

INTENT: THE ROAD TO GENOCIDE – SOURCES

Interactive visual by [Visualizing Palestine](#) in collaboration with [Law for Palestine](#).

INTENT: THE ROAD TO GENOCIDE – [INTERACTIVE VISUAL](#)

GENERAL SOURCE NOTES

Most of the statements of incitement featured in this piece are documented in Law for Palestine’s [Intent Database](#), unless otherwise noted with hyperlinks.

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INTRODUCTION

Under international law, [the crime of genocide](#) requires acts of genocide and the intent to destroy a group of people, or a part of that group.

Israeli leaders have made and continue to make [clear statements](#) of their intent to commit genocide against Palestinians.

“I have removed all restraints, [you’re allowed to] attack everything.” –Yoav Gallant, Former Israeli Minister of Defense, Oct 9, 2023

This sentiment has been **adopted and amplified** by individual soldiers, journalists and public figures across Israeli society.

“These people there [in Gaza] deserve death. A hard death, an agonizing death...There are no innocent people there.” –Yehuda Shlezinger, Israeli Journalist, Apr 19, 2024

These statements attempt to justify the unrestrained killing of all Palestinians as a **group of people**.

The crime of genocide is committed by killing or harming members of a group, as well as inflicting **conditions of life** that will bring about its destruction.

Note: See [article II of the Genocide Convention](#), which defines acts of genocide as:

- a. *Killing members of the group;*
- b. *Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*
- c. *Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;*
- d. *Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;*
- e. *Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.*

Israel has starved the people of Gaza, destroyed life-sustaining infrastructure, and forcibly displaced and killed residents at a shocking rate, leading dozens of experts to conclude that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.

The following examples of incitement, from a database of more than [400 statements](#), show Israel's **intent to commit genocide** in Gaza.

CHAPTER I: CIVILIAN HARM

Israeli forces made Gaza the **deadliest place in the world** to be a [child](#), [journalist](#), [health worker](#), or [aid worker](#). The mass killing was encouraged by Israelis at every level of society.

“It’s an entire nation out there that is responsible.” –Isaac Herzog, Israeli President, October 13, 2023

In the first year of Israel's bombing campaign, more than [900](#) Palestinian families, from **great-grandparents to infants**, were killed in their entirety. Another [4,836](#) families were survived by one or two members.

Airwars [documented](#) hundreds of attacks on Palestinian family homes and residential towers in the first few weeks alone.

14 October 2023

Israel [bombed](#) the Al-Herbawi family's home and adjacent residence, killing 34 civilians, including a 4-month old baby.

20 October 2023

Israel [bombed](#) the Al-Aqad family's home, killing 12 family members, including well-known poet Heba Abu Nada.

22 October 2024

Israel [bombed](#) the Al-Naouq family's home, killing 21 family members. Nine could not be recovered from under the rubble.

There are **thousands of stories** like these.

“When a 3-year-old girl is killed in a home in Gaza, it's because someone in the army decided it wasn't a big deal for her to be killed.”—[Israeli intelligence officer](#)

Families are also targeted by Israeli ground forces, who set up [free-fire zones](#) in areas where civilians are sheltering.

6 December 2023

Six members of the Abu Salah family were returning from the cemetery, where they had just buried their teenage nephew, when they were [gunned down](#) by Israeli forces.

Their remains were bulldozed into a pile of rubbish and only discovered after Israeli forces left.

“There was total freedom of action... It's permissible to shoot everyone, a young girl, an old woman.”—[Israeli Soldier](#)

Palestinians who survived faced the destruction of their homes and families, injury, disease, and starvation.

The Israeli military carried out "one of the most intense civilian punishment campaigns in history," [according](#) to military historian Robert Pape.

UNICEF [estimated](#) that 17,000 Palestinian children were orphaned or separated from their parents by February 2024.

“My most fervent dream is simply to stay alive.” —[Ahmad, 14](#)

"A ten-year-old boy [in Gaza] is a terrorist in 6 to 7 years." —Nissim Vaturi, Deputy Speaker of Knesset (Likud), 13 November 2023

Dehumanizing statements like this have been translated into civilian harm so irrefutably shocking that some of the world's largest humanitarian organizations [declared](#): “We have seen nothing like the siege of Gaza.”

