

NO CONDITIONS FOR LIFE

WOMEN, GIRLS AND THE GENDERED DIMENSIONS OF ISRAEL'S GENOCIDE AGAINST PALESTINIANS IN GAZA

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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GLOSSARY

WORD	DESCRIPTION
ACCESS RESTRICTED ZONE	An area over which the Israeli military assumes direct military control and imposes severe restrictions or no-go zones on Palestinian civilians and humanitarian organizations. It includes the "Yellow Line" and "Orange Line". As of October 2026, access restricted zones constituted 65% of the Gaza Strip's total area.
BOARD OF PEACE (BOP)	An international organization founded by US President Donald Trump initially to oversee the implementation of the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas and the demilitarization and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. It was endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2803 on 17 November 2025 as part of the US-backed Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. It was officially launched in January 2026 at the World Economic Forum.
COGAT	The Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, a body within Israel's Ministry of Defense tasked with administering the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
CWLRCP	The Centre for Women's Legal Research, Counselling and Protection.
"DUAL USE" POLICY	An Israeli policy restricting Palestinian imports to the Occupied Palestinian Territory of goods that Israel deems to potentially have military, as well as civilian, use.
"EVACUATION" ORDER	A mass order issued by the Israeli military to Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip, through leaflets and interactive maps, to "evacuate" certain areas. These orders led to mass displacement.
GENOCIDE CONVENTION	The UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.
ICC	The International Criminal Court.
ICJ	The International Court of Justice.
ICRC	The International Committee of the Red Cross.
IPC	The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, the world's foremost expert group assessing the risks of famine.
KEREM SHALOM CROSSING	Known in Arabic as Karem Abu Salem, a crossing between Israel and the south of the occupied Gaza Strip, at the junction of the border between Egypt, Israel and Gaza. It is named after the nearby Israeli kibbutz known as Kerem Shalom in Hebrew. It served as a major transit point for goods before 7 October 2023.

WORD	DESCRIPTION
NCAG	The National Committee for the Administration of Gaza.
NICU	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.
NIS	New Israeli Shekel, the currency of Israel and, by extension, through its occupation, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the occupied Gaza Strip.
NORTH OF WADI GAZA	The area north of the river valley of Wadi Gaza, consisting of the governorates of North Gaza and Gaza City. The Israeli military ordered civilian residents of this area to "evacuate" to the area south of Wadi Gaza on 12 October 2023.
OHCHR	The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.
OPT	The Occupied Palestinian Territory
"ORANGE LINE"	An invisible demarcating line established by the Israeli military in February 2026 and communicated to humanitarian organizations a month later. It was an expansion of the "Yellow Line" area, established in October 2025.
PCHR	The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights.
PHR	The Physicians for Human Rights.
PHRI	The Physicians for Human Rights in Israel.
PRCS	The Palestine Red Crescent Society.
RAFAH CROSSING	A border crossing between the Egyptian city of Rafah and the Palestinian city of Rafah on the southern border of the occupied Gaza Strip.
SO-CALLED CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT	An agreement between Israel and Hamas that entered into force on 10 October 2025 and included provisions relating to the cessation of hostilities, exchange of hostages and detainees, and humanitarian assistance. Amnesty International refers to the agreement as the "so-called ceasefire" because it found that Israel's attacks and other violations against Palestinians in Gaza continued despite the agreement.
UN COI	The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel.
UN OCHA	The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
UNFPA	The UN Population Fund.
UNICEF	The UN International Children's Fund.
UNOSAT	The UN Satellite Centre.
UNRWA	The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.
WADI GAZA	A *wadi* (river valley) that runs across the width of the occupied Gaza Strip from the eastern border with Israel to the Mediterranean coast. Between October 2023 and the ceasefire agreement of January 2025, the Israeli military used it as an artificial demarcating line to divide Gaza into two and cut off northern areas from southern areas.
WHO	The World Health Organization, a UN agency.

WORD	DESCRIPTION
"YELLOW LINE"	A constantly shifting military demarcation line established in the wake of the ceasefire agreement of October 2025 that splits the Gaza Strip into two. Areas east of the "Yellow Line" originally encompassed 53% of the Gaza Strip's area, but Israel has gradually expanded them. Israeli forces exercise direct military control in these areas and prevent displaced Palestinians from returning to their homes. In addition to the Israeli military, Palestinian armed groups, backed and armed by the Israeli military, operate in the area. A small number of civilians, including families of members of armed groups, are allowed to reside within that area.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 22 October 2023, 29-year-old Sondos Al-Kurd, eight months pregnant, was baking bread with her family in Mashrou' Beit Lahia in North Gaza, a governorate in the occupied Gaza Strip (Gaza), when their building was struck by an explosive weapon amidst Israel's relentless bombardment of the area. Her three-year-old daughter, Habiba, along with her younger sister, aunt and cousin, were killed. Sondos was pulled from the rubble with serious injuries and rushed to Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City. Doctors stabilized her and performed an emergency caesarean section, saving both her and her baby, though she was left with severe long-term injuries and her baby had to be put in an incubator. While recovering in hospital, Sondos' mother and brother were killed in another Israeli attack.

Later, Israeli forces attacked and besieged Al-Shifa hospital. Sondos was evacuated on a stretcher. She explained:

"I was in the maternity ward, and it was targeted many times... I kept saying, 'My daughter, my daughter'. They told me: 'Leave her in the incubator.' They said I wouldn't be able to manage her condition."

Sondos was separated from her newborn, who remained in critical care in the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). As the Israeli forces' siege continued, she heard reports that premature babies were dying due to interruptions to their care. While several babies died after oxygen supplies ran out or after Israeli forces forced staff to move the babies out of the equipped neonatal unit, Sondos's daughter survived. She was amongst 31 preterm and sick babies evacuated after eight days of siege, first to a hospital in Rafah in southern Gaza and then to Egypt for treatment. It took Sondos several months to learn her daughter was alive, and even then, restrictions on movement into and out of Gaza meant they were kept apart for over two years.

Sondos's account reflects many of the cumulative and compounded harms that women in Gaza have experienced and continue to experience: killings and serious injuries, pregnancy and childbirth under bombardment, attacks on healthcare, and the destruction of homes and family life – and illustrates how these harms do not occur in isolation but interact and reinforce one another across the life cycle of Palestinian women in Gaza.

OVERVIEW

This report provides a detailed gender-based analysis of Israel's genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, building on, strengthening and expanding the findings of Amnesty International's previous report published in December 2024 on Israel's genocide.

Israel's conduct in Gaza since 7 October 2023 has been devastating for the lives of women and girls. Israeli forces have killed thousands of women and girls, an average of roughly 30 a day before the so-called ceasefire, many through attacks that violated international humanitarian law, and also indirectly caused the death of an unknown number of additional women and girls through its unlawful blockade. Women and girls have been forced into a daily struggle for survival marred by grief, trauma, violence, repeated displacement, extreme deprivation, fear and profound loss. They have been deprived of access to essential healthcare, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, and put at increased risk of gender-based violence. Israel's actions have also severely undermined Palestinians' ability to make decisions about if and when to have children, to conceive, carry pregnancies to term, and give birth safely.

Women and girls in Gaza have experienced these harms cumulatively and repeatedly, resulting in devastating levels of physical, mental and reproductive harm. Women's unmet reproductive health needs, gendered caregiving responsibilities and pre-existing inequalities have intensified the harm they have endured. These violations have been an integral part of Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

The evidence demonstrates that Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza has continued despite the October 2025 "ceasefire," at a minimum through the ongoing deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction and through causing serious bodily and mental harm to members of the group, and without any change in the required specific intent.

Amnesty International previously concluded in December 2024 that Israel had committed prohibited acts under the Genocide Convention Article II(a), (b) and (c) with the specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza as such.

The evidence collected by Amnesty International for this report reinforces the 2024 findings. It also demonstrates that Israel has imposed measures that have had, and continue to have, the effect of preventing births among Palestinians in Gaza, a genocidal act under Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention if committed with the requisite intent.

Amnesty International, however, is not in a position to categorically conclude that these measures were imposed with the intent to deter births required under Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention. Nevertheless, the pattern of conduct and the broader context in which the acts were committed raise serious concerns that the outcome was indeed intended. Amnesty International is therefore calling for Israel to also be investigated for the additional genocidal act of imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.

The research for this report included 228 in-depth interviews carried out remotely between 7 October 2023 and 1 October 2026 (the end of the reporting period), with the assistance of a trusted fieldworker in Gaza. This includes over 120 interviews with women and girls about their own experiences, 20 men who witnessed these harms or themselves suffered gender-based harms, over 60 Palestinian healthcare providers, and 20 staff of NGOs or UN agencies. The investigation also draws on tens of verified photographs or videos, medical records, satellite imagery and data, reports from Palestinian, Israeli and international sources, and expert review by an independent obstetrician-gynaecologist and an independent legal expert. Amnesty International wrote to Israeli authorities and the Hamas political bureau on 30 September 2026, sharing findings of the report and raising a number of questions, but as of publication had received no response.

CUMULATIVE GENDERED HARMS

Women and girls have experienced and endured the cumulative effects of killings, injuries, attacks and sieges of hospitals, the near-total dismantlement of reproductive healthcare, repeated forced displacement, deliberate starvation and food deprivation, and arbitrary detention.

KILLING, INJURIES AND THEIR GENDERED IMPACT

Israel's military offensive in Gaza since 7 October 2023 has led to the killing and injury of women and girls on a massive scale. According to data from the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza, which Amnesty International reviewed and considers reliable, 74,237 Palestinians were killed between 7 October 2023 and 1 October 2026, including 22,331 women and girls (13,299 adult women and 9,032 girls). According to these figures, women and girls constitute 30.1% of all fatalities.

Tens of thousands of other women and girls sustained life-changing injuries, while the killing or disappearance of husbands, children, parents and siblings left women carrying profound grief and trauma.

The scale of killing of women has been unprecedented in comparison to previous Israeli military offensives in Gaza and exceptional when compared to documented patterns of civilian harm affecting women in contemporary armed conflicts. According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), for example, seven out of every ten women killed in armed conflict globally in 2023-2024 were killed in Gaza.

Amnesty International has previously documented a pattern of unlawful air strikes by Israeli forces in Gaza since 7 October 2023 that wiped out entire multi-generational families, finding they were either direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects or indiscriminate attacks. This report documents further cases of women and

girls killed or injured in unlawful attacks – also including by live fire – in their homes, while seeking medical care, inside maternity wards, or while attempting to access food.

In addition, the repeated use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in one of the most densely populated places on earth, combined with decisions to frequently and systematically strike individuals in their homes – especially at night, when the presence of a high number of civilians was known, and without any warning – has contributed to the high proportion of women and girls casualties.



Palestinians search through the debris of damaged residential buildings in the Sabra neighbourhood, south of Gaza City, October 2026. © Anadolu via Getty Images

One of the deadliest strikes documented by Amnesty International was the air strike on the Abu Nasr family home in Mashrou' Beit Lahia on 29 October 2024, where some 240 members of the extended Abu Nasr family had been staying in a five-story building. The Israeli air strike killed 137 people: 38 women, 44 men and 55 children, 24 of whom were girls. Hours earlier, an adjacent building belonging to the Odah family had been hit, and the debris collapsed onto the second floor of the Abu Nasr home, killing three children from the same family.

Afaf, 51, lost her mother, husband, five children and two grandchildren in the attack. She told Amnesty International:

"I woke up to a strike on my back. I found myself slipping into a hole. My daughter was next to me; her children were screaming, and my daughter-in-law was breathing her last. Only two of my children survived; the rest were all killed."

Hani, 40, Afaf's relative, was the sole survivor of his immediate family. He told Amnesty International:

"45 people were staying with me in the apartment; all of them were killed and I am the sole survivor. My wife was killed, as were all of my four children. My wife and I had been trying for eight years to give birth; we paid everything we had for fertility treatment. They were the most precious thing I had, and I lost them all."

This air strike is a rare instance in which the Israeli military has claimed it ordered an internal review. The Israeli military claimed that it struck the building after seeing a "spotter with binoculars" on its roof but has so far failed to provide any visual or other evidence to corroborate the claim. Amnesty International found nothing in the available evidence to indicate that anyone in the building was a legitimate military target. The organization's analysis of satellite imagery found that the close proximity and height of the surrounding

buildings would have made it challenging to clearly see the activities of the Israeli ground forces from the rooftop and therefore question its suitability as a lookout position for this purpose.

However, even if there had been a "spotter" on the rooftop, the strike destroyed a five-floor residential building sheltering hundreds of displaced civilians, including many children, without warning, before dawn when it was foreseeable they would all be at home. Even if there was a military objective in or near the targeted building, Amnesty International considers that the attack was unlawful because it failed to distinguish between civilians and military objectives or to meet the international humanitarian law requirements of proportionality and precautions in attack.

The scale of killings has decreased since the so-called ceasefire of October 2025. However, according to the Ministry of Health, by 1 October 2026, Israeli forces had killed 1,439 Palestinians, including 274 women and girls, and injured over 5,330, including 1,473 women and girls, since the agreement came into effect. This is despite the fact that no rockets have been successfully fired from Gaza towards Israel during this year.

OHCHR verified the killing of 331 Palestinians in the vicinity of the "Yellow Line" between the ceasefire agreement and the end of July 2026, including 27 women and 66 children. The "Yellow Line" demarcates an ever-increasing area of Gaza which, along with the "Orange Line", constitutes over 65% of the territory, and over which Israeli forces violently impose access restrictions through drone strikes and live fire.

Women Amnesty International spoke to across Gaza described still living under a constant threat of death, with attacks perceived as unpredictable and inescapable.

Women often experienced killings and injuries both as direct victims of attacks and through their gendered social and economic roles, leaving many to navigate bereavement, injury and displacement while simultaneously assuming additional caregiving responsibilities. UN Women estimated that in late 2025, women headed nearly one in four households in Gaza, almost double the pre-October 2023 rate of around one in nine. These households often suffered extreme economic precarity, even within the wider context of severe deprivation.

Pregnancy, childbirth and maternal health were also deeply affected by the scale of killing and injury, with many women experiencing pregnancy or parenting newborns while injured, bereaved, traumatized and living under intense and frequent bombardment with the constant threat of death.

MATERNITY CARE UNDER ATTACK

The dangers of pregnancy and childbirth were compounded by attacks on healthcare facilities and those attempting to reach them. The WHO has reported 1,000 attacks on Gaza healthcare facilities, causing 1,007 reported deaths, since 7 October 2023.

"Sara" (name changed) went into labour at a school where she was sheltering in northern Gaza on 6 December 2023. Because of Israeli military operations in the area, "Sara" had to walk several hundred metres from her shelter to Al-Awda hospital with the assistance of her mother-in-law, along with an injured man and his father, carrying a white flag together. However:

"Suddenly, I heard gunfire, and my mother-in-law fell to the ground. I looked at her and saw that a bullet had entered the back of her head and exited through her forehead. She died instantly. I froze for a moment, then I started running, all while having strong contractions… The medical staff received me while I was still in shock. … I did not feel the baby as he was delivered. I did not feel anything at all. I kept telling them that my mother-in-law was outside and asked if anyone could help her. I was still hoping she might be alive. They told me that no one could leave the hospital. The staff asked everyone to go inside, and they closed all the doors. They said the Israeli forces were getting closer and had taken positions in the houses surrounding the hospital."

"Sara" added that the danger continued even after she reached the hospital:

"Right after I gave birth, they placed me in a room to rest. About an hour later, snipers fired directly at the room. I remember five bullets hitting the room. It was a miracle that neither my baby nor I was hit… I had to remain in the hospital under total siege for 18 days… No one felt safe inside the hospital. Snipers were positioned all around it, shooting at anyone who moved. I saw a cleaner shot and killed in front of me…".

Israeli forces subjected at least scores of pregnant or post-partum women to attacks or compelled them to evacuate or flee as they besieged hospitals, interrupting or preventing access to essential medical care. They forced maternity patients into circumstances in which life-saving medical assistance they required could not be provided safely or consistently.

A doctor in the maternity department at Kamal Adwan hospital in northern Gaza described carrying out a caesarean section to respond to an obstetric emergency just before the hospital was raided on 12 December 2023:

"A pregnant woman with her mother came into the hospital, and the situation was very bad with tanks close by … We told her we wouldn't be able to do the surgery; we had no electricity and no anaesthetist. The mother took her pregnant daughter and left towards Al-Awda [hospital]. Five minutes later they came back covered in dust… She said: 'The tank and snipers shot at us… you have to help.'"

The doctor explained that there was no option but to operate with the limited resources available:

"We gathered fuel from the whole hospital and houses around the hospital and were able to operate the generator for only half an hour. There was an anaesthetist displaced near the hospital but without any experience. Still, we called her and brought her."

The operation was carried out without sterilization and with the patient manually ventilated. Even then, the anaesthesia proved insufficient.

"We got the baby out and we were about to close the cut, but her abdominal muscles got tight and she was waking up."

Although she was eventually sedated, the doctor recalled how his patient later told him that the experience – including undergoing surgery without adequate anaesthesia – was so traumatizing it had convinced her never to have another child.

Other doctors and midwives from hospitals across Gaza gave Amnesty International similar accounts of performing surgeries or otherwise delivering babies while sheltering in the basement from attacks with explosive weapons.

Newborn babies were similarly exposed to life-threatening conditions. Amnesty International documented how eight newborn babies died and 31 other babies had life-sustaining treatment interrupted following Israeli attacks and siege on Al-Shifa hospital in November 2023. In some cases, babies who survived were separated from their mothers – as Sondos referred to above – for more than two years.

Pregnant women and newborns continued to face serious risks seeking or obtaining medical care, even after the ceasefire agreement of October 2025, particularly close to the "Yellow Line". In March 2026, two paramedic colleagues described two incidents within the previous month several hundred metres from the "Yellow Line" in which a woman in advanced labour – and the ambulance sent to transport her – came under fire. In both cases, the woman gave birth shortly after finally reaching the ambulance, in one case only four minutes later.

Amnesty International found evidence of several instances of misuse of hospitals by Palestinian armed groups and Hamas-affiliated authorities, including one instance of the holding of several hostages for no medical reasons and the use of hospital premises for interrogation, detention and even torture of Palestinians. However, it did not find evidence substantiating Israeli claims that hospitals were being used as Hamas "command and control centres", and Israeli authorities have not provided sufficient information to support these allegations.

Regardless, misuse does not release Israel of its obligations under IHL to take all feasible precautions to avoid, and in any event to minimize, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects, and not to launch indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks.

DISMANTLING OF MATERNITY HEALTHCARE

Throughout the genocide, as scores of healthcare facilities were rendered non-functional, many through Israeli attacks or military operations, those that remained operational were overwhelmed and severely under-resourced.

In July 2026, UNFPA stated that 94% of Gaza's hospitals were either destroyed or only partially functional, fewer than half of the health facilities were able to operate at any level, and only 15% of facilities were able to provide emergency obstetric care. Medical staff and maternity patients described women giving birth on shared beds, or on the floor in overwhelmed wards, while some women were unable to reach healthcare facilities at all.

Israel's severe and unpredictable restrictions on humanitarian aid and essential supplies left health facilities often unable to provide even minimum standards of care. Doctors, nurses and midwives described chronic shortages of medicines, equipment and other basic supplies. Life-saving machines frequently failed due to fuel shortages or lack of spare parts. As of the beginning of October 2026, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, 44% of essential medicines were at zero stock and over half of medical consumables and 83% of laboratory testing materials were unavailable – with maternal and child health being one of the health sectors most badly hit by deficits in 2026. While shortages of medical supplies and equipment may be partially attributed to underfunding and possible diversion, the main obstacle remains restrictions and lengthy delays imposed by Israel, particularly affecting diagnostic and medical imaging services.

These conditions affected pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period. Limited diagnostic capacity meant complications went undetected, which exacerbated their negative impact on women and their pregnancies. Essential medicines, such as Anti-D immunoglobulin (given to prevent complications when a pregnant woman and her fetus have incompatible blood groups), were frequently unavailable. Healthcare professionals linked these shortages to miscarriages and other adverse pregnancy outcomes, including in subsequent pregnancies. Shortages of anaesthesia, medicines to manage labour and haemorrhage, and blood products compromised care during delivery and in critical cases, proved fatal. Newborns were forced to share incubators and other life-saving equipment, leading to increased infections and neonatal deaths.

Hanaa (name changed) described how her son died from a congenital heart disease after sharing an incubator and contracting an infection in Nasser hospital in November 2025.

"He died after 20 days… On the first day [after his birth], he was put in the incubator with another baby. Someone who worked in the NICU and knew my husband told him that the other baby had a blood infection and should not be with other babies… 4-5 days later, doctors told us that our son caught a blood infection."

"Hanaa" also described how during those 20 days "[Doctors] said they could not keep him on the oxygen machine enough time because of the shortages in oxygen".

As of 1 October 2026, Israel's ongoing arbitrary restrictions on the entry of goods and equipment into Gaza – including based on the "dual use" policy – continued to cause severe shortages of essential medication leading to preventable deaths, suffering and devastating conditions of life for Palestinians in Gaza. One healthcare professional, for example, told Amnesty International that shortages of an essential medicine used to treat premature babies forced staff to subject infants to additional invasive procedures, causing avoidable pain and complicating their care and recovery. The Israeli Ministry of Defense's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) classifies thousands of essential goods, including medical supplies and diagnostic equipment, as "dual use". Vague and unpredictable, the "dual use" policy grants COGAT broad discretion, with little to no oversight or transparency, to reject or delay the entry of life-saving items into Gaza.

FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND THE DESTRUCTION OF HOMES: ACCRUED IMPACT ON WOMEN

Israeli forces have forcibly displaced over 90% of Gaza's population, many repeatedly and under life-threatening conditions. As of October 2026, 86% of Gaza's population remain displaced, according to the Danish Refugee Council and Agricultural Development Association.

Between October 2023 and October 2025, the Israeli military issued at least 161 "evacuation" orders in shifting, overlapping and at times contradictory patterns, directing civilians to places that were themselves unsafe or later attacked. Displacement tore apart families, with relatives separated during evacuations, detained at checkpoints, trapped in different parts of Gaza, or unable to reunite due to hostilities and movement restrictions.

