique perspectives and contributions, ensuring more sustainable and inclusive solutions. Women's involvement in rebuilding homes, restoring livelihoods, and reconstructing institutions will be crucial for achieving long-term peace and stability.



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## **2. PROTECTION: ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND ENSURING PHYSICAL SAFETY**

The Gaza genocide war has exacerbated the vulnerabilities of women and girls, subjecting them to increased risks of gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual violence, exploitation, and abuse. The destruction of shelters, schools, and healthcare facilities has left women and girls exposed to unsafe living conditions, where their privacy, dignity, and physical safety are severely compromised. Overcrowded shelters, lack of adequate WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities, and limited access to menstrual hygiene products further exacerbate their vulnerability.

The WPS Agenda calls for enhanced protection mechanisms to safeguard women and girls from violence, especially in war and post-war settings. In Gaza, ensuring the provision of gender-segregated shelters, safe latrines, and dedicated services for GBV survivors is critical. Humanitarian actors must work to prevent sexual violence, provide psychosocial support, and ensure that women and girls can access healthcare, legal aid, and protection services in safe and dignified conditions. Unfortunately, international efforts failed to protect Palestinian women during the war on Gaza, as the Security Council failed to follow up on the implementation of Security Council resolutions related to the women, security and peace agenda, including Security Council Resolution 1325 with its four pillars.

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## **3. PREVENTION: ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF GENDER INEQUALITY AND CONFLICT**

The WPS Agenda stresses the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting the prevention of future violence, including by tackling gender inequality. In Gaza, systemic gender discrimination, patriarchal social norms, and economic marginalization have contributed to the heightened vulnerability of women and girls during the war. Women's lack of access to education, economic opportunities, and healthcare further exacerbates their suffering and limits their ability to recover from the impacts of war.

To prevent future gaps and create a more just and equitable society, efforts must be made to address the structural inequalities that disproportionately affect women. This includes promoting women's economic empowerment, ensuring access to education, and supporting gender-sensitive policies that promote equality. Women's roles as peacebuilders and community leaders should be strengthened to prevent the recurrence of violence and promote sustainable peace.

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#### **4. RELIEF AND RECOVERY: IMPLEMENTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE HUMANITARIAN AID**

The humanitarian response to the crisis in Gaza must be gender-responsive, addressing the specific needs of women and girls in both the short-term and long-term recovery processes. The WPS Agenda emphasizes the need for relief and recovery efforts to prioritize women's health, safety, and economic security. In Gaza, this means ensuring that women and girls have access to essential services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, psychosocial support, and food security, as well as access to dignity kits and other non-food items tailored to their needs.

Humanitarian aid must be targeted at the most vulnerable groups, including pregnant women, widows, women with disabilities, and women heads of households. Gender-sensitive interventions should include cash assistance programs, vocational training, and support for women's livelihoods to ensure that they can rebuild their lives and contribute to their families and communities.



## RECOMMENDATIONS



### **Immediate Action and International Response**

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An immediate and urgent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip is critical and must be implemented without delay. This ceasefire should be accompanied by measures to enable the unimpeded distribution of medical supplies, food, clean water, and other essential resources to meet basic humanitarian needs. The international community must take swift action to ensure Israel's compliance with international law and the decisions of the International Court of Justice including the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice issued in July 2024, which stipulated the illegality of the occupation and its consequences, as well as the General Assembly resolution issued in September 2024 based on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which stipulates the demand to end the Israeli occupation within a year. The international community must address the roots of the problem by forcing Israel to comply with international legitimacy resolutions, including the aforementioned General Assembly resolution, based on the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent Palestinian state. . This includes enacting strong sanctions against Israel and severing all political, financial, and military support and cooperation. Nations must immediately halt arms transfers to Israel, including export permits and military aid. Those providing weapons, military technology, or other forms of support to Israel, despite the presumed knowledge of their use in potential international crimes, should be held accountable for their role in the ongoing crisis.

## RECOMMENDATIONS



### **Humanitarian Access and Aid**

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Mobilizing flexible and multi-year funding for women's needs is crucial, as is supporting the documentation of rights violations. Humanitarian and recovery efforts should strengthen gender-responsive coordination and ensure aid reaches the most vulnerable populations, including women with disabilities, pregnant women, widows, and survivors of gender-based violence. Sector-specific recommendations include restoring gender-based violence response services, scaling up mental health and psychosocial support, and providing transitional shelter solutions that prioritize women-headed households. Additionally, implementing cash assistance and livelihood restoration programs, along with assistance in retrieving essential documents and restoring legal aid services, including support for inheritance and land rights issues, is vital.



### **Water, Sanitation, food security and Health**

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Ensuring access to water and sanitation is a fundamental human right that has gained international recognition. To grant this right to Palestinians in Gaza, it is imperative to end the current genocide war, lift the siege, and salvage what remains of the enclave's infrastructure. Pressure must be applied on Israel to reopen the main water pipelines, particularly those entering the northern part of



Gaza, and to guarantee the safety of technicians needed to repair and restore water lines and sanitation facilities. Sufficient fuel must be imported to run the Strip's water and sanitation infrastructure, including stations, water desalination plants, water wells, and mobile water cycles. The entry of necessary supplies for repair and rehabilitation work on such infrastructure must also be facilitated to protect the civilian population from health disasters.



## **Legal Accountability and International Court Action**

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As genocide is one of the international crimes that the International Criminal Court is mandated to investigate, it is imperative that the Court move forward with its investigation of all crimes allegedly committed in the Gaza Strip. The investigation should be broadened to include all individuals potentially responsible for these crimes, and arrest warrants should be issued where appropriate. The international community must support this process and ensure that those responsible for serious violations of international law are held accountable.



## **Long-term Recovery and Sustainable Solutions**

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For long-term recovery, it's essential to implement programs that address the root causes of the occupation and promote sustainable development. This includes supporting economic recovery initiatives, rebuilding infrastructure, and investing in education and healthcare systems. Efforts should be made to promote dialogue and reconciliation between communities. International support should be geared towards empowering local communities and institutions to lead their own recovery and development processes, ensuring that solutions are tailored to the specific needs and context of Gaza.



## TOWARDS A GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACH: PRIORITIZING WOMEN AND GIRLS IN LONG- TERM SOLUTIONS

### GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLICY FRAMEWORKS:

International actors, governments, and humanitarian organizations should integrate the WPS Agenda into all humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts. This includes adopting gender-sensitive policies, providing resources for women-led initiatives, and ensuring women's voices are central in peace negotiations.

### TARGETED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RESPONSE:

Immediate action must be taken to prevent and respond to GBV. Establishing safe spaces for women and girls, providing comprehensive GBV services, and ensuring access to legal recourse are critical.

### WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT:

Support programs should focus on rebuilding women's livelihoods by providing financial assistance, skills training, and employment opportunities, particularly for those who have lost their homes and means of income due to the conflict.

### HEALTHCARE ACCESS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS:

Ensure access to maternal and reproductive health services, mental health support, and care for chronic illnesses. The healthcare infrastructure in Gaza must be rebuilt with a focus on the specific health needs of women and girls.





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