CHAPTER II: STARVATION

“Never in post-war history had a population been made to go hungry so quickly and so completely as was the case for the 2.3 million Palestinians living in Gaza.” –[Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food](#)

“I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed.” –Yoav Gallant, Former Israeli Minister of Defense, 9 October 2023

Nine months after Gallant’s promise to cease the flow of life-saving essentials, UN experts [declared](#) a state of famine across all of Gaza.

During this campaign of starvation, Israeli forces [burned food stocks](#), [destroyed agricultural land](#), [bombed flour mills](#), [greenhouses](#), [bakeries](#), and [fisheries](#), allowed Israeli settlers to [destroy](#) aid bound for Gaza, and carried out targeted attacks on both [aid seekers](#) and [aid workers](#).

“The only thing that needs to enter Gaza is hundreds of tons of explosives by the Air Force, and not an ounce of humanitarian aid.” –Itamar Ben Gvir, Israeli Minister of National Security, 17 October 2023

On 29 February 2024, a crowd of starving Palestinians [gathered](#) on Al-Rashid Street to meet an incoming aid convoy.

“There was a sense of hope and even joy that we would get flour to take back to our families.” –[Abdel Jalil Al-Fayoumi, 22](#)

Then, Israeli forces opened fire on the crowd, massacring [112 people and injuring 760](#). The attack is remembered as the flour massacre.

“My 13-year-old cousin, Nidal, was shot dead while attempting to get a bag of flour from a truck.” –[Salameh Rafiq Obeid, 27](#)

The flour massacre represents a [pattern](#) of incidents of the Israeli military targeting desperate aid seekers in Gaza.

“There is no place for any humanitarian gestures – we must erase the memory of Amalek.” –Boaz Bismuth, Member of the Israeli Knesset (Likud), 16 October 2023

Note: In the Hebrew Bible, God [commands](#) the ancient Israelites to destroy every person belonging to a rival nation “Amalek”. Amalek is a biblical tribe hostile to the Israelites, described in the bible as the enemy of the Israelites. The relationship between the two groups is mainly hostile. The story of Amalek serves as a symbol of evil and enmity against the people of God in the Jewish tradition, and the command to remember what Amalek did to the Israelites and the obligation to blot out their memory is commemorated annually in the Jewish tradition during the Sabbath before Purim.”

On April 1, 2024, a series of Israeli strikes [targeted](#) a World Central Kitchen aid convoy, killing 7 aid workers.

The attack forced the largest aid organizations to [suspend](#) their operations in Gaza at a point when [1.1 million](#) people—or half the population of Gaza—were experiencing catastrophic levels of hunger and at least [28](#) children had died of starvation.

The Israeli military has repeatedly [attacked](#) aid convoys and facilities, even when aid agencies shared their locations with the Israeli military.

These attacks, combined with indiscriminate aerial bombardment, [made](#) Gaza the deadliest place in the world to be an aid worker.

At least [343](#) aid workers killed between 7 October 2023 and 3 December 2024.

[Children under five, pregnant or breastfeeding women](#), the [elderly](#), and [people with disabilities](#) suffer the most from Israel's **campaign of starvation**.

Israeli officials said they would weaponize food and they did, causing serious bodily and mental harm to Palestinians in Gaza and inflicting on them **conditions of life** intended to bring about their destruction as a group.

“Without hunger and thirst among the Gazan population, we will not succeed...” –Revital Gotliv, Member of the Israeli Knesset (Likud), Oct 23, 2024

CHAPTER III: INFRASTRUCTURE

In five months, Israeli forces destroyed an estimated [70%](#) of all civilian infrastructure in Gaza in one of the [most destructive](#) bombing campaigns in history.

"Right now we're focused on what causes maximum damage." –Daniel Hagari, IDF spokesperson, 10 October 2023

Three months after Israeli officials, legislators, and public figures called to “flatten,” “erase,” “burn,” and “destroy” Gaza, Israeli forces had carried out [one of the most destructive bombing campaigns](#) in history, according to military historians.

And it was just beginning.

Israeli forces didn't spare a single life-sustaining sector in Gaza. Its [housing](#), [education](#), [health](#), [transportation \(roads\)](#), [telecommunication](#), [cultural](#), [agricultural](#), and [environmental systems](#) all lie in rubble.