For pregnant and post-partum women, displacement often became an ordeal of physical survival. 37-year-old Ola told Amnesty International how, shortly after giving birth in November 2023 in Gaza City, her family members, including her 14-year-old son, were killed in an air strike, and the surviving family were forcibly displaced:

"I was recovering from a caesarean section. I walked toward al-Falah School but left shortly before it was hit. We then went to another relative's home near the school that was struck. We spent a night of terror and were then displaced to the south… I walked about 14 km on foot while recovering from the caesarean. I would walk two steps, then sit down to rest. I left with my husband's brother's children; they had lost both parents, and I had

to take care of them. I, so in need of care myself, had to care for orphans and my own children and to walk with them."

Women described displacement as deeply humiliating, forcing them into overcrowded, unsanitary and precarious conditions. They struggled to care for children and maintain personal and menstrual hygiene, amid acute shortages of water, sanitation, and basic supplies.

According to the UN, World Bank, and European Union in April 2026, 76.6% of homes in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. For women, the loss of home was not only material, but also the loss of privacy, dignity, autonomy and control over daily life. Amal Siyyam, Director of the Women's Affairs Centre in Gaza, explained:

"A home is not just walls. It is not just a sofa, furniture, table; for women, it's a place where we feel safe, where we feel comfortable… Losing our home is losing part of our history, part of our body. It is our pictures, our memories. It is where we got married, had children, where our children grew up, where we would sit and talk. For all of us, our homes kept our memories. When we remember them, we cry; it was our life."



A displaced Palestinian woman looks at a portrait of her father as she sits amid debris at her destroyed home, in the Bureij refugee camp, in the central Gaza Strip, October 2025. © EYAD BABA/AFP via Getty Images

The forced evacuation of Gaza's two domestic violence shelters in Gaza City, combined with the broader collapse of existing protection systems, also left many women with nowhere to seek safety and protection. One of the shelters was run by a women's NGO in Gaza City. Residents were forced to leave following a mass "evacuation" order issued by Israeli forces on 13 October 2023 to residents of the north of Wadi Gaza, in the context of intense bombardment and military operations, with less than 24 hours' notice. The following month, the shelter was destroyed amid an Israeli military operation. Despite the conditions they face, women's organizations across Gaza continued to work under extraordinary constraints, including by reopening one domestic violence shelter in July 2024 and establishing other makeshift structures.

As of 1 October 2026, Israel's expansion of access restricted zones to cover over 65% of Gaza had driven further displacement, confined Palestinians to an ever-shrinking area, and prevented many from returning to their homes and land. Ongoing Israeli restrictions on the entry of shelter and reconstruction materials further obstructed return.

GENDERED IMPACT OF STARVATION, DEPRIVATION AND EXPLOITATION

Since 7 October 2023, Israel's severe restrictions on the entry and distribution of food and other essential supplies into and across Gaza, combined with the destruction of local food production, have led to people throughout Gaza enduring acute hunger for prolonged periods and to waves of starvation. This was particularly severe during periods of full or near-total Israeli military sieges, including as imposed north of Wadi Gaza from January to April 2024, north Gaza governorate from October to December 2024, and all of Gaza from March to May 2025.

In July 2025, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) – the international food insecurity assessment system – stated that famine thresholds had been reached for food consumption in most of Gaza. WHO reported 421 malnutrition-related deaths in Gaza during that year.

Israel's deliberate restrictions have led to entirely foreseeable hunger and malnutrition, causing severe suffering, forcing people to survive on animal fodder, wild plants or irregular meals from community kitchens, or to go days without food. Women also described the daily reality of being unable to feed their children. They were often the last to eat and the first to sacrifice, giving their own portions to their children.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as infants, were particularly at risk. Malnutrition caused anaemia, weakened immunity, exhaustion and increased susceptibility to illness among pregnant women. It also increased the likelihood of adverse pregnancy outcomes, including fetal loss, premature birth, and low birth weight. Many women reported being unable to breastfeed because they themselves were malnourished, while infant formula was often unavailable or unaffordable.

While there has been an increase in the quantities of food entering Gaza since the so-called ceasefire of October 2025, restrictions and deprivation persisted. Women interviewed by Amnesty International in mid-2026 consistently said that on the occasions when nutritious food, baby formula and supplements were available, they were often unaffordable or irregularly distributed. Many said they continued to skip meals or sacrifice so their children could eat.

An IPC assessment published in July 2026 found that more than 1.2 million people were facing crisis-level or worse food insecurity and reported continuing risks of acute malnutrition among children and pregnant and breastfeeding women, while projecting a further deterioration in conditions through the end of 2026.

"Amina" (name changed), whose family were farmers before they were forcibly displaced, and whose husband went missing during an Israeli raid on Al-Shifa hospital on 15 November 2023, described trying to feed her children in March 2026:

"My situation is so miserable. We depend on the community kitchens to eat. I line up to fill water and I collect wood and cardboard to set fire to heat water to shower my kids. I can't afford to buy food, new clothes, or any necessities for my children... I stopped going to look for aid so that I don't get exploited or harassed. Instead, I go late and collect whatever is left over at the distribution sites. Sometimes, when I am in pain and can't walk, my daughter goes out to collect the leftovers of vegetables and fruits after the market closes. She has to go out and beg for money. One time, a man held her for the whole day because he caught her collecting the leftovers of his fruits and vegetables. He accused her of stealing. I looked for her the whole day until someone told me where she was. I had to go and beg him to let her go."

"Amina" was one of several women, all women-headed households, who told Amnesty International that she felt compelled to risk being shot at the militarized aid distribution sites established by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), rather than endure continued exploitation, harassment or starvation. The GHF was a US- and Israel-backed aid distribution mechanism operating in four militarized sites fully controlled by the Israeli military from May to October 2025, to circumvent the existing UN-led aid distribution system. "Amina" witnessed people around her shot dead or injured by Israeli military or US security contractors. Dozens of women were reportedly killed while seeking aid at these sites, as were hundreds of men and boys.

The catastrophic levels of hunger and poverty, resulting from policies and practices that Amnesty International has found to form part of Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities and exposed some women and girls to heightened risks of gender-based violence, exploitation and harmful practices.

UN agencies and local women's groups reported that deprivation and repeated displacement contributed to increased child marriage as families struggled to cope with extreme hardship. One 15-year-old girl and her mother told Amnesty International in May 2026 that forced displacement and deprivation caused by the Israeli blockade had left their family feeling they had no option but to compel the girl into marriage a year

earlier, when she was 14. She described being subjected to sexual and other forms of violence by her "husband".

REPRODUCTIVE AUTONOMY

The cumulative impact of Israel's attacks on healthcare, restrictions on essential supplies, forced displacement and starvation has been particularly devastating, leaving many women with little or no control over decisions relating to pregnancy, childbirth and their reproductive health.

Israeli attacks and its unlawful blockade have resulted in the near-total collapse of assisted reproductive services in Gaza. Before October 2023, Gaza had an advanced fertility sector, with at least nine clinics providing IVF and related services. By mid-2026, only one of those clinics remained partially functional, offering limited services but not IVF. Three fertility doctors told Amnesty International at this time that IVF services were now completely unavailable in Gaza.

Amnesty International documented that two IVF facilities were damaged because of attacks and were unable to recover or resume operating as a result of the Israeli blockade on essential items entering Gaza. According to three fertility doctors Amnesty International spoke to, other clinics were also forced to close because of damage from attacks and the unlawful blockade. Thousands of stored embryos, sperm and eggs, were destroyed, representing not only years of medical effort and financial investment but, for many, their only opportunity to conceive. These losses were compounded by restrictions preventing Palestinians from leaving Gaza to access fertility care elsewhere.

"Azza" (name changed), 27, had undergone IVF treatment before October 2023 and became pregnant with twins. However, she was forced to endure a complex last trimester of pregnancy amid bombardment, displacement and immense barriers to medical treatment. She described experiencing cramps and bleeding after a nearby air strike, and that a few weeks later, on 30 December 2023, she experienced a medical emergency:

"We went to Al-Sahaba hospital and delivered both babies, but they needed to be immediately taken to the NICU, which the hospital did not have. They died half an hour later… They did not let me see the babies.

After the babies died, my husband went to check on the [Al-Basma IVF] clinic as we lost contact with them. He saw it destroyed. After many tries, I managed to talk to the nurse on the phone and asked her if they were able to save the embryos; she said everything was destroyed.

At this point, I felt I had lost everything and felt hopeless… I live in a tent with my husband, my mother-in-law, her daughter and granddaughter. I often sit by myself crying or sleeping… My heart breaks every time I see children around me."

The ongoing violence, hunger, repeated displacement, destruction of healthcare services, and profound uncertainty about whether they could safely carry a pregnancy, give birth, or care for a child, also left other women feeling unable or unwilling to pursue pregnancy. A total of 13 women told Amnesty International that, because of what they had endured, they were too traumatized or did not feel able to have a child or further children. Two doctors and two case managers with a women's NGO likewise described a pattern among their patients or clients of women delaying or abandoning plans to have children for similar reasons.

DETENTION AND GENDER-BASED HARMS

Dozens of women were detained and subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, while hundreds of others were left searching for disappeared husbands, sons, fathers and brothers.

Amnesty International has estimated that at least 85 women from Gaza were detained for weeks or months, or in a smaller number of cases, over a year, by Israeli forces between 7 October 2023 and early 2026, most in late 2023 or early 2024. The 12 released women Amnesty International interviewed described being held incommunicado, and consistently described threats, beatings, invasive strip-searches, denial of menstrual hygiene products, and humiliation by Israeli guards or security personnel. None were charged with or tried for any offence. Their accounts suggest that some were detained in connection with the alleged actions or perceived affiliations of male relatives or others, or as potential sources of intelligence or pressure, which would constitute collective punishment and gender-based discrimination.

"Ohood" (name changed) told Amnesty International that she was strip-searched at least ten times during her 50 days in detention. She described the first instance, in December 2024, while being initially detained:

"It was by female soldiers, but there were ten or so male soldiers around the door. At the time, there were snipers pointing towards my head and heart… They forced me to take all of [my clothes] off, including my abaya, including my underwear. The doors and windows in the room were all open… They asked me to turn around slowly. Everyone could see me."

Several women reported that Israeli forces had threatened them with rape, sexualized insults and severe psychological abuse, including threats to kill their children at the point of detention, or taunting them that their children would be killed or were already dead during interrogations. Amnesty International is also among a number of organizations – including the UN Commission of Inquiry, and Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations – that have documented rape and other sexual assault against Palestinian men in detention.

GENOCIDE

This report finds that Israel is continuing to commit genocide against Palestinians in Gaza (as of October 2026, the end of the review period of this report), at a minimum through the ongoing deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction and through causing serious bodily and mental harm to members of the group. In addition, the report raises serious concerns that Israel has committed genocide through the imposition of measures intended to prevent births of Palestinians in Gaza, and calls for Israel to also be investigated for this crime.

CONDITIONS OF LIFE CALCULATED TO PHYSICALLY DESTROY PALESTINIANS

In December 2024, Amnesty International concluded that between October 2023 and June 2024, Israel deliberately inflicted conditions of life calculated to physically destroy Palestinians in Gaza through a combination of damage to and destruction of objects indispensable for the survival of the civilian population, mass forced displacement in inhumane conditions, and the denial and obstruction of essential services and life-saving supplies.

The evidence documented throughout this report further demonstrates Israel's systematic and ongoing destruction of conditions necessary for life in Gaza, through Israeli attacks on healthcare facilities, mass "evacuation" orders and ongoing forced displacement, house destructions, and severe illegal restrictions on the entry of aid and essential services. It demonstrates how Israeli conduct deprived pregnant and post-partum women of maternity care, food and other essentials; left women unable to meet their own and their families' basic needs; denied newborns life-saving treatment; and imposed conditions that ultimately led to the foreseeable increase of gender-based violence while dismantling systems of protection. Cumulative conditions imposed and maintained by Israel also caused preventable deaths of women, newborns and people with chronic illnesses, through the destruction of healthcare infrastructure and severe restrictions on the entry and delivery of humanitarian aid and essential supplies.

The evidence documented in this report also demonstrates that, through October 2026, Israel continued to inflict such conditions, particularly through the ongoing deprivation of goods and essential services through its unlawful blockade, the almost blanket denial of Palestinians entering or exiting Gaza, and the violent expansion and maintenance of access restricted zones across over 65% of Gaza, forcing Palestinians into an ever-shrinking, overcrowded area and exacerbating already inhumane living conditions.

CAUSING SERIOUS BODILY AND MENTAL HARM

The evidence in this report likewise adds to Amnesty International's earlier findings to further demonstrate how Israel caused serious bodily and mental harm on a massive scale.

As a result of Israel's unlawful conduct, women have suffered severe and life-changing physical injuries, severe hunger and malnutrition, reproductive harms including miscarriage and pregnancy loss, unsafe childbirth, and severe post-partum complications. They have also been subjected to trauma through killings, arbitrary detention and disappearances of family members, mass and repeated forced displacement and the destruction of their homes and livelihoods – often suffered cumulatively. Israeli security forces also subjected women in detention to ill-treatment, including sexual violence.

These harms have had grave and long-term disadvantages on women in Gaza and their ability to lead "a normal and constructive life", the relevant threshold of harm for this prohibited act as established by international jurisprudence.

This also did not end with the so-called ceasefire. Through to at least October 2026, women and girls continued to suffer severe physical and psychological harm from unlawful Israeli conduct, including suffering caused by the deprivation of medical supplies and other essential goods, the near-blanket prohibitions on exit and entry to Gaza, including for many patients with urgent medical needs, and the pain and uncertainty of ongoing, protracted and indefinite forced displacement in uninhabitable conditions. For many women, these harms accumulated over time, compounding the long-term consequences of injuries, trauma and deprivation already endured. In addition to the over 5,000 injuries reported from attacks after the "ceasefire", available data on mental health among the population of Gaza in 2025 and 2026 shows high rates of psychiatric disorders. Several women described suffering severe trauma symptoms to Amnesty International.

KILLING MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

In December 2024, Amnesty International concluded that, between October 2023 and June 2024, Israel carried out unlawful attacks that deliberately killed and seriously injured many civilians in Gaza.

This current report shows how during the same time period and until October 2025, Israeli forces killed Palestinian women and girls in unlawful attacks in their homes or displacement shelters, while seeking medical care, inside maternity departments, or while attempting to access food.

Israel's repeated attacks on residential buildings and the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in densely populated urban areas contributed to both the high number of civilian casualties and the significant proportion of women among those killed, at least until the so-called ceasefire.

Beyond those directly killed in military attacks, women and newborn babies also died as a result of Israel's destruction of healthcare infrastructure, repeated forced displacement in inhumane conditions, severe restrictions on humanitarian aid and essential supplies, and the resulting malnutrition, disease and collapse of medical services, particularly as a result of the cumulative harm imposed.

MEASURES INTENDED TO PREVENT BIRTH

Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention prohibits measures intended to prevent births within a protected group. The evidence collected by Amnesty International provides a substantial basis to conclude that Israel imposed measures that had and continue to have the effect of preventing births among Palestinians in Gaza.

Israeli measures prevented conception. Israel's attacks and blockade led to the closure of all IVF facilities that had existed in Gaza before October 2023 and prevented doctors from re-establishing IVF services. Thousands of embryos and other reproductive material Palestinians was destroyed. Opportunities for Palestinians to travel outside Gaza for IVF treatment continue to be severely constrained by Israel's blockade. The cumulative effect of Israel's conduct is the effective denial of access to IVF treatment.

In addition, Israeli measures have impaired gestation and childbirth. Israeli attacks devastated maternity hospitals and maternal healthcare services and deprived many women of access to essential antenatal and obstetric care. Pregnant women, including those with high-risk pregnancies, were repeatedly forcibly displaced, sometimes under fire, to locations not fit for human habitation, away from their healthcare providers. Israel's blockade and restrictions on medical items, fuel and adequate food further undermined maternity care, and along with the destruction of food production across Gaza, contributed to malnutrition. In some instances, these measures, alone or cumulatively, led to fetal loss and other adverse pregnancy outcomes.

Conditions imposed by Israel also contributed to a broader pattern in which some women abandoned plans for future pregnancies, including because of severe trauma, fear and uncertainty they had been forced to endure. International jurisprudence recognizes that measures intended to prevent births within a group may be physical or mental in nature, including where members of a group are led through trauma not to procreate.

Available data from 2025 and 2026 indicate a marked increase in miscarriages, stillbirths and other adverse pregnancy outcomes, alongside a marked decrease in birth rates among Palestinians in Gaza in 2024 and 2025. According to Palestinian Ministry of Health data, for example, the number of live births recorded

during the first six months of 2025 was approximately 41% lower than during the same period in 2022. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) also reported a decline in deliveries during the first half of 2026 compared to the first half of 2025.

SPECIFIC INTENT

Genocide is distinguished from other international crimes by its additional specific intent requirement (*dolus specialis*): the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a protected group as such.

Amnesty International previously concluded in December 2024 that Israel had committed prohibited acts under the Genocide Convention Article II(a), (b) and (c) with the specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza as such, and that this intent could be inferred from the pattern of Israel's conduct in Gaza, statements by senior Israeli officials and other contextual evidence.

This report provides additional evidence to our 2024 analysis by demonstrating Israel's deliberate course of conduct continuing through October 2026, as well as statements from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other senior Israeli officials involved in decision-making referring to or advocating for these policies and decisions. These include the forcible transfer of population, the concentration of the population into limited, heavily surveilled pockets of land, restrictions on or suspension of humanitarian aid, large-scale destruction, prevention of reconstruction, maintaining and expanding access restricted zones and trapping Gaza in a protracted limbo of displacement.

The genocidal act of Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, has an additional intent requisite: *the intent to prevent births* within the protected group.

While Amnesty International did not identify any policy, order or statement expressly stating an intention to prevent births on the part of Israeli authorities, international jurisprudence has consistently held that the requisite intent may be inferred from a pattern of conduct and the broader context in which the acts were committed.

The evidence set out in this report – when considered in its totality – indicates a widespread and systematic dismantling of the conditions necessary for many Palestinians in Gaza to conceive, carry pregnancies to term, and give birth to living children. Israel's actions prevented access to fertility treatment necessary for some Palestinians to conceive and they contributed to pregnancy complications, including miscarriages and stillbirths, thereby preventing pregnancies from resulting in live births.

The International Court of Justice required Israel, in three binding orders it issued in 2024, to take all measures within its power to prevent acts falling within Article II of the Genocide Convention, including "imposing measures intended to prevent births." International fact-finding bodies, UN agencies, human rights and humanitarian organizations repeatedly warned about the devastating impact of Israeli policies and practices on reproductive health, pregnancy outcomes and birth rates in Gaza.

Despite these orders and warnings, Israel continued and, in some cases, intensified the measures causing these harms over a period of three years through the unlawful blockade and its associated restrictions, while actions that could have alleviated or mitigated some of these harms were not implemented.

Thus, the evidence presented in this report demonstrates that the prevention of births was not an isolated, peripheral or unexpected consequence of Israel's overall pattern of conduct. Instead, it was the foreseeable outcome of policies and practices maintained and repeated by Israel over a three-year period, despite extensive notice of their effects.

However, the measures resulting in the prevention of births have been imposed while Israel concurrently inflicts conditions of life calculated to physically destroy Palestinians in Gaza. It is therefore difficult to infer from these circumstances whether there was a separate and distinct intent on the part of Israeli authorities to prevent births among Palestinians in Gaza through these measures. Amnesty International could thus not reach a definitive conclusion regarding the requisite intent to prevent births. However, Amnesty International considers that the pattern of conduct documented in this report raises serious concerns that Israel intended to prevent births among Palestinians in Gaza, and that this conduct should therefore be investigated as genocide through imposing measures intended to prevent births.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Israel must immediately end its genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and urgently facilitate humanitarian action and reconstruction, including by allowing the entry into Gaza of medical items, including those essential for reproductive health and autonomy, and other equipment and material necessary for the repair of life-sustaining infrastructure. These efforts must be carried out in a manner responsive to all Palestinians in Gaza, including women and girls, and ensure their full, equal and meaningful participation in shaping humanitarian, recovery, reconstruction and accountability processes.

In the face of Israel's disregard for these legal obligations, third states must live up to their own obligations under international law to prevent and punish genocide, including by taking all bilateral and multilateral measures to bring Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, its system of apartheid imposed against Palestinians and unlawful occupation of Palestinian territory to an end. This must include an immediate ban on arms trade with Israel, targeted sanctions on Israeli officials implicated in the commission of genocide and other crimes under international law and the regulation of the private sector to prevent any form of contribution that would lend further sustainability to Israel's violations of international law, including those uniquely or disproportionately harming women and girls as documented in this report. To end the long cycle of impunity for Israel's crimes against Palestinians, states must also urgently ensure justice and accountability for any alleged crimes under international law, including genocide, perpetrated in Gaza since 7 October 2023 by exercising domestic, universal or other forms of extraterritorial criminal jurisdiction and by supporting the investigation of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) into the situation in the State of Palestine, including through the execution of any ICC arrest warrants.

Amnesty International calls on states that are members of the USA-led Board of Peace to place human rights, including women's rights, and international law at the absolute centre of their actions, and to refrain from making any decision or measure designed to undermine existing UN mechanisms, including the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), or any step that risks fragmenting Gaza or isolating it from the rest of the OPT. Amnesty International also warns member states of the Board of Peace from engaging in any action that may result in destroying evidence of crimes under international law, including genocide.

Third states, intergovernmental organizations and other donors should urgently support Palestinian women's rights activists and women's groups operating in Gaza, as well as Palestinian and international organizations providing humanitarian support, including reproductive healthcare, protection from gender-based violence and support to women-headed households. Finally, Amnesty International calls on the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC to consider the commission of the crime of genocide by Israeli officials since October 2023 and ensure that its ongoing investigations adequately examine gender-based crimes and reproductive harms.

2. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 SCOPE

This report applies a gendered lens to document and analyse Israeli violations and crimes under international law in the occupied Gaza Strip (Gaza) between 7 October 2023 and 1 October 2026. It includes a particular focus on unlawful killings and the causing of serious bodily and mental harm; damage to and destruction of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population; mass forced displacements in inhumane conditions; denial and obstruction of essential services and life-saving supplies, as well as arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment in detention.

In December 2024, Amnesty International concluded that Israel was committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. One year later, the organization found that Israel continued to commit this genocide, particularly through the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Palestinians in Gaza, despite the so-called ceasefire of October 2025.[1]

This present report builds on these findings and uses a gendered lens to focus on how Israel's genocide in Gaza has been and is being endured by Palestinian women and girls.[2]

While this report considers violations of the rights of women and girls broadly, it pays particular attention to how Israel's conduct has affected their reproductive lives, bodily autonomy and ability to safely conceive, give birth and care for children. It is therefore anchored in a reproductive justice framework. Developed by Black feminist activists and scholars, this framework recognizes that reproductive rights cannot be understood narrowly in terms of access to maternal healthcare alone. Rather, it also asks whether women and families have the conditions of life necessary to exercise bodily autonomy, have or not have children, and care for families in safety and dignity.[3]

Amnesty International adopted this approach because it best encompasses the multiplicity of the harms and violations to which women and girls are subjected in a gendered way, but also as members of the group facing genocide. The report also considers how violations have developed cumulatively over time, as women and girls have been subjected to repeated and multiple violations that have compounded since Israel's military campaign against Palestinians in Gaza began.[4] Moreover, it recognizes that Palestinian women and

[1] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman': Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza* (Index: MDE 15/8668/2024), 5 December 2024, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/8668/2024/en/; Amnesty International, "Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza continues unabated despite ceasefire", 27 November 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/11/israels-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza-continues-unabated-despite-ceasefire/
Amnesty International has previously stated, along with other humanitarian, human rights and civil society colleagues, that the ceasefire exists in name only. Amnesty International, "Gaza ceasefire exists in name only, say more than 100 organizations", 9 October 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/10/gaza-ceasefire-exists-in-name-only-say-more-than-100-organizations/

[2] Amnesty International recognizes that gender shapes the experiences of all people affected by armed conflict. While the report includes documentation of reproductive or sexual violence against men in some specific sections, a comprehensive assessment of gendered or reproductive harms against men, boys, or people with diverse gender identities is for the most part outside the scope of this report. The word "woman" is often used as a shorthand to include both adult women and girls.

[3] Sister Song, "Reproductive Justice", https://www.sistersong.net/reproductive-justice/ (accessed on 1 June 2026).

[4] Just Security, "Cumulative civilian harm in Gaza: A Gendered view", Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, 25 June 2025, https://www.justsecurity.org/115407/cumulative-civilian-harm-gaza-gendered-view/

girls in Gaza were already disproportionately bearing the burden of conflict, occupation and patriarchal social norms, before 7 October 2023.[5]

The focus of this report is on violations by Israel, as the perpetrator of genocide in Gaza. It only considers violations by other duty bearers as relevant to this analysis. Violations by Palestinian armed groups in Israel during the 7 October 2023 attack or against hostages seized during the attack have been documented in multiple previous Amnesty International outputs, including an in-depth 173-page report finding these abuses amounted to crimes against humanity and war crimes.[6] Amnesty International has also repeatedly raised concerns about human rights violations by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups against Palestinians in Gaza since October 2023 and previously.[7] The report does, however, discuss the increased exploitation and extreme social pressures women and girls have been subjected to amidst the erosion of Gaza's social fabric and which is tightly related to the ongoing imposition of inhumane conditions of life by Israel.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

2.2.1 INTERVIEWS

For this report, Amnesty International draws on 228 interviews, including 170 in-depth interviews carried out between 1 December 2025 and 1 October 2026, as well as dozens of interviews carried out by the organization since 7 October 2023, which we re-analysed for the purposes of this report.[8]

Amnesty International conducted over 120 interviews with women and girls about their own experiences in Gaza since October 2023. Almost all of them had been displaced multiple times; some 40 were or had been pregnant, and 13 were released from detention by Israeli forces (12 from detention in Israel or the occupied West Bank; one who had been detained overnight in Gaza before being released). Others were also suffering from malnutrition, or grappling with barriers to fertility treatment or contraception, gender-based violence, or they had loved ones killed or missing.

The organization also conducted interviews with male family members of pregnant women (in some cases after women were killed) or women trying to get pregnant, interviews with released male detainees, interviews with over 60 Palestinian healthcare providers, 12 interviews with members of Palestinian NGOs, and eight interviews with staff members of UN agencies or international humanitarian organizations. In some cases, interviewees were situated across multiple categories, as Palestinians working with healthcare providers, or national and international NGOs, often spoke to Amnesty International as both experts and as individuals who experienced personal harms.

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[5] See section 3.1

[6] Amnesty International, *Targeting civilians: Murder, hostage-taking and other violations by Palestinian armed groups in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, https://www.amnestyusa.org/reports/targeting-civilians-murder-hostage-taking-and-other-violations-by-palestinian-armed-groups-in-israel-and-gaza/
See also Amnesty International, "Civilians on both sides paying the price of unprecedented escalation in hostilities between Israel and Gaza as death toll mounts", 7 October 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/israel-opt-civilians-on-both-sides-paying-the-price-of-unprecedented-escalation-in-hostilities-between-israel-and-gaza-as-death-toll-mounts/; Amnesty International, "Palestinian armed groups must be held accountable for deliberate civilian killings, abductions and indiscriminate attacks", 12 October 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/israel-palestinian-armed-groups-must-be-held-accountable-for-deliberate-civilian-killings-abductions-and-indiscriminate-attacks/; Amnesty International, "Hamas and other armed groups must release civilian hostages and treat all captives humanely", 7 November 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/11/israel-opt-hamas-and-other-armed-groups-must-release-civilian-hostages-and-treat-all-captives-humanely/; Amnesty International, "Hamas and other armed groups must immediately release civilians held hostage in Gaza", 12 July 2024, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/07/israel-opt-hamas-and-other-armed-groups-must-immediately-release-civilians-held-hostage-in-gaza/

[7] Amnesty International, "Hamas security services must stop targeting protesters in reprisals and respect freedom of peaceful assembly in Gaza", 28 May 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/05/palestine-hamas-security-services-must-stop-targeting-protesters-in-reprisal-and-respect-freedom-of-peaceful-assembly-in-gaza/; Amnesty International, "Journalist facing prison term for exposing corruption in Hamas-controlled ministry", 25 February 2019, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/02/gaza-journalist-facing-prison-term-for-exposing-corruption-in-hamas-controlled-ministry; Amnesty International, "Hamas must end brutal crackdown against protesters and rights defenders", 18 March 2019, https://amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2019/03/gaza-hamas-must-end-brutal-crackdown-against-protesters-and-rights-defenders; Amnesty International, "Palestine (State of)", The State of the World's Human Rights, April 2024, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/7200/2024/en/; Amnesty International, "Hamas must stamp out extrajudicial executions and ensure justice for victims", 20 August 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/08/palestine-hamas-must-stamp-out-extrajudicial-executions-and-ensure-justice-for-victims/

[8] Seventy-one of these interviews, which were completed before 24 February 2026, were used as a basis for an earlier press release. Amnesty International, "Israel's genocide in Gaza inflicts compounded harms on women and girls", 10 March 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/03/israels-genocide-in-gaza-inflicts-compounded-harms-on-women/

Amnesty International has not been allowed access to Gaza since 2012,[9] and the research was therefore conducted remotely, mostly in Arabic on voice calls over the phone or online messaging platforms. A minority of calls were in English or in a combination of the two languages. In many cases, extended interviews were conducted over several days or involved follow-up interviews. Interviewees were identified through multiple different entry points, including Palestinian women's rights and human rights groups (the Women Affairs Center (WAC), the Center for Women's Legal Research, Counselling and Protection (CWLRCP) and Al Mezan Center for Human Rights), through doctors, nurses, midwives and therapists, and through a "snowballing" methodology (that is, contacts referred interviewers on to other people who were interviewed). A trusted fieldworker contracted by Amnesty International in Gaza also visited hospitals and other key locations, including locations of strikes and displacement sites, and identified some of the interviewees.

Where interviewees requested anonymity or where Amnesty International considered publication of identifying details could place individuals or their families at risk, names and identifying details have been withheld or changed. In most cases, the names and identifying details of medical personnel have been removed for their security, as large numbers of male healthcare workers have been detained by the Israeli authorities. Women survivors were also given the explicit option to be identifiable or not; many preferred to be included anonymously or identified by first name only – for security and/or privacy reasons.

Amnesty International followed a survivor-centred approach throughout its research. Researchers sought to minimize the risk of re-traumatisation and prioritize the well-being of those interviewed. Researchers often asked women they interviewed what messages they had for the international community or what suggestions they had for making the situation better and have endeavoured to reflect these in the report. In documenting sexual violence, Amnesty International followed the Murad Code and broader survivor-centred best practices.[10]

2.2.2 OTHER SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

Amnesty International received photographs, videos or medical records from some interviewees or obtained them from open sources which corroborated or complemented information provided in interviews, or aided assessments of their credibility and reliability. Researchers verified and analysed over 40 images and analysed satellite imagery in several instances. In other instances, neither digital nor documentary evidence was available, either because it was never created or because it was lost due to repeated displacement and the widespread destruction of homes, healthcare facilities and other infrastructure. In such cases, the report relies on multiple witness statements corroborating specific incidents, or on consistent "pattern evidence" indicating recurring conduct.

In addition to interviews, Amnesty International also reviewed other publicly available information relating to attacks, "evacuation" orders, and destruction of civilian infrastructure, including press releases by the Israeli military, datasets from UN agencies and the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza, and reports by Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights and humanitarian organizations and global healthcare

[9] The Israeli authorities have repeatedly rejected – or failed to respond to – Amnesty International's requests to access Gaza since 2012. They rejected the organization's most recent request on 3 June 2024 on security grounds, stating that entry into Gaza was only possible in urgent cases and for humanitarian reasons, given that Gaza was a war zone. The Egyptian authorities have failed to respond to Amnesty International's requests to access Gaza via Rafah most recently on 24 October 2024.
[10] Global Code of Conduct for Gathering and Using Information about Systematic and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, https://www.muradcode.com/murad-code (accessed on 1 June 2026).

experts.[11] Amnesty International considers that Ministry of Health data remains the most comprehensive available source of fatality information in Gaza, and broadly accurate.[12]

The available information is nevertheless incomplete due to restrictions on movement into and within Gaza, the systematic destruction of hospitals and other healthcare infrastructure, obstacles to accessing healthcare, and significant gaps in available data, including the lack of gender-disaggregated information.[13]

Amnesty International compared data on pregnancy loss, maternal and neonatal mortality, and birth rates after October 2023 with data available for 2020-2022. Issues like fetal abnormalities and birth defects, as well as the medium- and long-term impacts of some of Israel's practices and the overall environmental toll of the genocide, remained beyond the scope of this report as they require further research. US and Israeli sanctions on leading Palestinian human rights organizations, as well as Israel's de-registration of key international humanitarian organizations, compounded the difficulties of consistent data collection.

Amnesty International wrote to the Israeli authorities and the Hamas political authorities on 30 September 2026 with the report's findings and a number of questions. At the time of publication, Amnesty International had not received a substantive response. Amnesty International continues to call on Israel to grant human rights organizations, UN investigators and international press unrestricted access to Gaza.

2.2.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Amnesty International is deeply grateful to the many women, healthcare workers, humanitarian staff, lawyers, researchers, and activists who shared their experiences and expertise despite the time involved, and in many instances, the difficulty and pain of recounting traumatic events. The organization also wishes to thank WAC, CWLRCP and Al Mezan for their generous guidance and expertise, as well as their assistance in facilitating contacts and interviews. Amnesty International has called for sanctions imposed by the USA on Palestinian human rights groups to be immediately lifted and remedied.[14] Amnesty International would also

[11] The following reports were particularly important for Amnesty International's research: Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), *Israel's Measures Intended to Prevent Births within the Gaza Strip*, 29 March 2024, https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Israels-Measures-intended-to-Prevent-Births-within-Gaza-Strip-1.pdf; Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights (Al Mezan), *Reproductive Health Under Genocide: The Struggle of Palestinian Women in Gaza*, 17 September 2024, https://www.mezan.org/en/post/46587/Reproductive-Health-Under-Genocide:-The-Struggle-of-Palestinian-Women-in-Gaza#:~:text=Al%20Mezan%E2%80%99s%20new%20thematic%20report%2C%20%E2%80%98Reproductive%20Health%20Under,the%20reproductive%20rights%20and%20health%20of%20Palestinian%20women; Human Rights Watch (HRW), *"Five Babies in One Incubator": Violations of Pregnant Women's Rights Amid Israel's Assault on Gaza*, 28 January 2025, https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/01/28/five-babies-one-incubator/violations-pregnant-womens-rights-amid-israels-assault; UN Human Rights Council, Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (UN CoI), *"More than a Human Can Bear": Israel's Systematic Use of Sexual, Reproductive and Other Forms of Gender-Based Violence Since 7 October 2023*, 13 March 2025, UN Doc. A/HRC/58/CRP.6; PHR and the Global Human Rights Clinic (GHRC), *Destroying Hope for the Future: Reproductive Violence in Gaza*, 14 January 2026, https://phr.org/our-work/resources/destroying-hope-for-the-future-reproductive-violence-in-gaza/; Physicians for Human Rights in Israel (PHRI), *Motherhood Under Fire: How Much Can a Woman Endure?*, 14 January 2026, https://www.phr.org.il/en/mothers-report-eng/

[12] The Ministry of Health in Gaza, under the control of the de facto Hamas-run government, is the only source that has collected data directly from hospitals consistently since 7 October 2023. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UN OCHA), the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Palestinian human rights organizations, and B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization, which have also collected this data in previous military offensives, have not been able to consistently track fatalities resulting from each and every strike due to the unprecedented relentlessness of attacks and potential risk to their field researchers. In previous offensives, data compiled by the Ministry of Health, which does not include a specific breakdown between civilians and combatants but rather based on age and gender, largely matched the data compiled by UN OCHA. Amnesty International has reviewed the monitoring and reporting methodology of the Ministry of Health, including the process they conduct for identifying the details of attack casualties, retroactive reporting to include those whose relatives initially failed to report their deaths to hospitals, and the reviews into cause of death. Amnesty International found the Ministry of Health's methodology to be largely reliable. On the few occasions where duplications have occurred, they have been removed. Some cases which were initially recorded as direct war-related fatalities were also removed after the Ministry of Health's review identified a different cause of death. Considering the huge toll of the genocide on Gaza's healthcare system, including hospitals, as well as the unprecedented death toll, Amnesty International cannot dismiss the possibility of isolated mistakes, but did not find any structural or glaring misreporting that would undermine the figures they provide or their methodology. Academic studies have found the Gaza Ministry of Health's fatality figures to be generally reliable, while indicating that the actual death toll is likely higher than the reported number. See Abu-Sittah and others, "Counting the dead in Gaza: difficult but essential", *The Lancet*, Volume 403, Issue 10419, 13 January 2024, https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01169-3/fulltext; Jamaluddine and others, "Traumatic injury mortality in the Gaza Strip from Oct 7, 2023, to June 30, 2024: a capture–recapture analysis", *The Lancet*, Volume 405, Issue 10477, 8 February 2025, https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02678-3/fulltext, pp. 469-477.

[13] Jamaluddine and others, "Traumatic injury mortality in the Gaza Strip from Oct 7, 2023, to June 30, 2024: a capture–recapture analysis", (previously cited); Gómez Ugarte and others, "Accounting for uncertainty in conflict mortality estimation: an application to the Gaza War in 2023-2024", Population Health Metrics, Volume 23, 2025, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12963-025-00422-9; Spagat and others, "Violent and non-violent death tolls for the Gaza conflict: new primary evidence from a population-representative field survey", The Lancet Global Health, Volume 14, Issue 4, 2026, https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(25)00522-4/fulltext, pp. e552-e559.

[14] Amnesty International, "US: Lift sanctions on leading Palestinian human rights organization", 10 July 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/07/us-lift-sanctions-on-leading-palestinian-human-rights-organization/; Amnesty International,

like to thank an independent consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist in the UK (name withheld), and Micaela Frulli, Professor of Law at the University of Florence, for their reviews of sections of this report.

Finally, Amnesty International would like to express its deep appreciation to its Gaza-based fieldworkers and to a consultant from Gaza, whose dedication and expertise were instrumental to this project.

"US sanctions against Palestinian NGOs a blatant attack on human rights", 4 September 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/09/israel-opt-us-sanctions-against-palestinian-ngos-a-blatant-attack-on-human-rights/

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 CONFLICT, OCCUPATION AND PATRIARCHY

Since Israel captured the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza in June 1967, it has subjected Palestinians to a brutal military occupation that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) found to be unlawful in its July 2024 Advisory Opinion.[15]

In 2005, Israel unilaterally withdrew its settlements and ground troops from Gaza as part of a policy it termed "disengagement". It retained key aspects of effective control over Gaza, including control over its territorial waters, airspace and the inward and outward movement of people or goods via land, air and sea. Israel has also continued to control the supply of electricity, water and access to telecommunications in Gaza, while also controlling Gaza's population registry. This retention of effective control means that Gaza remains occupied even after the withdrawal of Israeli settlements and troops – a fact reaffirmed by the ICJ in its July 2024 Advisory Opinion.[16]

In June 2007, infighting between the two main Palestinian political groups, Hamas and Fatah, in which both committed grave human rights violations, in the wake of Hamas's victory as a political party in parliamentary elections in 2006, led to Hamas's violent takeover of Gaza.[17] In response, in September 2007, Israel declared Gaza a "hostile territory", citing security concerns, and imposed an air, land and sea blockade, increasing the level of severity of the restrictions on the movement of people and goods in and out of Gaza to the rest of the occupied territory, to Israel and overseas.[18] While Israel claimed that the blockade was aimed at Hamas, and that "humanitarian aspects relevant to the Gaza Strip" would be taken into consideration in order to "avoid a humanitarian crisis", it was in reality collectively punishing Gaza's entire civilian population.[19]

Over time, restrictions imposed by Israel contributed to the deterioration of Gaza's economy and civilian infrastructure, including its healthcare system. Even prior to October 2023, Gaza faced chronic electricity

[15] International Court of Justice (ICJ), Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, advisory opinion, 19 July 2024.
[16] ICJ, Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Including East Jerusalem, advisory opinion (previously cited), paras 91-94; International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Updated Commentary on Article 2 Common to the Four Geneva Conventions of 1949, 2016, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/full/GCI-commentary, paras 307-313. See also Tristan Ferraro, *Determining the Beginning and End of an Occupation Under International Humanitarian Law,* International Review of the Red Cross, March 2012, https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/external/doc/en/assets/files/review/2012/irrc-885-ferraro.pdf; ICRC, "Fifty years of occupation: Where do we go from here?", 2 June 2017, https://www.icrc.org/en/document/fifty-years-occupation-where-do-we-go-here; Declaration of the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions, https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-198189
[17] Amnesty International, *Torn Apart by Factional Strife*, 1 October 2007, https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/MDE210202007ENGLISH.pdf
[18] Israel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Behind the headlines: Israel designates Gaza a 'hostile territory'", 24 September 2007, https://www.gov.il/en/pages/behind-the-headlines-israel-designates-gaza-a-hostile-territory
[19] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You are Subhuman'* (previously cited), pp. 50-53; Amnesty International, *Gaza Blockade – Collective Punishment*, 4 July 2008, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE15/021/2008/en/; Amnesty International, *Suffocating: The Gaza Strip Under Israeli Blockade*, 18 January 2010, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/002/2010/en. See also UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, *Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict*, 25 September 2009, UN Doc. A/HRC/12/48, para. 78; Al-Haq and others, "Joint written statement: Human Rights Council must end illegal closure of Gaza as collective punishment", 4 June 2020, https://www.mezan.org/en/post/45136

shortages, widespread poverty and unemployment, severe restrictions on access to clean water, and heavy dependence on humanitarian assistance. According to the UN, in 2022, around 80% of Gaza's population already depended on humanitarian aid.[20]

In 2008-2009, 2012, 2014 and 2021, Israel conducted four major military offensives on Gaza that killed at least 4,052 Palestinians, injured and displaced tens of thousands of others, and caused widespread damage and destruction to civilian property and critical infrastructure, according to the UN OCHA.[21] In August 2022 and May 2023, Israeli forces launched two lower-scale offensives directed at Palestinian Islamic Jihad. In all these offensives, Amnesty International documented a pattern of unlawful air strikes by Israeli forces against civilians and civilian objects, including direct and indiscriminate attacks, failure to provide effective warning to civilians and wanton destruction of civilian property not justified by military necessity.[22] In 2018-2019, Amnesty International also documented a pattern of unlawful killings and the intentional infliction of serious injuries by Israeli forces in the context of mass protests by Palestinians in Gaza, which became known as the "Great March of Return". The Israeli authorities have consistently failed to conduct independent, effective and transparent investigations into violations of international law committed by Israeli forces, including possible war crimes.[23]

Impunity has also persisted for serious violations of international humanitarian law, including possible war crimes, perpetrated by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups during these armed conflicts with Israel, in a pattern documented by Amnesty International since 2006. Palestinian armed groups fired thousands of unguided rockets and mortars, which are inherently inaccurate, towards populated areas in Israel, killing and injuring hundreds of civilians, including Jewish Israelis, Palestinian citizens of Israel and migrant workers.[24]

In 2022, Amnesty International concluded that Israel has been imposing a system of apartheid against all Palestinians whose rights it controls through policies of territorial fragmentation, segregation, dispossession and discriminatory restrictions on movement and access to resources.[25] Palestinians in Gaza experienced some of the harshest manifestations of these policies, including through the blockade and its associated restrictions, unlawful killings, fragmentation and the continued denial of the rights of refugees, who comprise over 70% of Gaza's population, to return to areas in Israel from which they were displaced or forced to flee in 1948. Recurrent Israeli military operations over many years caused repeated destruction of homes, agricultural land, civilian infrastructure and public services, while restrictions on reconstruction materials impeded recovery and deepened humanitarian need.[26]

IMPACT ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

These conditions had particularly devastating impacts on women and girls long before October 2023. Women in Gaza have historically played central roles in family, community, education, healthcare and civil society life. Literacy and educational attainment rates among women and girls in Gaza were over 97%, and women worked across professional sectors including healthcare, education, law and the humanitarian response; in 2023 many of these metrics were also improving, with literacy rates among girls aged 15-19 at over 99%.[27] However, women and girls in Gaza lived within a context shaped by the effects of Israel's system of apartheid, its illegal blockade and unlawful occupation, as well as recurring hostilities. This context

[20] See, for example, UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), "Prior to the current crisis, decades long blockage hollowed Gaza's economy leaving 80% of the population dependent on international aid", 25 October 2023, https://unctad.org/press-material/prior-current-crisis-decades-long-blockade-hollowed-gazas-economy-leaving-80

[21] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), p. 53.