"All the preoccupation with whether or not there is internet in Gaza...We are too humane. Burn Gaza now no less!" –Nissim Vaturi, Deputy Speaker of Knesset (Likud), 17 November 2023

On 27 October 2024 Israel [imposed](#) a total blackout on Gaza, cutting all telecommunication and internet services.

Note: Telecom blackouts were in place from at least 27-29 October 2023 and on [1 November 2023](#). Access Now [reported](#) that, as of 31 October 2023, 15 of the 19 providers operating in Gaza were facing a complete shutdown of their mobile and broadband services, with an 80% decrease in Internet traffic throughout October.

Over the next [34 hours](#), Israeli forces carried out a series of deadly massacres, killing more than [1,000](#) Palestinians and leaving large swaths of Gaza in ruins.

In one attack, Israeli airstrikes [brought down](#) a six-story residential building in central Gaza, killing at least 136 residents, including 54 children.

Hatem Abdo's 13-year-old son and two nephews, who were playing football in the street at the time, were among those killed.

During the blackout, Israel bombed high-rise blocks, public buildings, and critical infrastructure across Gaza, from [Jabalia](#) in the north to [Rafah](#) in the south.

"Don't know how to describe the damage. ... It's flattened, totally flattened to the ground. Nothing is the same, nothing is standing." –Anas Baba, Palestinian journalist [reporting](#) from Rafah, Gaza

Israel's destruction of civilian infrastructure is part of a campaign to dismantle the conditions of life in Gaza.

Nowhere is this clearer than in its persistent attacks on health facilities, which sustain not only present life, but also future life.

"We are determined to destroy [Al-Shifa Hospital]." –[Ehud Barak, Former Israeli Prime Minister, 20 October 2023](#)

Shortly after Barak's statement, Israeli forces [surrounded](#) Gaza's largest hospital, Al-Shifa, and held it under siege for two weeks.

[Hundreds of staff, 1,500 displaced people, and 600 patients](#), including [39](#) premature babies, were trapped inside. The hospital went days without power.

"We lost the life of one baby today. Yesterday we lost two." –[Dr. Marwan Abu Sada, Al-Shifa Hospital](#)

Israel eventually [invaded](#) Al-Shifa, [destroying](#) much of its life-saving equipment and leaving large sections in ruins.

After Palestinians [got the facility partially up and running](#), Israel [invaded again](#) the following year.

"[Al-Shifa hospital] is now an empty shell with human graves." [–Director-General, World Health Organization](#)

Israel has repeatedly killed, maimed, and arrested health workers in more than [568](#) separate attacks on sites of care.

By 1 June 2024, [84%](#) of health facilities in Gaza were damaged or destroyed. [Less than half](#) of all hospitals were partially functional, preventing Palestinians from accessing care amid bombardment, starvation, and disease.

“We must destroy Rafah, Nuseirat, and Deir al-Balah.... There's no half-measure... absolute destruction.” –Bezael Smotrich, Israeli Minister of Finance, 29 April 2024

Israel's campaign of mass destruction embodies the crime of genocide. By striking at the very foundations of Palestinian society, it undermines their existence on the land and their ability to return home in the future.

CHAPTER IV: DISPLACEMENT

More than [four out of five](#) Palestinians in Gaza were driven from their homes by Israeli forces in the first two months of the genocide. Israeli leaders and public figures have called for their permanent exile.

"The fighting will continue and expand to any place necessary in the Gaza Strip. There will be no sanctuary cities." –Benny Gantz, war cabinet member, former Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, 29 November 2023

Two months after the Israeli military issued the first of dozens of mass displacement orders to residents of Gaza, [85%](#) of the population had been **driven from their homes**, many being forced to move repeatedly.

Those who were **unable or unwilling to leave** north Gaza, or who tried to return to their homes, were [labeled](#) “accomplices in a terrorist organization” by the Israeli military and subjected to [denial of aid](#), [execution-style](#) killings, and [mass arbitrary arrests](#).

In October 2023, Mohammad Al-Absi [fled](#) with his family from their home in Jabalia refugee camp.