[22] In 2019, UNCTAD estimated the cost of the three Israeli military operations in Gaza between 2008 and 2014 to be at least three times the GDP of Gaza. UNCTAD, *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The Unrealized Oil and Natural Gas Potential*, 2019, UN Doc. UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2019/1, p. 12.

[23] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), pp. 53-56.

[24] See, for example, HRW, *Rockets from Gaza: Harm to Civilians from Palestinian Armed Groups' Rocket Attacks*, 6 August 2009, https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/08/06/rockets-gaza/harm-civilians-palestinian-armed-groups-rocket-attacks; Amnesty International, *Unlawful and Deadly: Rocket and Mortar Attacks by Palestinian Armed Groups During the 2014 Gaza/Israel Conflict*, 26 March 2015, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde21/1178/2015/en; HRW, "Palestinian rockets in May killed civilians in Israel, Gaza", 12 August 2021, https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/08/12/palestinian-rockets-may-killed-civilians-israel-gaza; Amnesty International, *'They Were Just Kids': Evidence of War Crimes During Israel's August 2022 Gaza Offensive*, 25 October 2022, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/6079/2022/en/

[25] Amnesty International, *Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime Against Humanity*, 1 February 2022, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/

[26] See, for example, Amnesty International, *Israel's apartheid against Palestinians* (previously cited), pp. 170-173.

[27] See, for example, World Bank, "West Bank and Gaza gender landscape, 2026 edition", https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099342204062313190/pdf/IDU1306ee1bb1e8a8149c71a0811c0970409a19d.pdf (accessed 1 June 2026); Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), *Literacy Rate of Persons (15 Years and Over) in Gaza Strip by Age Groups and Sex, 1995, 1997, 2000–2022*, https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/Education-1994-2022-11E3.html (accessed on 27 July 2026).

intersected with and was exacerbated by long-standing patriarchal norms, whose overreach further intensified following Hamas' takeover in 2007.[28]

Restrictions on movement, military incursions, destruction of homes and infrastructure, and economic hardship imposed distinct burdens on women, who often bore primary responsibility for caring for children, older persons and other family members. Measures imposed by the Israeli authorities had gender-specific consequences, limiting women's access to healthcare, education, employment and family life. Military operations and movement restrictions disrupted access to schools, work and social services, while increasing caregiving responsibilities for families affected by injury, detention, displacement or poverty. Women also assumed greater roles in sustaining households amid prolonged insecurity and economic hardship.[29]

Palestinian women's rights organizations and humanitarian agencies had also documented increasing psycho-social distress, economic insecurity and gender-based violence, particularly following repeated cycles of hostilities and displacement.[30]

The blockade and recurring military operations by Israel compounded these inequalities. As living conditions deteriorated, women frequently absorbed increasing caregiving responsibilities within households experiencing job loss, poverty, food insecurity and housing instability. Women often managed complex survival strategies for families amid electricity shortages, medical and water insecurity and the collapse of public services. Restrictions on movement also affected women's access to specialized healthcare outside Gaza, including radiation therapy, sexual and reproductive healthcare, including maternal healthcare services unavailable within the territory.[31]

By October 2023, Gaza's healthcare system was already under severe strain as a result of the long-standing unlawful blockade. Humanitarian organizations had warned for years that shortages of medicines, fuel, medical equipment and trained personnel were undermining healthcare provision, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, particularly maternal healthcare. Restrictions on the entry of Israel-identified "dual-use" items impeded the repair and maintenance of medical infrastructure and equipment. Electricity shortages regularly disrupted hospital services, including neonatal and maternity care.[32]

These restrictions were further aggravated by the socially and religiously conservative governance under Hamas, which, since assuming control over Gaza, adopted several measures to constrain women's freedoms, including mandating gender segregation at schools starting from age nine,[33] attempts at imposing an Islamic dress code on women and girls in several public institutions, including schools, universities and courts and banning unmarried women, regardless of their age, from travelling outside Gaza without approval of their male "guardian" if their fathers apply for such a ban.[34]

Throughout that period, women and women's rights groups in Gaza continued to challenge patriarchal norms, campaign for increased protection for women against domestic violence and struggle for gender equality in personal status affairs.

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[28] Amnesty International, *Conflict, occupation and patriarchy: Women carry the burden*, 31 March 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/mde150162005en.pdf

[29] Amnesty International, *Conflict, occupation and patriarchy* (previously cited).

[30] UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN OCHA, "A crisis within a crisis: fighting Gender-Based Violence (GBV) during COVID-19", 2 June 2020, https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/crisis-within-crisis-fighting-gender-based-violence-gbv-during; UNFPA Palestine, Gender Based Violence, https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/gender-based-violence (accessed on 29 October 2026); Action Aid, *Agents of Change: The Role of Palestine's Women-Led Organizations in Crisis*, September 2024, https://www.actionaid.org.uk/publications/agents-change; Curdin Brugger, Bassam Abu Hamad, Jan Hattendorf, Mirko S. Winkler and Nicole Probst-Hensch, "Changes in psychological distress during conflict escalation in an adult population-based cohort in the Gaza Strip (2020–2025): a longitudinal analysis", eClinicalMedicine, Volume 90, 2025, Article 103647, https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(25)00581-4/fulltext

[31] UNFPA Palestine, Gender Based Violence, https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/gender-based-violence (accessed on 29 October 2026); UN OCHA, "A crisis within a crisis: fighting Gender-Based Violence (GBV) during COVID-19" (previously cited); Action Aid, *Agents of Change* (previously cited); WHO, *Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Functionality in Gaza*, October 2025, https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/MHPSS_Functionality_-_Final.pdf

[32] Gisha, *Ill Will: Israel's policy on medical evacuations from the Gaza Strip*, February 2026, https://gisha.org/en/ill-will/; Gisha, "Essential and denied: Israel's dual-use policy in Gaza", 17 March 2026, https://gisha.org/en/dual-use-items/; WHO, *Emergency Situation Report, occupied Palestinian territory, Gaza, 1–31 July 2019*, https://www.un.org/unispal/document/who-situation-report-opt-gaza-1-31-july-2019/ (accessed on 17 November 2026); PCHR, *Impact of Israeli unilateral coercive measures on the right to health of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip*, 26 February 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/Issues/ucm/cfis/2023-hrc-ga/subm-2023-thematic-s-cso-pchr.pdf

See also, for example, WHO, Situation Report Occupied Palestinian Territory, Gaza 14-27 August 2018, https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/documents/who-health-cluster-special-sitrep-14-27_aug_final.pdf (accessed on 29 October 2026).

[33] Palestinian Legislative Council in Gaza, Education Law number 1 of 2013, Article 46, https://rtei.okfn.org/documents/EDUCATION_LAW.pdf

[34] For more information, see PCHR, "Higher Sharia Court Council circular on travel restrictions: Grave mistake that must be reversed", 16 February 2021; HRW, "Gaza authorities Issue travel restrictions for unmarried women: Guardians should not have power to bar women from travel, 17 February 2021, https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/17/gaza-authorities-Issue-travel-restrictions-unmarried-women

3.2 GENOCIDE AGAINST PALESTINIANS IN GAZA

On 7 October 2023, fighters from Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups from Gaza indiscriminately fired a barrage of rockets into Israel, breached the perimeter fence that surrounds Gaza and attacked dozens of military and civilian targets in southern Israel. During the attack, approximately 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed, including at least 36 children. In addition, Palestinian armed groups abducted 223 civilians – Israeli and foreign nationals, including men, women and children – and captured 27 Israeli male and female soldiers (or bodies of those killed). The groups held soldiers and civilians alike as hostages, some for weeks, but most for months or two years. Some hostages were subjected to torture in captivity, including sexual violence, and at least six were murdered. These actions amounted to crimes against humanity and war crimes.[35]

On the same day, Israel embarked on a military offensive on Gaza of unprecedented magnitude, scale and duration. Since then, it has carried out relentless aerial and ground attacks, many of them with large explosive weapons, which have caused massive damage and flattened entire neighbourhoods and cities across Gaza, along with their life-supporting infrastructure, agricultural land, and cultural and religious sites and symbols deeply engrained in Palestinians' collective memory.[36] While the intensity and frequency of air strikes and shelling decreased significantly after the so-called ceasefire in October 2025, Israeli attacks, including air strikes, continued.

As of 1 October 2026, the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza had recorded over 74,000 people killed in Israel's military offensive, and the injury of tens of thousands more, including thousands of children.[37] Many of the casualties were from direct attacks on civilians or civilian objects or indiscriminate attacks, often wiping out entire multigenerational families.[38] Israel has forcibly displaced 90% of Gaza's 2.2 million inhabitants, many of them multiple times, into ever-shrinking, ever-changing pockets of land that lacked basic infrastructure.

It has deliberately obstructed or denied the import and delivery of life-saving goods and humanitarian aid. It has restricted power supplies that, together with damage and destruction, led to the collapse of the water, sanitation and healthcare systems.[39] It has carried out 1,000 attacks on Gaza healthcare facilities, causing 1007 reported deaths.[40] This has included sieges and raids on most of Gaza's hospitals. It has subjected hundreds, most likely thousands, of Palestinians from Gaza to incommunicado detention and subjected many to acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including sexual violence.[41] The unlawful acts inflicted on Palestinians simultaneously, for months without respite, have had a profound, cumulative impact on the mental and physical health of Gaza's entire population: those who survived were left weakened, hungry or traumatized, with likely permanent effects on their mental and physical health.[42]

In December 2024, Amnesty International published a report concluding that Israel was committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.[43] Amnesty International found that the Israeli authorities had committed prohibited acts under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention), including killings, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Palestinians in Gaza, part of a protected group under the Convention.[44] In concluding that the Israeli authorities had deliberately inflicted conditions of life calculated to bring about the destruction of Palestinians in Gaza, it looked in particular at the imposition and maintenance of a comprehensive siege, including severe restrictions on the entry of essential goods and services such as food, water, fuel, electricity and medical supplies, as well as the large-scale destruction of homes and civilian infrastructure and the repeated mass displacement of the population. To establish Israel's intent, the organization considered both direct evidence, which included statements by high-ranking officials dehumanizing Palestinians and calling for measures incompatible with their survival, along with the overall pattern of conduct of the Israeli forces operating in Gaza, including the context in

[35] Amnesty International, *Targeting Civilians* (previously cited).
[36] Amnesty International, '*You Feel Like You Are Subhuman*' (previously cited).
[37] WHO Health Cluster, Occupied Palestinian Territory, https://healthcluster.who.int/countries-and-regions/occupied-palestinian-territory, "Gaza casualties" (accessed on 23 September 2026).
[38] Amnesty International, '*You Feel Like You Are Subhuman*' (previously cited). See also Chapter 4.
[39] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman*' (previously cited).
[40] WHO Health Cluster, Occupied Palestinian territory, https://healthcluster.who.int/countries-and-regions/occupied-palestinian-territory, (accessed on 26 October 2026).
[41] See, for example, The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), "Detention and alleged ill-treatment of detainees from Gaza during Israel-Hamas War", 16 April 2024, https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_on_detention_and_alleged_ill-treatmentupdated.pdf
[42] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited).
[43] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited).
[44] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited).

which the prohibited acts were committed, as well as their scale, severity and repetitiveness. Seen in their totality, the only reasonable inference was that Israel committed prohibited acts under the Genocide Convention with the intent to physically destroy Palestinians in Gaza, as such.

Amnesty International's findings are consistent with those of other human rights organizations and UN-mandated bodies, including the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (UN CoI), which has concluded that Israel committed genocidal acts against Palestinians in Gaza and that these acts were carried out with genocidal intent.[45]

3.3 NO END TO THE GENOCIDE DESPITE THE SO-CALLED CEASEFIRE

On 10 October 2025, a US-brokered ceasefire agreement entered into force between Israel and Hamas, stipulating, among other things, the release of all Israeli hostages in a hostage-prisoner exchange deal, an increase in the entry of humanitarian aid, a gradual transition of governance in Gaza and a gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces.

However, the agreement did not lead to a cessation of Israeli air strikes on Gaza, which continued, albeit at a lower intensity, resulting in ongoing civilian deaths and injuries, including 1,439 Palestinians killed by 1 October 2026, as reported by the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza,[46] among them, at least 326 children.[47] Israeli attacks also continued to damage or destroy civilian infrastructure and drive forced displacement. On 17 November 2025, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2803, which endorsed the US-backed comprehensive plan to end the conflict in Gaza by welcoming the establishment of the Board of Peace (BoP), as a transitional governance body tasked with administering Gaza and coordinating humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts, through a technocratic committee, and overseeing demilitarization.[48] Amnesty International warned that the BoP risked undermining international law since it appeared to have been designed to replace the long-standing UN mechanisms and serve economic interests and personal ambitions.[49] The organization also called on EU member states to ensure that any engagement with the BoP "be firmly grounded in international law, human rights, accountability, and meaningful Palestinian ownership".[50]

The technocratic committee appointed by the BoP on 16 January 2026, the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), headquartered in Egypt, is yet to enter Gaza as of the time of writing. Since its establishment, the BoP has repeatedly failed to adequately condemn Israel's violations of the so-called ceasefire and instead led efforts to gravely undermine UNRWA.

While the so-called ceasefire resulted in a reduction in large-scale aerial bombardment, humanitarian organizations and Palestinian residents consistently reported that conditions imposed by Israel across Gaza remained catastrophic. Vast areas had been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable, healthcare infrastructure remained devastated, and much of the population continued to live in tents, overcrowded shelters or damaged buildings without adequate access to clean water, sanitation, healthcare or electricity.[51]

The October 2025 agreement also resulted in a limited increase in the entry of humanitarian assistance, but humanitarian organizations continued to report ongoing severe restrictions imposed by Israel on such assistance and major obstacles to the restoration of civilian life and infrastructure.[52] Tens of thousands of patients with chronic illnesses continue to suffer what one humanitarian organization termed a "silent crisis"

[45] UN CoI, *Legal analysis of the conduct of Israel in Gaza pursuant to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,* 16 September 2025, UN Doc. A/HRC/60/CRP.3; UN CoI, *"The Essence of Childhood Has Been Destroyed": Israel's Deliberate Targeting of Palestinian Children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory Since 7 October 2023*, 18 June 2026, UN Doc. A/HRC/62/CRP.2.
[46] WHO Health Cluster, Occupied Palestinian Territory, https://healthcluster.who.int/countries-and-regions/occupied-palestinian-territory, "Gaza casualties", (accessed on 29 September 2026).
[47] UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), "At least 300 children reportedly killed in Gaza in past 300 days", 31 July 2024, https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/least-300-children-reportedly-killed-gaza-past-300-days
[48] UN Security Council (UNSC), Resolution 2803, (2025), adopted on 17 November 2025, UN Doc. S/RES/2803.
[49] Amnesty International, X post: "Today's ceremony marking the establishment of the so-called global 'Board of Peace' lays bare a brazen disregard for international law and human rights. It also represents a stark new manifestation of the escalating assault on UN mechanisms, international justice institutions and universal norms", 22 January 2026, https://x.com/amnesty/status/2014320121762796028?s=20
[50] Amnesty International, "EU must centre Palestinians' human rights and international law", 20 February 2026, https://www.amnesty.eu/news/eu-must-centre-palestinians-human-rights-and-international-law/
[51] UN OCHA, "Humanitarian situation report", 25 September 2026, https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-25-september-2026
[52] UN OCHA, "Reported impact snapshot | Gaza Strip", 7 October 2026, https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/Gaza_Reported_Impact_Snapshot_7_October_2026.pdf

that has led to the collapse of Gaza's chronic disease care,[53] amidst ongoing shortages of life-saving medical supplies and equipment.

The entry of humanitarian cargo through crossing points remained severely restricted, including the continued limited operations of Kerem Shalom/Karem Abu Salem and Rafah crossings. Exit from Gaza for Palestinians remained mostly limited to medical treatment, family reunification and education, and even those depended on coordination mechanisms requiring Israeli security approval and complex bureaucratic arrangements with transit and host countries.[54] Thousands of patients remained unable to leave Gaza for treatment; in early 2026, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that around 18,500 people, including thousands of children, required urgent medical evacuation for medical care that could not be provided within the Strip.[55]

Following the so-called ceasefire, the Israeli military imposed an arbitrary and constantly shifting demarcation line, known as the "Yellow Line", which has progressively expanded the area of Gaza placed under direct Israeli military control.[56] In February 2026, the Israeli military introduced an additional arbitrary demarcation line, known as the "Orange Line," expanding the area under direct Israeli military control and imposing severe restrictions on humanitarian organizations attempting to operate within its area, including requiring prior coordination.[57] The map of the "Orange Line" was never published on the official website of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), a body within Israel's Ministry of Defense tasked with administering the OPT – and was only shared with humanitarian organizations, adding to the existing uncertainty and risks posed by the original "Yellow Line." The resulting access restricted zone has driven further mass forced displacement, exacerbated already inhumane living conditions, cut off access to much of what remains of Gaza's fertile agricultural land, and isolated communities from essential services, including healthcare facilities.

The expansion of access restricted zones is part of a policy aimed at increasing the area of Gaza under direct Israeli military control, devastating Palestinians' ability to return to their homes and sustain their livelihoods. By June 2026, UN OCHA reported that access restricted areas covered approximately 65% of Gaza, compared with 53% when the ceasefire arrangements went into effect.[58] Israeli officials insisted in late December 2025 and again in July and August 2026 that these restrictions would continue to be maintained or further extended, and refused to agree on any timeline for the withdrawal of Israeli troops, conditioning it on what they called "genuine" Hamas disarmament. This suggests that the deployment of the Israeli military in these areas may become a long-term reality.[59]

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[53] Medglobal, *Silent Crisis: The Collapse of Chronic Disease Care in Gaza*, 23 June 2026, https://medglobal.org/silent-crisis-the-collapse-of-chronic-disease-care-in-gaza/; PCHR-I, *Israel's Genocide in Gaza Persists One Year into the So-Called "Ceasefire"*, 12 October 2026, https://www.phr.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/One-Year-Since-Ceasefire-20261001.pdf

[54] Gisha, *Ill Will: Israel's policy on medical evacuations from the Gaza Strip* (previously cited).

[55] Israeli authorities continue to control and severely obstruct the process of medical evacuations even as more than 18,500 Palestinians in Gaza require urgent treatment that is not available there, largely due to Israel's destruction of the healthcare system. Medical evacuations to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have been almost entirely prohibited since 7 October 2023. According to WHO, over 18,500 patients urgently need medical treatment that is not available in Gaza. See WHO, *Medical evacuation of patients from Gaza*, Infographic: "Medical evacuation of patients from Gaza", 23 February 2026, https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/Medevac_23_Feb2026.pdf; Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, X post, "Thousands of critical patients in Gaza are still waiting for life-saving medical evacuation abroad", 28 August 2026, https://x.com/DrTedros/status/2093255973443981616?s=20; PCHR-I, *Israel's Genocide in Gaza Persists One Year into the So-Called "Ceasefire"* (previously cited).

[56] See for example, Reuters, "How Israel moved its "Yellow Line" deeper into a shattered Gaza City neighbourhood", 22 January 2026, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/how-israel-moved-its-yellow-line-deeper-into-shattered-gaza-city-neighbourhood-2026-01-22/; The Guardian, "Gaza's yellow line creeps forward as Israeli forces expand zone of control", 22 April 2026, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/apr/22/gaza-yellow-line-creeps-westwards-israel

[57] Gisha, "Between the Yellow and Orange Lines", 13 May 2026, https://gisha.org/en/between-the-yellow-and-orange-lines/

[58] UN OCHA reported that "access restricted areas in Gaza now take up 65% of the land". See UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Report I 26 June 2026, 26 June 2026, https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-26-june-2026; The Guardian, "Gaza's yellow line creeps forward as Israeli forces expand zone of control" (previously cited).

[59] Jerusalem Post, "Gaza's Yellow Line is Israel's new border line, IDF chief Eyal Zamir tells reservists in Gaza", 7 December 2025, https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-879531; Times of Israel, "Touring the Strip, IDF chief Zamir says Gaza ceasefire line 'a new border'", 7 December 2025, https://www.timesofisrael.com/touring-the-strip-idf-chief-zamir-says-gaza-ceasefire-line-a-new-border/

Reuters reported Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's statement of 28 May 2026 that Israel intended to expand the area under its control to 70% of Gaza. Reuters, "Israel's yellow line, a shifting edge of war pushing Gazans from home", 28 July 2026, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-yellow-line-shifting-edge-war-pushing-gazans-home-2026-07-28/.

i24NEWS also reported that Israeli officials stated Israel would not withdraw from the "Yellow Line" in Gaza until Hamas is fully disarmed and the Strip is demilitarized, presenting this as a non-negotiable condition in ongoing negotiations. See i24NEWS, " 'There will be no Israeli withdrawal from the yellow line before Hamas is disarmed,' Israeli official tells i24NEWS", 30 July 2026, https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel-at-war/artc-there-will-be-no-israeli-withdrawal-from-the-yellow-line-before-hamas-is-disarmed-israeli-official-tells-i24news

Health facilities remained affected by military operations, with documented attacks on healthcare continuing, albeit at a lower intensity than during earlier phases of the conflict.[60]

In November 2025, Amnesty International concluded that the genocide against Palestinians in Gaza did not end with the October 2025 so-called ceasefire. It found that many of the conditions of life imposed during the military campaign persisted after the reduction in intensity of military attacks, including through widespread destruction of housing and civilian infrastructure, continued deprivation of resources essential for survival, and restrictions preventing meaningful recovery and reconstruction. Amnesty International further concluded that Israeli authorities continued to impose conditions that made it impossible for large parts of Gaza's population to access adequate shelter, healthcare, food, water and sanitation in pursuit of their physical destruction. Amnesty International also found no evidence of a change in intent; for example, there has been no decline in the level of dehumanization of Palestinians, no prosecutions or investigations by Israeli authorities into statements that may amount to direct and public incitement to genocide, as ordered by the binding orders of the IICJ, all while near-total impunity over Israel's conduct of hostilities in Gaza continues to reign.[61]

Other human rights entities or organizations, including the UN Commission of Inquiry, Physicians for Human Rights – Israel, Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), have likewise found that the genocide did not end with the so-called ceasefire.[62]

In the following chapters, Amnesty International documents how Israeli conduct has devastated the lives of women and girls in Gaza since October 2023. It provides further evidence that Israel has committed the crime of genocide, and that the genocide has continued until 1 October 2026, the end of the reporting period of this report.



Map of the Gaza Strip showing the so-called Yellow and Orange Lines, as of June 2026. © UN OCHA OPT, 26 June 2026

[60] WHO, OPT Emergency Situation Update, 7 Oct 2023 - 31 Aug 2026, https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/SItrep_72.pdf, (accessed on 19 October 2026).
[61] Amnesty International, "Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza continues unabated despite ceasefire" (previously cited).
[62] PCHRI, *Israel's Genocide in Gaza Persists One Year into the So-Called "Ceasefire"* (previously cited); Al Mezan, "Al Mezan condemns escalating genocide", 23 July 2026, https://en.pngoportal.org/post/4103/Al-Mezan-Condemns-Escalating-Genocide-Mass-Killings-and-Siege-on-Patients-Calls-for-Genuine-International-Action; PCHR, *Scholasticide and Genocide in Gaza: Assessment, Testimonial and Legal Analysis*, 28 September 2026, https://pchrgaza.org/palestinian-centre-for-human-rights-launches-new-report-scholasticide-and-genocide-in-gaza-assessment-testimonies-and-legal-analysis/

4. KILLINGS, INJURIES AND THEIR GENDERED IMPACT

Since October 2023, Israel's military operations in Gaza have caused killings and devastation on a scale and intensity rarely seen in the 21st century. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza, 74,237 Palestinians have been killed in the three years since 7 October 2023, including 22,331 women and girls (13,299 adult women and 9,032 girls). According to these figures, women and girls constitute 30.1% of all fatalities. The Ministry of Health has also recorded that 175,539 Palestinians have suffered injuries, including tens of thousands of women and girls.

Killings and injuries of women have continued since the so-called ceasefire of October 2025. According to the Ministry of Health, by 1 October 2026, Israeli forces had killed 1,439 Palestinians, including 274 women and girls, and injured over 5,330, including 1,473 women and girls, since the agreement came into effect. This is despite the fact that no rockets have been successfully fired from Gaza towards Israel since the start of 2026, according to the Israeli military as reported by Israeli media. Women Amnesty International spoke to described still living under a constant threat of death, with attacks perceived as unpredictable and inescapable.

The high proportion of casualties among women and girls reflects a pattern of unlawful attacks on civilians, decisions to strike thousands of homes and tents where alleged targets were foreseeably with their families and the frequent use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects.

For many women, killings of close family members or other loved ones have caused deep pain and psychological trauma, exacerbated the burden of caring for families amid ruin or exposed them to further abuse and violence. The scale of killing has reshaped Gaza's social fabric. According to UN Women, women reportedly head nearly one in four of all households, roughly double the pre-October 2023 rate of around one in nine, often in conditions of extreme social and economic precarity. Attacks, at times relentless, have also turned pregnancy, parenting, and daily survival into acts of endurance, often surrounded by death, fear and trauma.

4.1 KILLING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

4.1.1 THE SCALE OF KILLING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

As of the beginning of October 2026, the Ministry of Health in Gaza recorded the killings of 74,237 fully identified individuals, including 21,976 children, and the injury of 175,539 others, in Israeli attacks since 7

October 2023.[63] Of those fatalities, 22,331 were women and girls (13,299 adult women and 9,032 girls), amounting to 30.1% of all identified fatalities.

In its March 2025 report, UN CoI found the proportion of women and girls among reported fatalities since 7 October 2023 was much higher than in previous Israeli military operations in Gaza.[64] The scale of killings of women is also exceptional in global terms. In September 2024, Oxfam reported that more women and children had been killed in Gaza over the previous year than the equivalent period of any other armed conflict for the past two decades,[65] while the OHCHR stated that approximately 70% of all women killed in armed conflict globally in 2023–2024 were killed in Gaza.[66]

As of 1 October 2026, the Ministry of Health in Gaza reported that 21,976 children (under 18s) had been killed since 7 October 2023, constituting 29.6% of all recorded fatalities. This included 12,944 boys and 9,032 girls killed. A total of 1,125 of the children killed were under one-year-old.[67]

4.1.2 PATTERNS CONTRIBUTING TO THE KILLING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN AIR STRIKES

Specific patterns of attack and methods of warfare contributed to the scale of civilian casualties, and the high proportion of women and girls killed.

Amnesty International has previously investigated 15 attacks carried out by Israeli forces between October 2023 and April 2024 that killed 334 people, including dozens of women and at least 141 children.[68] Amnesty International had found that these attacks were unlawful because they either directly targeted civilians or were deliberately indiscriminate.[69] Amnesty International also documented additional cases of women and girls unlawfully targeted or indiscriminately attacked, including while seeking healthcare or food aid in Gaza, as set out further below.[70]

In five of the 15 cases documented, subsequent information published by the Qassam Brigades on their Telegram channel indicates that a small number of individuals who had been present at the sites of previously investigated air strikes were fighters with Palestinian armed groups.[71] In four out of these five cases, they had been staying – or sleeping – amongst their families, while in the fifth – they were present in a bustling market street in Jabalia refugee camp.

This new information is relevant to the assessment of these attacks, but does not in itself establish that those individuals constituted lawful military objectives at the time of the attack, that they were the intended targets, or that the attacks were otherwise lawful under international humanitarian law.

In the event that these individuals were the intended targets of these strikes, and that they had been taking part in hostilities at that time, then the attacks were not attacks directed at civilians; however, they were nevertheless indiscriminate attacks that killed and injured civilians, and, as such, must be investigated as war crimes.

While the 15 cases investigated by Amnesty International amount to only a small fraction of Israel's attacks, they are indicative of a pattern of violations of international humanitarian law, including repeated direct or indiscriminate attacks by the Israeli military in Gaza.[72] The UN Commission of Inquiry, as well as other human rights organizations, have also documented cases of direct or indiscriminate attacks against women and girls by Israeli forces in Gaza.[73]

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[63] Ministry of Health in Gaza statistics, on file with Amnesty International.
[64] UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), para. 24.
[65] Oxfam International, "More women and children killed in Gaza by Israeli military than any other recent conflict in a single year", 1 October 2024, https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/more-women-and-children-killed-gaza-israeli-military-any-other-recent-conflict
[66] OHCHR, "UN data shows surge in civilian deaths in conflict globally, highlights pervasive discrimination", 18 June 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/06/un-data-shows-surge-civilian-deaths-conflict-globally-highlights-pervasive
[67] Ministry of Health in Gaza statistics, on file with Amnesty International.
[68] Due to lack of sex disaggregated data on these cases, it was possible only to obtain age-disaggregated statistics.
[69] Amnesty International, '*You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), section 6.1.
[70] See sections 5.2, 5.3 and 8.4.
[71] Al-Qassam Brigades, Telegram post: أقمار الطوفان ["Moons of the flood"], https://t.me/AqmarTofan/1091 (accessed on 8 October 2026).
[72] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), section 6.1
[73] For example, UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), paras 29-35. Other organizations have also documented violations of the international humanitarian law obligations regarding proportionality and precautions in attack. See, for example, OHCHR, *Indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks during the conflict in Gaza (October-December 2023)*, 19 June 2024, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/opt/20240619-ohchr-thematic-report-indiscrim-disprop-attacks-gaza-oct-dec2023.pdf

Furthermore, most of the fatalities among women and girls documented by Amnesty International were caused by Israeli strikes on homes and makeshift shelters, some of which killed entire multi-generational families.[74] The unprecedented rate of women and child fatalities is closely linked to patterns of attack that repeatedly struck residential buildings, overcrowded shelters and, in some cases, entire residential blocks. Such locations often housed large extended families, many of whom had already been displaced multiple times.[75]

These findings are consistent with Israeli investigative reporting indicating that individuals identified as targets were often struck while in their homes with their families. An investigation by +972 Magazine reported that:

"The Israeli army systematically attacked the targeted individuals while they were in their homes – usually at night while their whole families were present – rather than during the course of military activity. According to the sources, this was because, from what they regarded as an intelligence standpoint, it was easier to locate the individuals in their private houses. Additional automated systems, including one called "Where's Daddy?" … were used specifically to track the targeted individuals and carry out bombings when they had entered their family's residences."[76]

If accurate, such practices raise serious concerns regarding compliance with international humanitarian law. Family dwellings are locations where the presence of spouses, children and other civilian relatives is foreseeable. Where feasible alternatives exist, selecting a time and place for attack that reduces the risk to civilians is a key component of the obligation to take precautions in attack to minimize civilian harm. Targeting individuals in their homes at a time when the presence of civilian family members is particularly foreseeable, and without adequate consideration of whether the attack could feasibly be carried out at a time or place that would reduce incidental civilian harm, may indicate a failure to adequately consider feasible alternatives that would reduce civilian harm.

In addition, Amnesty International and other organizations have also documented the repeated use of heavy explosive weapons with wide-area effects in residential buildings and makeshift camps and in the proximity of hospitals, markets, places of social gatherings, schools sheltering displaced people in one of the world's most densely populated areas, including using aerial bombs of 250 pounds (110kg) to 2,000 pounds (900kg). The use of such weapons in densely populated civilian neighbourhoods likely constitutes indiscriminate and/or disproportionate attacks.[77] Feminist analysis has identified how, in other contexts, "if more incidents of violence in conflict settings involve explosive weapons, the proportion of civilian casualties that are female is likely to rise".[78]

On the rare occasions when the Israeli military commented on specific strikes between 2023 and 2025, it claimed that the strikes targeted operatives or officials of armed groups, or that armed groups used the location for military purposes.

Israeli authorities have not publicly engaged with the specific allegations concerning the practice of targeting individuals in their homes, nor replied to Amnesty International letters on documented cases. Instead, in response to the +972 Magazine investigation, the Israeli military reiterated general claims that it complies with international humanitarian law.[79]

Amnesty International recognizes that Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups at times endangered civilians by operating from, or near, densely populated residential areas, such as IDP camps.[80] However,

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[74] Amnesty International, "Damning evidence of war crimes as Israeli attacks wipe out entire families in Gaza", 20 October 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/damning-evidence-of-war-crimes-as-israeli-attacks-wipe-out-entire-families-in-gaza/

[75] The UN CoI has likewise found that Israeli attacks on thousands of residential buildings have been responsible for a high percentage of women and girls' fatalities in Gaza. See UN CoI, "*More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), para. 24.

[76] Yuval Abraham, "'Lavender': The AI machine directing Israel's bombing spree in Gaza", 3 April 2024, +972 Magazine, https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/

[77] Amnesty International, *'You feel like you are subhuman'* (previously cited), para. 17; OHCHR, *Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, 2026, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session61/advance-version/a-hrc-61-26-auv-en.pdf, para. 17; Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), "Palestine: Explosive weapons cause majority of war wounds in Gaza based on 2024 data", 7 August 2025, https://www.doctorswithoutborders.ca/palestine-explosive-weapons-cause-majority-of-war-wounds-in-gaza-based-on-2024-data/; ICRC, *Explosive Weapons with Wide Area Effects: A Deadly Choice in Populated Areas*, January 2022, https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/document_new/file_list/ewipa_explosive_weapons_with_wide_area_effect_final.pdf

[78] Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), *Women and Explosive Weapons*, 2014, https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/news/latest-news/8630-new-publication-women-and-explosive-weapons, p. 14.

[79] Yuval Abraham, "'Lavender': The AI machine directing Israel's bombing spree in Gaza" (previously cited).

[80] Amnesty International, '*You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), pp. 104-106; Amnesty International, "Israeli attacks targeting Hamas and other armed group fighters that killed scores of displaced civilians in Rafah should be investigated as war crimes", 26 August 2024, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/08/israel-opt-israeli-attacks-targeting-hamas-and-other-armed-group-fighters-that-killed-scores-of-displaced-civilians-in-rafah-should-be-investigated-as-war-crimes/

such unlawful conduct does not relieve Israel of its obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians, avoid indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks, and take all feasible precautions to minimize civilian harm.[81]

THE ABU NASR FAMILY

One of the deadliest strikes documented by Amnesty International was the air strike on the Abu Nasr family, a rare case where the Israeli military announced that it was conducting an "internal review" into an air strike.[82] Amnesty International found that the air strike was either a direct attack on civilians and civilian objects or an indiscriminate attack. The organization is calling for the incident to be investigated as a war crime.

On 29 October 2024, at about 4.20am, an Israeli air strike hit the five-story Abu Nasr building in Mashrou' Beit Lahia, owned by 82-year-old Issa Abu Nasr, where some 240 members of the extended Abu Nasr family had been staying. The strike killed 137 people, including 55 children, 24 of whom were girls, 38 women, including two pregnant women, and 44 men. The oldest victim of the strike was Issa Abu Nasr, 82, and the youngest was Sham Abu Nasr, just two months old. Hours earlier, an adjacent building belonging to the Odah family had been hit, and the debris collapsed onto the second floor of the Abu Nasr home, killing three children – siblings Layan, Yassin and Bakr Abu Nasr.

Following the attack that struck the Odah home, and the intensification of shelling, family members tried to seek help and evacuate those wounded, but none of their neighbours could reach them. A doctor who lived in a neighbouring building told Amnesty International:

"Our neighbours cried out for help, knowing that I'm a doctor, but I couldn't reach them because of the heavy tank shelling in the area; it was too dangerous to leave one's home."

Afaf, 51, lost her mother, husband, five children and two grandchildren in the attack. She told Amnesty International:

"We were all gathering, me, my children and their spouses and our relatives… Then we went back to the fifth floor and tried to sleep again… I woke up to a strike on my back. I found myself slipping into a hole. My daughter was next to me, her children were screaming, and my daughter-in-law was breathing her last. Only two of my children survived; the rest were all killed. When I opened my eyes, I saw them all covered in blood. I screamed for help, but nothing came."[83]

Aida, Afaf's 15-year-old daughter, was seriously injured in the attack. Three of her cousins had been killed hours earlier in the strike on the neighbouring building. She told Amnesty International:

"We went back to bed after the first strike… I woke up to the sound of people screaming, my sister dying, my family next to me, all killed. When I regained my consciousness, I could not move; I was beneath the rubble…

"My father was killed, my three brothers, my two sisters, their spouses, their children.

"I was deprived of walking; I was denied my childhood; I was dreaming of doing so much, but I was denied everything. I just want to receive proper treatment abroad so I can walk properly again."[84]

Hani, 40, was the sole survivor of his immediate family. He told Amnesty International:

"45 people were staying with me in the apartment to the west, all of them were family members; all of them were killed and I am the sole survivor. My wife was killed, as were all of my four children. My wife and I had been trying for eight years to give birth, we paid everything we had for fertility treatment. They were the most precious thing I had, and I lost them all."[85]

Amnesty International did not find any evidence of a military objective in or near the targeted building. Amnesty International reviewed the names of the dead, injured and those staying in the building at the time

[81] For more on this, see Amnesty International, '*You Feel Like You Are Subhuman*' (previously cited).
[82] Haaretz, "Israel's army investigates if it breached international Law by killing hundreds of Gazans", 13 November 2024, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-11-13/ty-article-magazine/.premium/israels-army-investigates-if-it-breached-international-law-by-killing-hundreds-of-gazans/00000193-25f8-db8b-addf-7df878950000
[83] Interview by voice call with Afaf Abu Nasr, 16 February 2025.
[84] Interview by voice call with Aida Abu Nasr, 24 February 2025. Aida was medically evacuated to Egypt in March 2026 and after months of treatment and rehabilitation, she was able to walk.
[85] Interview by voice call with Hani Abu Nasr, 16 February 2025.

of the attack and did not find any evidence that any of them had any military link or connection to armed groups or were taking direct part in hostilities.

In its research, Amnesty International relies on open-source evidence, including social media accounts, interviews with family members, subsequent available posts by armed groups and other circumstantial evidence, to determine whether the individuals whose names it collected are or could be considered military targets. Amnesty International recognizes that its research faces certain methodological constraints, including the secret nature of armed groups' conscription as well as the consistent refusal of Israeli authorities to engage with the organization's questions or provide evidence for its strikes.

An Israeli military official told the BBC Israeli forces struck the building in response to seeing a "spotter with binoculars" on the building's roof, but they did not provide any visual evidence, nor did they cite the presence of specific fighters inside the building.[86]

Members of the family interviewed by Amnesty International as well as neighbours denied that the roof of the targeted building was used at any point as a lookout post by armed groups. While it is difficult to conclusively confirm these claims, the close proximity and height of the surrounding buildings, seen in satellite imagery from 24 October 2025, suggest it would have been challenging to see the activities of the Israeli forces – who appeared to be conducting operations west of the Abu Nasr building – from the rooftop.



Satellite imagery from 24 October 2024 shows the buildings where the Abu Nasr family was located. On 12 November 2024, the building is no longer visible.

Haaretz reported that the strike was among several strikes under review by the Israeli military's General Staff Fact-finding and Assessment Mechanism (FFAM), a body within the Israeli military responsible for conducting preliminary reviews of "exceptional" operational incidents where allegations of misconduct arise, but as of the time of publication, the results of such a review, if indeed undertaken, were never made public.[87]

According to an investigation by National Public Radio (NPR), published on 9 May 2025, the Israeli military responded to their detailed list of questions on the attacks by claiming that "the incident was still under review".[88]

[86] BBC, "Deadly Israeli strike targeted 'spotter' on Beit Lahia building's roof, official says", 30 October 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c6247nwz73do
[87] Haaretz, "Israel's army investigates if it breached international Law by killing hundreds of Gazans", 13 November 2024, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-11-13/ty-article-magazine/.premium/israels-army-investigates-if-it-breached-international-law-by-killing-hundreds-of-gazans/00000193-25f8-db8b-addf-7df878950000
[88] NPR, *Investigating One of the Deadliest Moments of the War in Gaza*, 9 May 2025, https://www.npr.org/2025/05/09/1250191987/investigating-one-of-the-deadliest-moments-of-the-war-in-gaza
According to the NPR report, an Israeli military commander who spoke to them on condition of anonymity said "troops were battling a Hamas battalion in the area and that they believed most civilians had fled".

On 30 September 2026, Amnesty International wrote to Israel's defence ministry to inquire about a detailed list of allegations of violations of IHL, including the Abu Nasr Strike, but has not received a response as of the time of publication.

The air strike on the Abu Nasr family building was most likely a direct attack on civilians and civilian objects and the Israeli military failed to substantiate its claim that the building had been used for military purposes.

Even if the building's roof had been used as a lookout post as claimed by the Israeli military, the attack would have been disproportionate and unlawful. The building was known to have been sheltering a high number of civilians, who had nowhere else to flee at the height of Israel's intensive campaign against North Gaza and the Israeli military knew – or must have known – that attacking the building when everyone inside was sleeping would have resulted in high civilian casualties. Even if the target was a military spotter using the roof of the building as a lookout, the expected loss of civilian lives would far outweigh any military advantage anticipated. Additionally, the strike clearly failed to take all feasible precautions to minimize damage to civilian objects and loss of civilian life: survivors interviewed by Amnesty International did not mention that they had received any advance warning, and they added that there was no possibility of leaving the area due to constant shelling. The use of an explosive weapon with wide-area effects, which completely destroyed the entire building, indicates the air strike targeted the whole building rather than a specific floor. Whether it was a direct attack on civilians, an indiscriminate attack, or a disproportionate attack, the strike on the Abu Nasr family building should be investigated as a war crime.

4.2 KILLING OF PREGNANT WOMEN AND REPRODUCTIVE HARMS CAUSED BY ATTACKS

Doctors working at four different hospitals told Amnesty International of surgeries on women who had been killed or mortally injured to deliver the fetus/baby alive.[89] A doctor in the maternity department in Al-Awda hospital, Nuseirat (Deir al-Balah governorate), explained, for example:

"I personally had to perform what we call emergency deliveries for at least six women who arrived at the emergency room already dead after their houses were bombed. I was able to deliver two babies who were born healthy."[90]

"Tariq" (name changed at the request of the interviewee) told Amnesty International that after his home in Beit Lahia was hit in an Israeli air strike on 13 October 2023:

"My wife was retrieved from under the rubble and taken to Kamal Adwan hospital by an ambulance. The doctors there told me that a woman who was eight months pregnant who arrived on Friday and underwent a caesarean section. They said the baby was delivered in good condition, but the mother was in critical condition, so she was transferred to Shifa hospital."[91]

"Tariq"'s wife died a few days later. He has since struggled to trace what happened to his baby. While he located an unidentified baby born to a mother who was killed following an attack on a home, another family with a similar tragedy – in which the baby was rescued from a mortally injured woman – believed the baby to be their own. As of 1 October 2026, the identity of the baby remained disputed.[92]

The UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has stated that pregnant women are put at additional risk by blast waves from explosive weapons, which may lead to pregnancy-related complications and

[89] Interviews by voice call with six doctors or midwives at Al-Awda hospital Jabalia, Al-Awda hospital Nuseirat, Kamal Adwan hospital and Emirates Red Crescent hospital, May 2024 - August 2026.
[90] Interview by voice call with a doctor in the maternity department of Al-Awda hospital (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 19 February 2026.
[91] Interview by voice call with "Tariq" (name changed for privacy reasons), 6 April 2026.
[92] Interview by voice call with "Tariq" (name changed for privacy reasons), 6 April 2026. The child was among those evacuated to Egypt after Al-Shifa hospital was raided, as detailed in section 5.5. "Tariq" has appealed for intervention to enable the families to carry out DNA testing unavailable in Gaza. As of 1 October, the issue remained unresolved. In a follow-up interview conducted with "Tariq" on 23 October 2026, he confirmed to Amnesty International that the two families are still waiting for a DNA test. "Both families are victims of a situation they have no responsibility for."

miscarriages.[93] Existing medical literature also recognizes that severe psychological stress during pregnancy, as could be triggered by nearby attacks, may also negatively affect pregnancy outcomes.[94]

While it is difficult to isolate the cause of death or draw a clear causal link between events, three women told Amnesty International they started to have cramping and vaginal bleeding immediately after a nearby air strike or air strikes and went on to have a miscarriage or preterm birth where the baby died. Healthcare professionals referred to additional such cases.

"Amina" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), for example, told researchers how:

"One day, massive and constant air strikes were taking place. The smell of gas and gunpowder filled the house. I was shaking with fear, and I suddenly had severe bleeding. We found one of the ambulances that came to pick up injured people, and it took me and my husband to Al-Shifa hospital. The streets were covered with wounded people covered with blood. I saw people on the street who sustained horrific injuries."[95]

"Amina" collapsed on arrival in the hospital. When she awoke, she was told she had miscarried and required a life-saving hysterectomy. As a result of the surgery, she will not be able to carry a pregnancy in the future.