They sought shelter at the UN-run Al-Fakhoura school, but Israeli forces bombed it within weeks, killing two members of his family.

"Nowhere is safe in Gaza, not even our schools." –Tamara Alrifai, UNRWA [[Al Jazeera](#)]

Salah Al-Din road, one of two routes from north to south Gaza, became known to Palestinians as a "[death corridor](#)".

Palestinians evacuating south along the road have been [arrested, shot at, and killed](#) by Israeli forces, even though the army declared it a "safe" route.

"You can follow the orders so that you aren't exposed to danger, but the danger will still reach you wherever you are." –[Raji Al-Ajrami](#)

"We need all 2 million to leave. That's the solution for Gaza." –Ayelet Shaked, Former Israeli Minister of Interior, 22 November 2023

Mohammad Al-Absi made it south with the surviving members of his family. They [settled](#) in a warehouse in Rafah before moving to a tent camp closer to a United Nations base.

Days after they arrived at Tal al-Sultan camp, Israel bombed it, killing [45](#) Palestinians in what became known as the "tent massacre."

"All the children started screaming... The sound was terrifying." –[Umm Mohamed Al-Attar](#)

The family was unable to afford transportation, so they [settled](#) in another camp nearby.

Two days later, on 28 May 2024, Israel [bombed](#) that camp, too, killing 15 members of the Al-Absi family.

"I felt helpless watching my family dying and not able to help them." –[Mohammad Al-Absi](#)

Mohammad and his brother are the [only surviving members](#) of their family.

The Israeli military has attacked displaced people in [tents](#), [hospitals](#), [schools](#), [mosques](#), [churches](#), [UN shelters](#), along [evacuation routes](#), and in designated "[safe](#)" areas.

"Have you ever felt like a toy, being played with left and right, east and west, pushed from one place to another – south to Khan Younis, out of Rafah, back to Khan Younis, then to Nuseirat, only to be driven out again?" –[Maram Humaid, Gaza, August 2024](#)

Israelis continue to demand that Palestinians be sent into **permanent exile**, continuing the Nakba.

“There is no return to the north [of Gaza], and there will not be.” –[Itzik Cohen Brigadier General, Israeli Army, 5 November 2024](#)

CONCLUSION

Israeli leaders sought to justify their genocidal intent through colonial tropes, racialized language, and the use of dehumanizing terms to describe Palestinians as a whole.

“We are the people of the light, they are the people of darkness.” –Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister, 25 October 2023

Their rhetoric was so alarming that 800 scholars of genocide studies and international law immediately [spoke out](#).

"Language used... appears to reproduce rhetoric and tropes associated with genocide and incitement to genocide." [–Public statement, 15 October 2023](#)

The warning of genocide scholars was **born out** in the months of bombing, invasion, starvation, and mass displacement unleashed by Israel.

On January 26th, the International Court of Justice [ordered](#) "**immediate and effective measures**" to protect Palestinians in Gaza from the risk of genocide.

Israeli leaders ignored the demand and **belittled the court**.

“Whoever is looking for justice, will not find it on the leather chairs in The Hague.” –Yoav Gallant, Former Israeli Minister of Defense, 26 January 2024

Israel continues to [obstruct aid](#), [commit war crimes](#), and [use starvation as a weapon of war](#).

In November 2024, a United Nations [investigation](#) found Israel's war in Gaza was “consistent with the characteristics of genocide.”

“There are no uninvolved people in Gaza... everyone is involved.” –Rami Igra, Former head, Mossad Hostages and MIA Unit, 14 February 2024

As Israel's genocide rages on, it has become increasingly difficult to **count the dead**.

Gaza's Ministry of Health reported 44,502 fatalities as of 3 December 2024, but [experts project](#) the direct and indirect death toll will be many times higher.

In the last year, Israel has shown the intent, capacity, and determination to permanently extinguish the **conditions of life** in Gaza.

They will not stop without a broad campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions that inhibit their ability to continue this genocide.

Yet the [US](#), [UK](#), [Germany](#), and other states continue to provide Israel with military, political and diplomatic protection. By doing so, they are complicit in Israel's genocide — defying international law, ignoring their own treaty obligations, and undermining their basic humanity.

It's not too late to stop the genocide.