4.3 LIFE-CHANGING INJURIES TO WOMEN AND GIRLS

In addition to those killed, large numbers of women and girls have been injured. UN Women concluded that between 7 October 2023 and 31 December 2025, nearly 11,000 women and girls sustained injuries resulting in lifelong disabilities.[96] These include amputations, spinal injuries, burns, and shrapnel wounds, frequently sustained in circumstances where access to timely and adequate medical care was severely limited or entirely absent.

Many women have thus been left without access to surgery, rehabilitation, prosthetics, pain management, or ongoing care.

One girl, "Maha" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), aged 11, from north Gaza, told Amnesty International:

"Before the war, everything was normal… but after what happened, everything changed. I could see everything. Then they hit us, and I lost my sight. My mother, my father, my siblings [were also killed] … I haven't gone to school in a long time."[97]

Her grandmother, "Rena" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), who looked after her, told Amnesty International:

"Seven members of my family were martyred – my sons and daughters. Then we went to stay with my daughter. She was martyred in June 2024 along with her husband and her children. Another son was also with them – he was staying there with his wife and children. They were all killed. Two girls survived – one is now blind, and the other has metal plates in her body and burns on her back. Before the war, [the granddaughter who lost her sight] received a certificate of achievement in school. She was among the top students…"[98]

"Rena" said her 67-year-old husband was diabetic and unable to walk. She described the difficulties of caring for her two grandchildren with very little available food or money, while living in displacement.

In addition to enduring severe physical pain and psychological trauma, injured women have described facing increased barriers to caring for their children, moving independently, securing food and water, earning an income, or navigating repeated displacement in conditions of continuing hostilities and humanitarian deprivation. In a 2025 report documenting the experiences of women who underwent limb amputations, PCHR noted that such injuries have profoundly affected women's ability to "move, work, be productive, and

[93] UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), Gendered Impacts of the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/UNIDIR_Gendered_Impacts_of_the_Use_of_Explosive_Weapons_in_Populated_Areas.pdf (accessed on 29 October 2026).
[94] Coussons-Read, M.E., "Effects of prenatal stress on pregnancy and human development: mechanisms and pathways", 2013, Obstetric Medicine, Volume 6, No. 2, https://doi.org/10.1177/1753495X12473751, pp. 52-57.
[95] Interview by voice call with "Amina" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 10 March 2026.
[96] UN Women, "The cost of war in Gaza on women and girls", 17 April 2026, https://www.un.org/unispal/document/advocacy-brief-the-cost-of-war-in-gaza-on-women-and-girls-un-women-17apr26/
[97] Interview by voice call with "Maha" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), June 2025.
[98] Interview by voice call with "Rena" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), June 2025.

socially integrate", while exposing them to ongoing psychological suffering in a context where rehabilitation, prosthetics and support services remain severely limited.[99]



Injured woman returns to her tent, in az-Zawayda area of Deir al-Balah, February 2026. © Anadolu via Getty Images

4.4 KILLINGS AND INJURIES SINCE THE SO-CALLED CEASEFIRE

Killings and injuries of women have continued even during periods described as ceasefires, including since the so-called ceasefire of October 2025. According to the Ministry of Health, by 1 October 2026, Israeli forces had killed 1,439 Palestinians, including 274 women and girls, and injured over 5,330, including 1,473 women and girls, since the agreement came into effect.[100] This is despite the fact that no rockets have been successfully fired from Gaza towards Israel since the start of 2026 and until 1 October (the period under review), according to the Israeli military as reported by Israeli media.[101]

Since the so-called ceasefire, OHCHR has verified the killing of 64 children in reported Israeli attacks that killed only children and no adults, and 30 women and 10 more children in reported Israeli attacks in which all those killed were women or women and children, with no men fatalities.[102]

Women Amnesty International spoke to in mid-2026 described still living under a constant threat of death, with attacks perceived as unpredictable and inescapable.

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[99] PCHR, *Severed Bodies, Shattered Souls: Women in Gaza Victims of Genocide*, 26 March 2025, https://pchrgaza.org/pchr-Issues-new-report-severed-bodies-shattered-souls-women-in-gaza-victims-of-genocide; UN Women, *Gender Alert: Gaza: A War on Women's Health*, September 2024, https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/09/gender-alert-gaza-a-war-on-womens-health-hq, p. 8; Interview with a member of a Palestinian NGO supporting people with disabilities (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 15 July 2026.

[100] Ministry of Health in Gaza statistics, on file with Amnesty International.

[101] Mako, לראשונה משנת 2000: שנה שלמה בלי אף ירי רקטה לעוטף עזה, ["For the first time since 2000, a whole year without any rocket launch towards the Gaza Envelope"], 6 October 2026, https://www.mako.co.il/pzm-soldiers/Article-28b1dcb967211a1026.htm

[102] UN, "One year after ceasefire announcement, killings continue across Gaza", 12 October 2026, https://palestine.un.org/en/324294-one-year-after-ceasefire-announcement-killings-continue-across-gaza

Many of these killings have occurred where Palestinians were near or perceived to have crossed the "Yellow Line", where Israeli troops exercise direct military control.[103] Women and girls have been injured or killed by shrapnel coming into the home or by tank shelling.

26-year-old Aya told Amnesty International how her area, near the eastern border of Gaza and the "Yellow Line":

"[I]s too dangerous to such a point that last November [2025] my daughter was hit by shrapnel that went through the window and hit her head while she was sleeping. … The situation remains unpredictably dangerous. Sometimes, there is so much shooting that I can't go pick my son up from school until the shooting stops."[104]

Aya's daughter was badly injured but survived.

The UN CoI has reported incidents of Israeli forces targeting Palestinians, including children, near the "Yellow Line", including the case of two brothers – aged nine and ten – in an Israeli drone strike on 29 November 2025 in Bani Suheila, east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza.[105] OHCHR documented the case of a two-year-old boy who was shot and killed in the early morning hours of 14 June 2026 in the arms of his father on their way to visit an aunt in Wadi al Salqa, eastern Deir al Balah.[106] OHCHR also reported verifying the killing of 331 Palestinians in the vicinity of the "Yellow Line" between the ceasefire agreement and the end of July 2026, including 27 women and 66 children.[107]

Together with the invisible "Orange Line", the "Yellow Line" demarcates an ever-increasing area of Gaza, constituting 65% of the territory through October 2026, over which Israeli forces violently impose a no-go zone or severe access restrictions.[108] OHCHR has referred to the area within the "Yellow Line" as a "kill zone" and noted that many people were reportedly killed while moving through areas lacking clear demarcation on the ground.[109]

4.5 THE ENDURING INDIRECT IMPACT OF KILLINGS AND INJURIES ON WOMEN

The impact of killings and injuries extends far beyond those directly harmed and the physical injuries as such. Women have experienced severe mental harm because of the deaths of family members, including their children, spouses, parents and extended relatives.

For example, 22-year-old Ranim, displaced from Gaza City to Khan Younis alongside her family, was severely injured in an air strike that hit the home to which she was displaced when she was eight months pregnant, killed her 11-month-old infant and left her living with a permanent disability. She described the devastating psychological toll:

"I was holding my son in my arms when suddenly the house shook; we were on the second floor; the first thing I saw as soon as I opened my eyes was my child's body next to me, and his severed head next to his grandmother, on the floor. I was taken to hospital, where I gave birth to a daughter and afterwards the doctors had to amputate my right arm at the elbow. I cannot look at my daughter's face because she reminds me of Izz, the boy I lost. He would have turned one year in November. I cannot hold my daughter; I cannot love her. It is not only my hand that was amputated, but I also feel that my life, my whole life, was as well."[110]

Some women and men also described the pain of having loved ones missing, with no idea if or how they died.[111] Thousands of people are reported by UN OCHA to be missing in Gaza, most of whom are likely

[103] Gisha, "Between the orange and yellow lines", 13 May 2026, https://gisha.org/en/between-the-yellow-and-orange-lines/
[104] Interview by voice call with Aya (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 30 April 2026.
[105] UN CoI, *"The Essence of Childhood Has Been Destroyed"* (previously cited), para. 38.
[106] UN, "One year after ceasefire announcement, killings continue across Gaza", 12 October 2026, https://palestine.un.org/en/324294-one-year-after-ceasefire-announcement-killings-continue-across-gaza
[107] UN, "One year after ceasefire announcement, killings continue across Gaza" (previously cited).
[108] See section 3.
[109] UN OCHA, "Expansion of areas under Israeli control in Gaza endangers civilians and relief efforts", 1 June 2026, https://www.ochaopt.org/content/expansion-areas-under-israeli-control-gaza-endangers-civilians-and-relief-efforts; OHCHR Palestine, X post: "More than 1,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza since the announcement of a ceasefire in October 2025: Here is what we know", 18 June 2026, https://x.com/OHCHR_Palestine/status/2067632390680256553?a=UT1bgAAcUIM4JAMUQqg&s=20
[110] Interview by voice call with Ranim (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 21 November 2023.
[111] In some instances, loved ones believed to have been killed were in detention in Israel. This has left some families hoping missing loved ones may be alive. See section 10.2.

under rubble.[112] "Tariq", mentioned above, told Amnesty International's researchers their five-year-old daughter was missing after a bombing on their home – her body hadn't been found; most likely, they said their girl was taken to hospital and died there unidentified, but they still held out hope she could be alive more than two years later.[113] A psychiatrist Amnesty International spoke to in Gaza said the phenomena of the missing was causing particular ongoing trauma and suffering for the population,[114]and the severe psychological impact of not knowing the fate or whereabouts of a loved one is well documented.[115]

Women also described suffering in circumstances where they had to continue to care for others in near-impossible circumstances. 37-year-old Ola from Gaza City told researchers how, shortly after she gave birth to her youngest son in November 2023, her 14-year-old son was killed in an Israeli air strike on her parents-in-law's home that killed 36 members of the family.

"That day, we were displaced. I was recovering from a caesarean section. I walked toward al-Falah School but left shortly before it was hit. We then went to another relative's home near the school that was struck. We spent a night of terror and were then displaced to the south… I walked about 14 km on foot while recovering from the caesarean. I would walk two steps, then sit down to rest. I left with my husband's brother's children; they had lost both parents, and I had to take care of them. I, so in need of care myself, had to care for orphans and my own children and to walk with them."[116]

According to UN Women, the conflict has reshaped family structures in Gaza, resulting in a growing number of reported and de facto women-headed households.[117] According to a needs assessment survey conducted at the end of 2025, households where women are reported as heads in Gaza are estimated to have reached approximately one in four of all households, equivalent to 86,290 households, and roughly double the pre-October 2023 rate of around one in nine.[118]

This represents a major shift in household structure and survival responsibility in Gaza. These families survive in a social system where prevailing gender roles position men as primary breadwinners, and where broader social protection systems have collapsed.[119] Before October 2023, women accounted for around 19% of the Palestinian labour force in Gaza, while women-headed households were already heavily reliant on humanitarian assistance. The destruction of livelihoods since October 2023 has had a particularly severe impact on these households.[120]

Human rights defenders described women who had been widowed and their children as facing acute social and economic precarity.[121] Women who led households often described to Amnesty International surviving extended periods without food for themselves or children, lacking basic items such as blankets in their tents, facing risks accessing aid, and, in some cases, efforts by others to sexually exploit them.[122]

Based on data from late 2025, UN Women reported that women-headed households were more likely than male-headed households to lack adequate shelter (68% compared with 55%), to have experienced damage or destruction of their homes (74% compared with 67%), and to have been displaced repeatedly. They also faced severe financial pressures, with two-thirds reporting an urgent need for cash assistance.[123]

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[112] UN OCHA, "Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash update #160", 1 May 2024; https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-160

[113] Interview by voice call with "Tariq" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 6 April 2026.

[114] Interview by voice call with a psychiatrist in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 23 April 2026.

[115] ICRC, "The agony and the uncertainty: Missing loved ones and ambiguous loss", 2 June 2015, https://www.icrc.org/en/document/agony-and-uncertainty-missing-loved-ones-and-ambiguous-loss

[116] Interview by voice call with Ola (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 16 April 2026.

[117] UN Women, "The cost of war in Gaza on women and girls" (previously cited).

[118] UN Women, *Left to carry households alone: War and the rise of women-headed households in Gaza*, September 2026, https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2026-09/brief-left-to-carry-households-alone-war-and-the-rise-of-women-headed-households-in-gaza-en.pdf

[119] Women Affairs Centre Gaza, الفتيات الصغيرات بين مطرقة الحرب وسندان التزويج المبكر]"Young Girls Between the Hammer of War and the Anvil of Early Marriage"], 9 April 2025, https://www.wac.ps/Issues#Issue1 (in Arabic).

[120] UN Women, "Gaza's Recurrent Escalations Chip Away at Women's Ability to Make a Living", 22 May 2023, https://palestine.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2023/05/gazas-recurrent-escalations-chip-away-at-womens-ability-to-make-a-living; UN Women, *Rapid Assessment and Humanitarian Response in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, October 2023, https://knowledge.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/10/un-women-rapid-assessment-and-humanitarian-response-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory
These sources note women's low labour-force participation prior to October 2023, the high dependence of women-headed households on humanitarian assistance, and the disproportionate impact of livelihood loss on women and women-headed households following the escalation of hostilities.

[121] Interview by voice call with Samir Zaqout, Deputy Director of the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, 4 March 2026, Interview by video call with Amal Siyyam, Director of the Women's Affairs Centre in Gaza, 23 March 2026.

[122] See section 8.3 for more details.

[123] UN Women, *Left to carry households alone* (cited previously).

"Umm Iyad", a 32-year-old widow and mother of three children, told Amnesty International that her husband, a taxi driver, was killed by a quadcopter while out searching for aid with a friend. She described the impact on her:

"My life completely changed. It is so painful to see my children without the love and support of their father. When I think about it, I can't breathe… My sadness is bigger than anything else. The only way I can feed my children is from the community kitchens… I wish I had a way to secure income for my children. Before the killing of my husband, I did not have to worry about that because I knew he always found ways to at least secure food for us. Now I have to think about feeding them, their safety, sending them to school, while I am still grieving and I will be grieving for the rest of my life."[124]

Mass killing and injury, or the threat of it, also formed the context for all reproductive decision-making and action in Gaza. In many cases, it led to women and their families feeling compelled to abandon or delay reproductive plans.[125] For others, it denied women and their partners their right to safe and dignified pregnancy and parenting, instead turning these into experiences marred by fear, grief and trauma. Pregnant women and new parents had no option to escape the violence, as there was no safe place in Gaza, and no opportunity for most of Gaza's population to be able to leave.

Like Ranim, whose case is described above, many of the women Amnesty International interviewed who were making reproductive decisions, or who were pregnant or raising a child, were also grieving loved ones killed during attacks, were injured themselves, or were caring for injured loved ones. These overlapping harms profoundly constrained the conditions in which women could exercise reproductive autonomy, experience pregnancy and childbirth, and care for their children safely and with dignity.

For example, 29-year-old Sondos Al-Kurd, from north Gaza, told researchers that she gave birth on Sunday 22 October 2023 after surviving an air strike. Early in the afternoon, the home she was displaced to in Beit Lahia was hit while she and other women from her family were baking bread. Her three-year-old daughter, 19-year-old sister, aunt and cousin were all killed, and Sondos was seriously injured. Only women had been in the house when it was bombed by an Israeli air strike, according to Sondos. After being pulled from the rubble, she had emergency surgery, followed by an emergency caesarean section. Her baby was taken to the NICU, reportedly affected by the smoke and gas exposure during the attack.[126] Sondos said that while she was in hospital recovering, her mother and brother were also killed in an attack.[127]

[124] Interview by voice call with "Umm Iyad" (full name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 6 May 2026.
[125] See section 9.3.
[126] Sondos's baby survived but was evacuated to Egypt in November 2023 when Israeli forced besieged Al-Shifa hospital. The family was then separated for more than two years. See section 5.5 for more details.
[127] Interview by voice call with Sondos Al-Kurd, 6 April 2026.

5. MATERNITY CARE UNDER ATTACK

Israeli forces repeatedly exposed pregnant and post-partum women, women in labour, newborn babies, and those accompanying them to life-threatening harm during attacks on hospitals and other healthcare facilities across Gaza. Women seeking maternity care were put at risk while attempting to reach hospitals, during treatment, and in the aftermath of childbirth.

Amnesty International documented the killing by Israeli forces of a woman accompanying her relative to give birth, three further incidents in which women came under Israeli fire during labour or while recovering, and the killing of at least three women or children during Israeli attacks on maternity facilities.

Amnesty International also documented that dozens of women were forced to give birth, undergo emergency obstetric treatment or recover from childbirth in facilities under attack or siege. Dozens more were subjected to unsafe evacuations or compelled to leave hospitals prematurely, sometimes leaving their pre-term or sick babies behind, or interrupting or preventing their own essential medical care. These cases are likely to be only a fraction of the total number of women affected across Gaza.

Newborn babies were similarly exposed to life-threatening conditions. Amnesty International documented the case of 39 babies who had life-sustaining treatment interrupted during the siege of Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City in November 2023 and a subsequent evacuation operation. In some cases, babies survived only to be separated from their families for prolonged periods, for up to over two years, with some parents left uncertain for weeks or months whether their child was alive or dead.

Israeli authorities have repeatedly alleged that many of the hospitals in Gaza were used by Palestinian armed groups for military purposes and therefore lost their special protected status under international humanitarian law. While Amnesty International documented some misuse of parts of certain hospital facilities, it also found that in many cases Israeli authorities have not provided sufficient information to substantiate broader allegations or permit independent verification. In particular, Israeli authorities failed to substantiate the claim that any of the targeted hospitals served as “command and control centres”, a generic and vague claim that accompanied most attacks on hospitals.

Moreover, even if protected status was lost, Israeli forces would still be bound by their international humanitarian law obligations of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack. Amnesty International documented instances of Israeli forces violating these obligations in attacks on maternity patients or maternity care. In particular, it found a pattern of Israeli forces failing to take all feasible precautions to minimize the harm to pregnant and post-partum women and newborns in their attacks.

Amnesty International continued to document cases of women in labour facing high risks to reach healthcare facilities, even after the so-called ceasefire of October 2025, in the vicinity of the “Yellow Line” area.

5.1 ATTACKS AGAINST HOSPITALS

The Israeli military have carried out large-scale military operations and raids against almost all major healthcare facilities across Gaza since 7 October 2023, at times on multiple occasions, which forced these

hospitals to interrupt or indefinitely suspend their services. On 25 July 2026, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) stated that 94% of Gaza's hospitals were either destroyed or only partially functional.[128] Repeated attacks meant that many of these hospitals were forced to rebuild and restore services from scratch on several occasions, during which they were able to reopen, amidst massive shortages in reconstruction materials and medical equipment.[129] Documented attacks on healthcare have continued after the so-called ceasefire of October 2025, albeit at a lower intensity than during earlier phases of the conflict.[130]

Hospitals attacked, raided or shelled since October 2023 include but are not limited to: Al-Awda, the Indonesian, and Kamal Adwan hospitals in the North Gaza governorate; Al-Shifa, Al-Ahli Arab Baptist hospital, Al-Rantissi, Al-Nasr, Al-Quds, and Al-Helou hospitals in Gaza City; Al-Aqsa Martys hospital in Deir al-Balah; and Nasser, the Gaza European, and Al-Kheir hospitals in Khan Younis – most of which had sizeable maternity departments or were maternity hospitals.[131]

In some cases, Amnesty International has not been able to find sufficient evidence to attribute responsibility for attacks that took place in areas where Palestinian armed groups were engaged in hostilities with Israeli forces, including due to access restrictions, safety challenges, or lack of forensic evidence. In some such cases, facilities may have suffered damage from hostilities in their vicinity. However, the majority of attacks and all raids and sieges of hospitals – including direct attacks – were directly attributable to Israeli forces.[132]

By early 2024, the only fully functioning hospital equipped with a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and maternity facilities in south Gaza was the Emirates Red Crescent Hospital in Rafah, a specialized maternity hospital which served thousands of women, most of whom were displaced from other parts of Gaza. That hospital was forced to shut down following the beginning of Israel's military operations in Rafah in May 2024 amid worsening insecurity and severe shortages of staff and medical supplies following the closure of the Rafah crossing and the Israeli military's invasion of Rafah.[133] It has remained closed to date in an area almost entirely flattened by Israeli forces, who retain direct military control of Rafah. The hospitals in north Gaza providing maternity services were also among those attacked and forced to close, and as of 1 October 2026, remained closed, leaving limited options for pregnant and post-partum women in north Gaza, among others.[134]

The WHO referred to the destruction of Gaza's hospitals as systematic: "Hospitals are rehabilitated and resupplied, only to be exposed to hostilities or attacked again".[135]

Israeli military operations against hospitals followed similar patterns: Vague and generic claims by the Israeli military that these hospitals witnessed military activities or housed a "military command centre"; the issuing of "evacuation" orders for the areas in which these hospitals are located; conducting air strikes or shelling in the vicinity of the hospitals or on a specific floor; followed by sieges preventing access to patients and blocking medical supplies, food and fuel; then carrying out raids; detention of staff, patients and displaced

[128] UNFPA Palestine, "UNFPA and France Partner to Restore Life-Saving Maternal and Newborn Care in Gaza", 25 July 2026, https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/news/unfpa-and-france-partner-restore-life-saving-maternal-and-newborn-care-gaza
See also WHO, Health Cluster, Occupied Palestinian Territory: Health Cluster dashboard, https://healthcluster.who.int/countries/occupied-palestinian-territory (accessed on 29 October 2026).

[129] For examples of instances in which attacks on hospitals led to the destruction of medical equipment, see, for example, WHO, "Health system at breaking point as hostilities further intensify in Gaza, WHO warns", 22 May 2025, https://www.who.int/news/item/22-05-2025-health-system-at-breaking-point-as-hostilities-further-intensify--who-warns

[130] WHO, OPT Emergency Situation Update, 7 Oct 2023-31 Aug 2026, https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/SItrep_72.pdf (accessed on 19 October 2026).

[131] Interviews with healthcare professionals, 2024-2026; WHO, "Health system at breaking point as hostilities further intensify in Gaza, WHO warns" (previously cited); UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), para. 40. OHCHR, *Attacks on Hospitals During the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza (7 October 2023 – 30 June 2024)*, 31 December 2024, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/opt/20241231-attacks-hospitals-gaza-en.pdf, para. 8.
The maternity department in Al-Shifa was, however, moved to Al-Helou in late October 2023, to make space for trauma patients.

[132] In many cases, investigations by Amnesty International, the UN CoI and other organizations were able to attribute attacks directly to Israeli forces, including through witness testimony, analysis of weapon remnants, satellite imagery and other corroborating evidence. See, for example, Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), Chapter 6; UN CoI, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel*, 11 September 2024, UN Doc. A/79/232, paras 18-40; OHCHR, *Attacks on Hospitals During the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza* (previously cited).
Further evidence for attributing attacks to Israeli forces is also presented in this chapter.

[133] Israel's military operation in Rafah, launched in May 2024, displaced over one million Palestinians from what had become the main refuge for displaced civilians in Gaza and further restricted access to healthcare, humanitarian assistance and other services essential for survival. See for example, Amnesty International, "Israeli military must guarantee civilians' safety as ground operation gets underway in eastern Rafah", 7 May 2024, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/05/israel-opt-israeli-military-must-guarantee-civilians-safety-as-ground-operation-gets-underway-in-eastern-rafah/; Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), Chapter 6; Reuters, "Main maternity hospital in Rafah stops admitting patients", 8 May 2024, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/main-maternity-hospital-rafah-stops-admitting-patients-2024-05-08/
UNFPA also reported that the Israeli ground operation in Rafah beginning on 6 May 2024 displaced around 900,000 people, including approximately 18,500 pregnant women, and that maternal healthcare access had become minimal. UNFPA *Palestine Situation Report #8,* 22 May 2024, https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/sitrep8

[134] See section 6.1.

[135] WHO, "Health system at breaking point as hostilities further intensify in Gaza, WHO warns" (previously cited).

persons; forced evacuations, including of remaining patients and staff, and withdrawal of its forces, leaving facilities severely damaged.[136]



A view of burned and destroyed Al-Shifa hospital following Israeli attacks, April 2024. © Anadolu via Getty Images

While hospitals have not been besieged since the so-called ceasefire, hospitals, other health facilities and medical transports have continued to come under attack. WHO has reported 99 attacks on healthcare facilities since the so-called ceasefire.[137]

Among those attacks was an Israeli strike on the vicinity of Al-Aqsa hospital in Deir al-Balah on 1 August 2026, just after 1am, which, according to WHO, damaged a medical storage facility, destroying essential medical supplies, including items recently delivered by WHO.[138] Amnesty International's fieldworker visited the site one day after the attack and found that it had left a large crater and also destroyed tents of displaced people living adjacent to the hospital. According to a list received by Amnesty International from the Ministry of Health in Gaza, the supplies destroyed in the strike included medicines, equipment and consumables required for kidney dialysis treatment.[139] The Israeli military claimed that the struck site was used by Hamas to store weapons but has so far failed to provide any evidence substantiating its claims.[140]

[136] OHCHR, *Attacks on Hospitals During the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza* (previously cited), para. 7.
HRW and PHRI likewise found that Israeli forces operating in hospitals denied patients access to electricity, water, food and medicines, contributing to deaths and unnecessary suffering among patients. HRW, "Gaza: Israeli Military War Crimes While Occupying Hospitals", 20 December 2023, https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/03/20/gaza-israeli-military-war-crimes-while-occupying-hospitals; PHRI, *Destruction of Conditions of Life: A Health Analysis of the Gaza Genocide*, July 2025, https://www.phr.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Genocide-in-Gaza-PHRI-English.pdf

[137] WHO, Health Cluster, Health Service Point – Overview of the Health Service Points of Different Types in OPT, https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiODAxNTYzMDYtMjQ3YS00OTMzLTkxMWQtOTU1NWEwMzE5NTMwIiwidCI6ImY2MTBjMGI3LWJkMjQtNGIzOS04MTBiLTNkYzI4MGFmYjU5MCIsImMiOjh9 (accessed 29 October 2026).

[138] Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, X post: "Over the weekend, a medical storage facility adjacent to Al-Aqsa Hospital in #Gaza was attacked", 3 August 2026, https://x.com/DrTedros/status/2084372471084376523?s=20

[139] Written communication with MoH, 6 August 2026, on file with Amnesty International.

[140] IDF, **יומן המלחמה - 01/08** ["War Diary – 01/08"], 1 August 2026, https://www.idf.il/%D7%90%D7%AA%D7%A8%D7%99-%D7%99%D7%97%D7%99%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%9F-%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%94/%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%9F-%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%94-%D7%AA%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%91-%D7%9C%D7%90%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%9A-%D7%94%D7%99%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%9D/%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%9F-%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%94-01-08-26/

5.1.1 INCIDENTS OF MISUSE OF MEDICAL FACILITIES BY PALESTINIAN ARMED GROUPS

Medical units and transport – including hospitals and ambulances – have special protection under international humanitarian law and must be respected and protected at all times; they lose that protection only if and while they are used to commit acts harmful to the enemy, outside their humanitarian function.[141]

In most instances where the Israeli military has attacked, besieged, and raided hospitals, including Al-Shifa and Nasser hospitals, in Gaza City and Khan Younis respectively, Israeli forces alleged that these facilities were being used by Palestinian armed groups for military purposes – specifically as "command and control centres" – and, as a result, according to the Israeli military, they had lost their special protection under international humanitarian law.[142]

While Amnesty International documented four instances of misuse of medical facilities by forces affiliated with Hamas and received credible information about a number of others, the organization did not substantiate the Israeli military's claims of command-and-control centres located inside hospitals. The organization acknowledges that it has limited access to information, but at no point did the Israeli military provide credible or persuasive evidence that the medical facilities it consistently attacked and besieged had been serving as command-and-control centres. Amnesty International is not aware of any investigation conducted by the Israeli military into the prolonged sieges and large-scale raids against hospitals.

In one of the instances identified, Amnesty International has reviewed allegations that Israeli hostages were held within Nasser hospital for no medical purpose and was informed by a released hostage that they were held in the hospital on 28 and 29 November 2023 with other Israeli hostages before their release.[143]

Moreover, Amnesty International has also documented four instances between mid-2024 and September 2025 in which Hamas-run security forces used hospitals as locations in which to interrogate and torture Palestinians, including dissidents, individuals accused of looting and others working with a local company contracted by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF).[144] According to the evidence collected by Amnesty International, these incidents took place in the Indonesian hospital in North Gaza, Al-Aqsa hospital in Deir al-Balah and Nasser hospital in Khan Younis, in a specific room or basement in the hospital which was turned into a makeshift interrogation room.[145]

Based on Amnesty International's research, which included interviews with witnesses and victims' families, 12 Palestinians working for a local company in Gaza, Khuzundar, contracted by the GHF, were also reportedly tortured and denied medical treatment in the yard of Nasser hospital, which resulted in their deaths, following their detention and shooting on a bus transporting them to one of the GHF-run distribution centres, on 11 June 2025. The families of the victims told Amnesty International that they had received prior approval from the Hamas authorities before agreeing to the job.[146]

Misuse of medical facilities, regardless of its scale or frequency, is likely to be unlawful and endanger civilians, medical personnel and the sick and wounded. Amnesty International wrote to the political bureau of Hamas on 30 September 2026, raising these concerns; at the time of publication, Amnesty International had not received a response.

5.1.2 ISRAELI VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

While Amnesty International found evidence of Palestinian armed groups misusing hospitals in several instances, in many other instances Amnesty International has found no evidence to support such claims, nor have Israeli authorities made sufficient information public to enable independent verification.[147]

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[141] Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 12 August 1949 (Fourth Geneva Convention), Article 18; ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 28.
[142] OHCHR, *Attacks on Hospitals During the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza* (previously cited).
[143] Amnesty International, *Targeting Civilians* (previously cited), p. 132. See also, for example, UN CoI, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, 11 September 2024, UN Doc. A/79/232, paras 76, 77.
[144] For more information on the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, see section 8.4.
[145] Interviews by voice call with three Palestinians who were held at the Indonesian hospital (names withheld at the request of the interviewees), 27 April 2025; Interviews by voice call with two relatives of a people held at Nasser hospital, 15 and 16 June 2025; Interview by voice call with a person who was summoned to interrogation at Al-Aqsa hospital, 15 August 2025.
[146] Interview by voice call (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 14 June 2025; Interview by voice call (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 15 June 2026.
[147] For more, see OHCHR, *Attacks on Hospitals During the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza* (previously cited), paras 15-17.

Amnesty International also found a direct correlation between the intensification of attacks on hospitals and attempts to force the mass displacement of the civilian population, most notably following the issuance of the first mass "evacuation" order to all those living north of Wadi Gaza on 13 October 2023 and during the so-called Generals' Plan.[148] The "Generals' Plan" was the unofficial codename for an Israeli military operation to besiege, bomb and force the mass displacement of the North Gaza governorate based on a plan proposed by a group of retired Israeli generals, between October and December 2024.[149]

Furthermore, even if a hospital loses its special protection, it may still only be attacked under strict conditions. Protection ceases only after due warning has been given, with a reasonable time limit, and after such warning has gone unheeded.[150] Evacuation orders do not fulfil the due warning requirement, and due warnings must give the responsible party the opportunity to stop the alleged military misuse and preserve the hospital's protection.

With the exception of the November 2023 siege of Al-Shifa hospital, Amnesty International has not seen any publicly available information to suggest that the Israeli forces provided or claim to have provided a due warning in line with international humanitarian law.[151] While Amnesty International was not able to investigate this for each hospital, including because of the killing or arbitrary detention of heads of Gaza's hospitals, senior healthcare providers told Amnesty International that the first and second sieges of Al-Awda hospital, mentioned above and described further below, were both imposed with no warning; according to their accounts, during the first siege, forces besieged the hospital for one week in November 2023, then demanded the hospital director go out to be interrogated.[152] Likewise, at the start of the second siege, the soldiers surrounded the hospital on 18 May 2024, called for the hospital director to come out via loudspeaker, and demanded he evacuate the hospital, without any prior warning.[153] Similarly, the second Israeli raid and siege of Al-Shifa hospital, on 18 March 2024, was not preceded by any warning.[154]

Any attack must also comply with the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack.[155] All feasible precautions must be taken to protect patients, medical personnel and other civilians, and medical equipment, including by facilitating safe evacuations where required and ensuring that medical equipment is not harmed.[156] Evacuations must be carried out in conditions of safety and must not endanger the lives or health of patients, including by interrupting life-saving treatment without adequate alternatives.[157] In addition, particularly vulnerable persons, including pregnant women, newborns, people with disabilities and the sick and wounded, are entitled to specific protection under international humanitarian law.[158]

Other human rights bodies, such as OHCHR, have documented a pattern of failures by the Israeli forces to respect the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in their attacks on hospitals in Gaza.[159] Amnesty International has likewise documented a pattern of failures by the Israeli authorities to respect these principles in relation to attacks on maternity care, set out in this chapter.

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[148] In addition to providing treatment, hospitals and their vicinity served as makeshift shelters for thousands of displaced persons. Attacks on hospitals, therefore, accelerated mass displacement. This pattern was observed on an exceptionally large scale in November 2023 when hundreds of thousands of civilians fled areas north of Wadi Gaza southwards in the days and weeks following the raid on Al-Shifa. The same pattern was observed in the city of Khan Younis following the raid on Nasser hospital on 15 February 2024, and an additional attack in March. The raid and siege on Al-Shifa hospital in March 2024 were also accompanied by another wave of mass displacement inside Gaza City.

[149] Haaretz, "Is Israel really implementing a plan of siege and starvation in Gaza?", 22 October 2024, https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/editorial/2024-10-22/ty-article-opinion/is-israel-really-implementing-a-plan-of-siege-and-starvation-in-gaza/00000192-b5c7-d5f0-a1bf-f7e74e130000

[150] Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 19; ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 28.

[151] For the Israeli authorities reported warning to Al-Shifa hospital, see: State of Israel, *Israel's Initial Comments to OHCHR 4th Thematic Report*, 20 December 2024, https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/israel-comments-gaza-hospitals-report-2024.pdf https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/israel-comments-gaza-hospitals-report-2024.pdf, p. 3.
In this statement, Israel stated that "In November 2023, the IDF issued a specific warning to cease all military activities in the Al-Shifa Hospital".

[152] Interview by voice call with a senior healthcare professional at Al-Awda hospital (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 19 August 2026.

[153] Interview by voice call with a senior healthcare professional at Al-Awda hospital (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 25 August 2026.

154 Interviews by voice call with a senior doctor at Al-Shifa hospital (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 18 March 2024; Interview by voice call with a nurse at Al-Shifa Hospital (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 19 March 2024.

[155] ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rules 1, 14 and 15; see also Additional Protocol I, Articles 48, 51 and 57 (reflecting customary international law).

[156] ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 15; see also Additional Protocol I, Article 57 (reflecting customary international law).

[157] Fourth Geneva Convention, Articles 16 and 17; ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rules 109 and 111.

[158] Fourth Geneva Convention, Articles 16 and 38; ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 134.

[159] OHCHR, *Attacks on Hospitals During the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza* (previously cited).

5.2 WOMEN KILLED OR AT RISK SEEKING MATERNITY CARE

Women seeking maternity care were exposed to extreme danger during Israeli attacks. Amnesty International documented one case in which Israeli forces killed a woman accompanying her relative to give birth, and three additional cases in which women in labour came under fire while attempting to reach hospitals, or while recovering.

5.2.1 AL-AWDA HOSPITAL

Al-Awda hospital in Jabalia refugee camp, north Gaza, first came under siege in December 2023. Amnesty International investigated the shooting of a 48-year-old woman[160] outside Al-Awda hospital during the siege, finding that Israeli forces were responsible for her unlawful killing.

"Sara" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 27, described how on 6 December 2023 her 48-year-old mother-in-law was shot dead when they approached Al-Awda hospital while "Sara" was in active labour at the start of the siege:

"We were displaced in Halab School in northern Beit Lahia. I started having contractions at midnight on 6 December… By 6am, the contractions had become unbearable. The other displaced people with us urged me to go to the hospital… I had no other choice. There was no medical care at the school that could help me deliver the baby. We decided that my mother-in-law and her son would walk with me. My husband stayed behind with our older child, who was one year and seven months old at the time. An injured man and his father also came with us because he [the injured man] needed medical treatment for his wound. We carried a white flag in case the Israeli forces saw us."[161]

"Sara" said the area was quiet as they walked approximately 200 meters to the hospital, but that just as they arrived near the hospital entrance:

"Suddenly, I heard gunfire, and my mother-in-law fell to the ground. I looked at her and saw that a bullet had entered the back of her head and exited through her forehead. She died instantly. I froze for a moment, then I started running, all while having strong contractions. I kept running with the two men who were with us and my brother-in-law until we reached the hospital entrance. The medical staff received me while I was still in shock. I told them I was having contractions and that my water had broken. They immediately took me to the maternity ward. The baby was already about to be born. I was in a complete state of shock. I did not feel the baby as he was delivered. I did not feel anything at all. I kept telling them that my mother-in-law was outside and asked if anyone could help her. I was still hoping she might be alive. They told me that no one could leave the hospital. The staff asked everyone to go inside, and they closed all the doors. They said the Israeli forces were getting closer and had taken positions in the houses surrounding the hospital."[162]

"Rami" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an ambulance driver and paramedic, told Amnesty International he was present at Al-Awda hospital at the time of this attack and that Khitam's body could only be retrieved and buried at the end of the 18-day-long siege.[163]

"Sara" described to Amnesty International how the danger continued after arriving in the hospital:

"Right after I gave birth, they placed me in a room to rest. About an hour later, snipers fired directly at the room. I remember five bullets hitting the room. It was a miracle that neither my baby nor I was hit. They [hospital staff] had to close that room, so they moved me to the hallway."[164]

"Amani" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a health professional who had been working in Al-Awda hospital maternity department, told Amnesty International that after the siege was over, she saw dead bodies on the road leading to the hospital, including five women, two of whom appeared heavily

[160] Name on file with Amnesty International (withheld at the request of the interviewee).
[161] Interview by voice call with "Sara" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 27 February 2026.
[162] Interview by voice call with "Sara" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 27 February 2026.
[163] Interview by voice call with "Rami" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a paramedic in Gaza, 17 March 2026. Al Mezan also reported a testimony from Dr. Mohammad Saleha, director of Al-Awda hospital, who stated that he received a patient just after her mother-in-law was shot dead during the siege and they could not retrieve her body until the siege was over. See: Al Mezan, *Reproductive health under genocide* (previously cited), p. 6.
[164] Interview by voice call with "Sara" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 27 February 2026.

pregnant.[165] Several medical workers told Amnesty International they heard screams that were cut short, of what they understood to be people approaching the hospital during the first few days of the siege – a time when the communications infrastructure was down and patients came to the hospital not knowing that Al-Awda was under siege.[166] The UN CoI and OHCHR likewise documented or reported receiving information about one or two pregnant women (respectively) killed outside Al-Awda hospital during this time.[167]

Amnesty International concludes that Israeli forces were responsible for the unlawful killing of the 48-year-old woman accompanying her daughter- in-law to give birth. This assessment is based on the witness testimony collected by Amnesty International that described the situation as otherwise calm, the context of the siege of Al-Awda hospital by Israeli forces, accounts from medical personnel regarding the presence of Israeli snipers in nearby buildings, and other reports indicating the absence of active clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups at the time.[168] One individual present during the siege reported that crossfire had occurred sporadically at its outset but was infrequent, and stated that he observed Israeli forces positioned in elevated buildings overlooking the hospital around the time the woman accompanying her pregnant daughter-in-law was killed.[169] Amnesty International was not able to verify if the Israeli authorities were responsible for the unlawful killing of other women seeking maternal healthcare or their accompanier outside Al-Awda hospital during the siege. Amnesty International raised this case in a letter to the Israeli authorities sent on 30 September 2026 but had received no reply by the time of publication.

5.2.2 THE "YELLOW LINE" AREA

Women in labour near the "Yellow Line" – an Israeli military-imposed no-go zone, the boundaries of which are constantly being shifted and expanded by the Israeli army, have also come under fire while seeking medical care.[170] Two paramedics, colleagues "Mahmoud" and "Anwar" (names changed at the request of the interviewee), told Amnesty International that they – and the pregnant women they were assisting – have repeatedly come under Israeli fire when responding to active labour cases near the "Yellow Line" areas. Amnesty International spoke to the two paramedics together in April and September 2026, respectively.

In the first interview, they told Amnesty International that in March 2026 they responded together to two cases of women who came under fire while they were giving birth, one of whom was a 23-year-old woman displaced in north-east Bureij refugee camp, a few meters from the "Yellow Line". "Mahmoud" (name changed at the request of the interviewee) explained, on 6 March at 4.04pm:

"The situation was completely calm, but once they [the Israeli forces] saw the ambulance show up, a quadcopter started shooting; this is how we know we are not allowed to enter a certain area… Two women were trying to help her walk [towards the ambulance]. She stopped a few times, almost giving birth; they helped her. She kept screaming in pain… quadcopters were shooting around them."[171]

The paramedics said it was a small distance, but it took the woman in labour almost twenty minutes to reach the ambulance, and that the baby was born four minutes later inside it. All three major hospitals in the North Gaza governorate are located in access restricted zones as of early October 2026.

They also described a second, similar incident where they and their patient in active labour came under fire, in March 2026 at Al-Maghazi refugee camp, around 100-150 meters from the "Yellow Line".[172]

In September 2026, the two paramedics told Amnesty International about a third case from the previous month, in which they were called out to the home of a woman in active labour in eastern Deir Al-Balah, 300-400 meters from the "Yellow Line". They said when they arrived, the quadcopter hovered around them as they received the woman in labour in their ambulance until they left the area. They said the woman, who

[165] Interview by voice call with "Amani" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a health professional in Gaza, 19 February 2026.
[166] Interviews by voice call with health-care workers present in Al-Awda hospital at the time, 9 and 10 June 2026.
[167] UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), para. 32; OHCHR, *Attacks on Hospitals During the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza* (previously cited), para. 25.
[168] Interview by voice call with "Sara" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 27 February 2026; Interview by voice call with "Amani" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a health professional in Gaza, 19 February 2026; Interviews by voice call with two additional health professionals in Gaza (names withheld at the request of the interviewees), 2 June 2026.
[169] Interview by voice call with a health professional in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 2 June 2026. Similar conclusions about attribution were reached by both the UN CoI and OHCHR. See UN CoI, "*More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), para. 32; OHCHR, *Attacks on Hospitals During the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza* (previously cited), para. 25.
[170] For more information on the "Yellow Line", see section 3.3.
[171] Interview by voice call with "Mahmoud" and "Anwar" (names changed at the request of the interviewees), two paramedics in Gaza, 2 April 2026. Name of patient on file with Amnesty International.
[172] Interview by voice call with "Mahmoud" and "Anwar" (names changed at the request of the interviewees), two paramedics in Gaza, 2 April 2026 and 29 September 2026.

also gave birth in the ambulance, could not get to a hospital herself as residents considered it too unsafe to drive in the area at night for fear of being shot by Israeli forces.[173]

5.3 WOMEN RECEIVING MATERNITY CARE UNDER FIRE

For many women, danger continued when they reached the hospital maternity department, where they should have been safe. Women were forced to give birth, undergo emergency obstetric procedures and recover from childbirth while Israeli forces attacked hospitals, meaning they endured labour and giving birth surrounded by tanks, subjected to sniper fire or in facilities operating under siege-like conditions.

Eight women interviewed by Amnesty International described the terror of receiving maternity care or delivering in maternity wards amid bombardment, including in Al-Awda hospital in north Gaza, Al-Shifa and Al-Helou hospitals in Gaza City, and Nasser hospital in Khan Younis.

5.3.1 AL-AWDA HOSPITAL

28-year-old Lina told Amnesty International how she arrived on 4 December 2023 at Al-Awda hospital in northern Gaza having contractions, after a terrifying journey past Kamal Adwan hospital that was under attack. When she arrived in the Al-Awda maternity department:

"We heard a huge explosion and started to smell gas in the hospital. It happened while a doctor was taking blood from me to run some tests. The doctor was shaking and crying and saying they bombed the entrance of the hospital… The staff gave everybody face masks as the hospital was full of a gas smell. I broke down in tears because I couldn't breathe because of the gas; I was in so much pain from the contractions and I was so scared. They took everybody to the hallway, and she finished taking the blood sample far from the windows."[174]

While Lina was advised to leave quickly after giving birth, Sara, who gave birth the next day, became trapped in the hospital as it was fully encircled by Israeli forces. Sara said:

"I had to remain in the hospital under total siege for 18 days, completely separated from my husband and my [older] son. That was extremely difficult for me. I was constantly worried about my older child. No one felt safe inside the hospital. Snipers were positioned all around it, shooting at anyone who moved. I saw a cleaner shot and killed in front of me…

"I slept on a thin mattress on the floor in the hallway… Food supplies were running out. In the final days of the siege, there was not enough food for everyone. They prioritized patients. At first, we received more regular meals, but later it was reduced to just one meal per day, half an egg and a piece of bread. If the siege had lasted longer, we might have died of hunger… After everything that happened, I began experiencing memory loss. For example, I could not remember my husband's phone number, so I had no way to contact him."[175]

Healthcare workers described similar conditions. "Amani" (mentioned above) said that some ten pregnant and post-partum women remained trapped in Al-Awda during the siege, surrounded by frequent explosions and sniper fire, while staff went hungry so patients could eat.[176] During a subsequent siege in May 2024, she said: "We were ordered to evacuate. Israeli forces invaded the hospital with dogs. Pregnant women and mothers of newborns saw everything and were terrified...".[177]

"Munir" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a lemon farmer from northern Gaza and father of four, told Amnesty International his wife [name withheld], aged 28, faced life-threatening conditions in Al-Awda hospital on 18 October 2024 before the hospital evacuated her:

[173] Interview by voice call with "Mahmoud" and "Anwar" (names changed at the request of the interviewees), two paramedics in Gaza, 2 April 2026 and 29 September 2026.
[174] Interview by voice call with Lina (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 8 June 2026.
[175] Interview by voice call with Sara (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 27 February 2026.
[176] Interview by voice call with "Amani" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a health professional in Gaza, 19 February 2026.
[177] Interview by voice call with "Amani" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a health professional in Gaza, 19 February 2026. See also UN News, "Gaza: WHO chief calls for end to latest hospital siege", 2024, https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/05/1150016

"She called me and said they were trapped in the hospital, they bombed the upper floor, all patients and medical staff were sheltering in a hallway and the situation was very bad. She told me the windows' glass shattered and flew toward them because of the intensity of the shelling."[178]

"Munir"'s wife and a relative accompanying her were killed as they were evacuated the following day, as detailed in section 5.4 below.

5.3.2 AL-HELOU HOSPITAL

Amnesty International documented similar patterns of women receiving maternity healthcare coming under extreme danger elsewhere.

At Al-Helou hospital in Gaza City, healthcare workers described moving women in labour to the basement as bombardment intensified around the hospital. Rajaa, a midwife, told Amnesty International that on 15 November 2023:

"The siege started at night. I was helping a woman deliver. We started to hear more bombing and the explosions got too close to the hospital and we decided to move to the basement. At dawn, a tank was stationed at the entrance of the hospital… We had three women who hadn't delivered yet and couldn't leave. In the following three days, we stayed in the basement and delivered their babies, including two by caesarean section. We ran out of fuel, and the water and electricity were cut off… When water was cut off, we had to use wipes and saline solution to clean women after deliveries. I personally helped deliver a woman who had a tear and stitched her using a torchlight. We had to turn off all the lights, fearing being shot at from the Israeli forces surrounding the hospital."[179]

Subsequent sieges at Al-Helou hospital forced further deliveries to take place in similarly precarious conditions, including the treatment of a woman suffering from eclampsia without the specialist support normally required.[180]



Al-Helou hospital, Gaza City, May 2025 © Anadolu via Getty Images

[178] Interview by voice call with "Munir" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 24 February 2026.
[179] Interview by voice call with Rajaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), former midwife at Al-Helou hospital in Gaza City, 5 May 2026.
[180] Interview by voice call with Rajaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), former midwife at Al-Helou hospital in Gaza City, 5 May 2026.

5.3.3 KAMAL ADWAN HOSPITAL

Amnesty International was informed about two cases of women forced to give birth with medical emergencies in near-impossible conditions at Kamal Adwan hospital under siege.

"Maher" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a general practice doctor working in the maternity department at Kamal Adwan hospital, described carrying out a caesarean section just before that hospital was raided on 12 December 2023 and the doctor was detained:

"A pregnant woman with her mother came into the hospital, and the situation was very bad with tanks close by; it was just one day before the raid… We told her the hospital was out of service. It was just me and one obstetrician in the hospital. He suggested I do a clinical check and see if she was ready. We found the baby's hand was out, so she needed an urgent caesarean section, and she started to have contractions. Al-Awda hospital nearby was partially working but also close to being under siege. It was not far but dangerous to reach. We told her we wouldn't be able to do the surgery [and that she should go to Al-Awda]; we had no electricity and no anaesthetist. The mother took her pregnant daughter and left for Al-Awda. Five minutes later they came back covered in dust… She said: 'The tank and snipers shot at us… you have to help.'"

"Maher" said the situation threatened the lives of both the pregnant woman and her baby, leaving no option but to operate with what was available:

"We gathered fuel from the whole hospital and houses around the hospital and were able to operate the generator for only half an hour. There was an anaesthetist displaced near the hospital but without any experience. Still, we called her and brought her."

The operation was carried out without proper sterilization, without the full range of medications required for safe general anaesthesia, and with the patient manually ventilated using a hand-held device. However, the anaesthesia was insufficient: "We got the baby out, and we were about to close the cut, but her abdominal muscles got tight, and she was waking up."

Although the anaesthetist was able to sedate her again, she showed signs of severe distress after regaining consciousness. "Maher" said that she "refused to allow us to put the baby in the incubator… saying she was too scared and wanted just to die with her baby."

"Maher" later saw his patient again in a displacement shelter, where she told him that he had saved her life. However, she also said the experience – including undergoing surgery without adequate anaesthesia – had led her to decide she would never have another child.[181]

An independent consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist that Amnesty International consulted confirmed that, based on the description, this amounted to an obstetric emergency.[182]

In a separate case, Rawiya, a nurse, described another emergency caesarean section at the same hospital shortly afterwards for a woman in labour whose baby was in distress. Medical staff used spinal anaesthesia, despite concerns that the spinal anaesthesia drugs had degraded due to inadequate storage conditions.

"The doctor told me we had two options: either to take the risk and operate on her or leave her to die… The generator was only working on and off, so we were performing surgery in impossible conditions. There were explosions all around us constantly, and we could smell the gunpowder inside the surgery room. A tank was only five meters away from the entrance of the hospital while we were doing the surgery. Less than four hours after the patient gave birth, or even less, the hospital was raided. She was still not fully recovered from the anaesthesia and was not able to walk. We asked her to take the baby and walk with us outside."[183]

[181] Interview by voice call with "Maher" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a general practitioner in the maternity department at Kamal Adwan hospital, 8 June 2026.
[182] The description of the baby's hand protruding through the cervix during the clinical check indicated that the baby was that the baby was "in a malpresentation not compatible with vaginal birth" and that the woman's waters had broken. Written communication with an independent consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 31 August 2026 and 20 October 2026.
[183] Interview by voice call with Rawiya (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), nurse at Kamal Adwan hospital, 3 June 2026. Al Mezan documented a woman giving birth in the hospital around the same time, in extremely difficult conditions lacking basic supplies and electricity. The woman also described how she was forced out of the maternity ward into the courtyard of the hospital carrying her baby and belongings hours after giving birth, and required by Israeli forces to stay there (along with other patients and staff) from morning to evening. Al Mezan, *Reproductive Health Under Genocide* (previously cited), p. 5.

5.3.4 MATERNITY DEPARTMENTS UNDER ATTACK WITH EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS

Maternity buildings themselves came under attack with explosive weapons. Amnesty International documented attacks in Kamal Adwan hospital and Nasser hospital maternity buildings.

At Kamal Adwan hospital, a doctor and nurse separately described an attack on a patient room in the maternity department in mid-December 2023 leading to at least two fatalities – a woman and a child – that appeared to be from Israeli tank fire.[184] The nurse said she had been in the room moments earlier, and that only displaced women and children had been present within it; the doctor likewise told Amnesty International that he could see no reason for the attack.

Amnesty International's Crisis Evidence Lab reviewed videos or images published by the media or shared directly with Amnesty International showing a damaged room identified as being part of the maternity building at Nasser hospital, in Khan Younis. One video, circulated widely, shows a man carrying an Israeli M485 illumination projectile, which is used for night-time battlefield illumination.[185] According to testimony, the projectile struck the building on 17 December 2023, killing 12-year-old patient Dunia Abu Mohsen, and causing panic among scores of patients and medical staff.[186] Israeli forces should have taken precautions to protect civilians before firing near the building.

A doctor working at the Al-Kheir Maternity hospital in Khan Younis, which is a medical centre under the auspices of the Sahaba medical complex in Gaza City, told Amnesty International that at least six people were killed when the hospital was raided by Israeli forces in mid-January 2024. The doctor said medical staff were shocked and surprised by tanks approaching the hospital without warning (or a prolonged siege) and she heard multiple explosions that hit the hospital's yard and first floor. She described that Israeli forces then raided the hospital, ordered an evacuation and told her to take two children with her after both of their parents and their 12-year-old brother were killed in the attacks. She said she saw other bodies of people killed as she left the hospital, and that she understood most of the casualties to be displaced people sheltering in the hospital.[187] Amnesty International was not able to independently verify this incident.

5.4 FORCED EVACUATION AND INTERRUPTION OF MEDICAL TREATMENT

Women and healthcare workers reported violent and unsafe evacuations of women in need of continued maternal or other obstetric care, causing family rupture and interrupting their medical treatment. In some of these cases, women fled out of fear or on advice from hospital staff as attacks on the hospitals intensified and sieges seemed imminent.

29-year-old Sondos Al-Kurd, who was badly injured in an attack that also killed her three-year-old daughter and three other women relatives on 22 October 2023, described being carried out of the hospital she had been admitted to on a stretcher by a journalist on 10 November. Sondos was recovering from life-saving

[184] Interview by voice call with Rawiya (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a nurse at Kamal Adwan hospital, 3 June 2026; Interview by voice call with "Maher" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a doctor at Kamal Adwan hospital, 8 June 2026. Rawiya, the nurse, said an Israeli tank was stationed outside the hospital at the time, and that the attack came from the direction of the tank. "Maher", the doctor, said that tanks were approaching from the eastern side; some of the staff and patients moved to the hallway out of the rooms exposed to the east, when one of the patient rooms was struck. He said he saw a fireball come from the room. There was some discrepancy in figures; "Maher" reported he saw a woman and a child killed in the attack and several badly injured. He did not preclude the possibility of other fatalities. Rawiya reported seven women and children were killed. UN OCHA also reported receiving information about the attack at the time and said "two mothers" were killed. UN News, "Gaza: Aid collapse worsens humanitarian crisis as hostilities intensify", 12 December 2023, https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1144682

[185] See, for example, the video published by the Guardian. The Guardian, "People flee after shell hits maternity ward at Gaza hospital", 18 December 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Cz1vqGsl4c

[186] Interview by voice call with a senior member of the Paediatrics and Maternity Department at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis (name withheld at the request of the interviewee),15 May 2026.
Images shared with Amnesty International or published by the media on 18 December 2023 show a damaged room identified as being part of the maternity building. The room is full of debris; there is a hole in one of its walls, and at least one bed is damaged. Guardian News, "People flee after shell hits maternity ward at Gaza hospital", 18 December 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Cz1vqGsl4c; Images shared with Amnesty International, May 2026.
The New York Times has previously documented the (mis)use by Israeli forces of M485 canisters against hospitals in Gaza, including an instance leading to the death of a patient at Shifa hospital. New York Times, "Evidence points to Israeli shells on strikes on Gaza's largest hospital", 11 November 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-al-shifa-hospital.html

[187] Interview by voice call with a doctor at the Al-Kheir Maternity hospital in Khan Younis (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 19 June 2026.

surgery and an emergency caesarean section at Al-Shifa hospital several weeks earlier, but in the process of evacuation, she was separated from her newborn.

"I was in the maternity ward and it was targeted many times during that period of time… I kept saying, 'My daughter, my daughter…' They [other people fleeing] told me: 'Leave her in the incubator.' They said I wouldn't be able to manage her condition."[188]

It took Sondos over two years to be able to reunite with her baby after this separation. The evacuation of Sondos's baby, who was put at great risk during the siege, is described below.[189]

"Amina" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a mother of four and pregnant at the time of the incident, said she rushed to Al-Shifa hospital on 11 November 2023, suffering heavy vaginal bleeding, arriving into what she described as "beyond apocalyptic" circumstances with staff overwhelmed and the waiting room floor covered in bodies and blood. After losing consciousness, she learnt she had lost the pregnancy and had been given a hysterectomy, but her recovery was cut short as the hospital was surrounded by Israeli forces on 14 November and raided the following day.[190] She said:

"People came and said we have to escape. There were massive and constant air strikes. I started running and saw tanks surrounding the hospital. There was a woman who had a severe injury and was in a horrible state. She said the Israeli soldiers unleashed their dogs and a dog attacked her and almost amputated her leg… I was still in my hospital gown. On my way out, I saw wounded people everywhere."[191]

"Amina" said she fled without knowing the fate of her husband, who had been with her at the hospital and remains missing. She was eventually assisted by an ambulance to Al-Aqsa hospital, where she lost consciousness on arrival. "Amina" also said that because the siege was creating so much pressure on the hospital staff, she was never given a proper explanation of why she needed the hysterectomy, which permanently ended her ability to carry a pregnancy.[192] She told Amnesty International she felt that, as a result of the operation, she felt like something was missing in her, and how devastating it was to "wake up finding out my uterus was removed without knowing. I wish they killed me instead of doing that to me".[193] She also said that she faces ongoing pelvic pain as a result of the interruption in post-surgery monitoring, treatment and recovery and described facing depression, social withdrawal, and problems with her memory that she said did not exist before the operation and siege.

Amnesty International also investigated the case of two women, one aged 28, and her relative (names withheld), who were killed while evacuating in an ambulance from Al-Awda hospital in Jabalia on 19 October 2024 because it was coming under siege by the Israeli forces. The 28-year-old had given birth the previous day, and her baby was with her. According to "Rami" (name changed), the paramedic transporting the victims, the Al-Awda hospital administration wanted to reduce pressure on the hospital because of the siege, and while the paramedic was concerned about the safety of the journey, the patients were in extreme danger in the hospital (see section 5.3 above, where the woman's husband recounted how she had told him the night before that the hospital was being attacked, and patients had to take cover in a hallway). According to video verified by Amnesty International and testimony, the ambulance – which "Rami" said was evacuating eight patients – was in a convoy with two other ambulances when it exploded. The two women were killed. "Rami" told Amnesty International he and the other surviving patients came under fire as they fled the ambulance, and he was only able to return to collect the infant the following morning. Amnesty International was not able to identify what caused the explosion or attribute responsibility for the attack.

Amnesty International received information about dozens of other women who were compelled to evacuate hospitals in terrifying circumstances and face interruptions to their care due to the attacks on hospitals. Due to a shortage of fuel and damaged roads, some of these women had to evacuate on donkey- or horse-drawn carts or walk for hours to reach the southern part of Gaza, including by crossing through a checkpoint at a military zone referred to by Israel as the Netzarim Corridor – which bisected Gaza between November 2023 and January 2025.

Rajaa, a senior midwife mentioned above, told Amnesty International that a group of 30-35 "maternity cases", including 12 with high-risk pregnancies and obstetric emergencies, fled Al-Helou hospital in Gaza

[188] Interview by voice call with Sondos Al-Kurd, 6 April 2026.
[189] See section 5.5.
[190] Interview by voice call with "Amina" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 10 March 2026.
[191] Interview by voice call with "Amina" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 10 March 2026.
[192] "Amina" told Amnesty International she believed the lack of blood units available, and the general crisis state of the hospital meant that doctors had fewer options available to treat her, meaning they gave her a hysterectomy that might not have been required in another circumstance. Amnesty International could not confirm this; however, an independent consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist confirmed this was plausible in the context of a hospital environment under extreme pressure, lacking basic items and completely overwhelmed.
[193] Interview by voice call with "Amina" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 10 March 2026.

City on foot, facing a dangerous interruption of their hospital care on 15 November 2023 at the start of the first siege.[194] During two further sieges before the so-called ceasefire of October 2025, she said six more maternity patients were again discharged early and fled the hospital.

A doctor at Al-Kheir maternity hospital in Khan Younis also described attacks, a raid and forced evacuations by Israeli forces in mid-January 2024. She said that among those ordered to leave the hospital on foot and walk for more than two hours towards Rafah were eight women who had a caesarean section that morning, most of whom were suffering from malnutrition or anaemia and needed further monitoring, as well as support to be able to feed their babies. She said:

"The women who had just delivered, especially with a caesarean section, had to flee while still heavily bleeding and their catheter still connected, carrying their newborn babies, completely in the dark, tanks directed us with a light what way we should take… The caesarean section women were walking and bleeding at the same time."[195]

Forcing these women to leave a healthcare setting in the immediate post-partum period would mean that they were not getting safe monitoring to detect complications such as pre-eclampsia, haemorrhage and sepsis.[196]

The doctor at Al-Kheir also said at least four other women were in hospital waiting to deliver and were among those ordered to leave by the Israeli forces. She did not know what happened to them after.

Rawiya, a nurse working at Kamal Adwan hospital, also told Amnesty International that women who had given birth hours earlier were ordered to leave by Israeli forces when the hospital was besieged in late 2023.[197]

Rawiya also described the Israeli soldiers mistreating patients, including maternity patients, and other people sheltering in the hospital during a raid following a later siege. This included her 10- and 12-year-old children who were sheltering at the hospital with her. She told Amnesty International that when Israeli forces had entered the hospital:

"After finishing the search [of the hospital], at 2am on 26 October 2024, they ordered us all to go out to the yard of the hospital. The tank was in front of us. There were four dead bodies in the yard and we could smell them. My kids had to sit next to them… We stayed [in the yard] for 30 hours with no food or water… It was extremely cold... The tank was turning its cannon towards us, and snipers were shooting under our feet. My kids' lips turned blue from the cold. A colleague brought me a blanket, but a soldier threw it away."[198]

Four other women told Amnesty International that they were rapidly discharged from hospital while still in need of treatment or monitoring for fear the facility was coming under attack or siege. One of these women, for example, "Basma", aged 30, told researchers she was discharged immediately from Al-Awda hospital in north Gaza after a miscarriage procedure in April 2025 for this reason. She said she was in pain, had been suffering malnutrition at the time, and nurses worried she was suffering from complications from the procedure – still, in the circumstances, hospital staff thought she was safer leaving than staying.[199] She told researchers that after she suffered this miscarriage in such inhuman conditions, she was too emotionally scarred to try to become pregnant again.[200]

ISRAELI VIOLATIONS OF DISTINCTION, PROPORTIONALITY AND PRECAUTIONS IN ATTACK

Amnesty International's investigation focused specifically on maternity care identified incidents in which Israeli forces failed to respect the principle of distinction by directly attacking civilians, including the sniping at patients seeking or receiving maternity care and staff at Al-Awda hospital in December 2023 and attacking a patient room in Kamal Adwan hospital on 11 December 2023. In instances where Israel has failed to present evidence of the misuse of hospitals to commit acts harmful to the enemy, these acts also likely violated the prohibition of attacking medical units and personnel.

[194] Interview by voice call with Rajaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), former midwife at Al-Helou hospital in Gaza City, 5 May 2026.
[195] Interview by voice call with a doctor at Al-Kheir maternity hospital in Khan Younis (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 19 June 2026.
[196] Written communication with an independent consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, 31 August 2026.
[197] Interview by voice call with Rawiya (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a nurse at Kamal Adwan hospital, 3 June 2026.
[198] Interview by voice call with Rawiya (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a nurse at Kamal Adwan hospital, 3 June 2026.
[199] Interview by voice call with "Basma" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 14 February 2026.
[200] For further details on the barriers she faced to access contraception, see section 9.4.

In a context in which the Israeli authorities failed to adduce evidence that they had reasonably weighed the expected harm to civilians of attacking a hospital – even one that has lost its protected status – in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated from the attack, Amnesty International also has serious concerns that the attacks on hospitals violated the prohibition of disproportionate attack. It should be noted that the expected harm to civilians should have been considered to be rising steeply, as more hospitals were attacked and taken out of use.[201] Finally, Amnesty International considers that these attacks demonstrate a clear pattern of Israeli forces violating their obligation to take all feasible precautions in attack to minimize harm to civilians.

Women were forced to give birth in hospitals under siege, bombardment or fire, often without access to basic necessities, and in some cases were denied safe evacuation or required to flee without continuity of care. Given the known presence of patients receiving maternity care, including pregnant women in need of urgent medical assistance, it would have been foreseeable that such operations posed a heightened risk to a group of protected persons who are granted enhanced protection under international humanitarian law. Feasible alternatives could and should have been considered to ensure that care could continue in conditions of safety and dignity, or that evacuations could take place safely without interruption to life-saving treatment.

International humanitarian law recognizes that pregnant women face particular risks during armed conflict and are entitled to special protection and respect. In addition to the protection afforded to civilians generally, the Fourth Geneva Convention identifies pregnant women ("expectant mothers") as a category warranting particular protection and contains specific provisions aimed at safeguarding their access to healthcare, humanitarian relief and other assistance required during pregnancy and childbirth. The experiences documented in this section, including exposure to hostilities while in labour, the denial of safe access to obstetric care, and the disruption of maternity services, are particularly concerning in light of these heightened protections and the specific health and assistance needs of pregnant women during armed conflict.[202]

5.5 NEWBORNS ENDANGERED

As hospitals across Gaza came under attack, the lives and health of babies who relied on incubators or other life-saving equipment were put at risk. Amnesty International documented violations of international humanitarian law by Israeli forces, in particular failures to take all feasible precautions in attack to minimize harm to civilians, that appeared to have contributed to the deaths of eight babies during the siege of Al-Shifa hospital in November 2023, and interrupted life-saving care for dozens more.

"Ahmad", a doctor (name changed at the request of the interviewee), and Enas, a nurse, who were present in Al-Shifa hospital caring for the babies during the November 2023 siege, told Amnesty International that there were dozens of babies in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) when Israeli forces started their assault on the hospital early that month.[203] Many of these babies were in incubators, and some were on ventilators or otherwise receiving oxygen support.[204] "Ahmad" and Enas both said that oxygen supplies to the NICU were interrupted at around 1am on 11 November 2023, around the same time as the hospital's main generator stopped operating for lack of fuel, and that despite the medical staff's desperate efforts to provide oxygen manually, at least two babies who had been receiving oxygen on ventilators died in the following few hours as a result.[205] Enas sent two photographs to Amnesty International, which she identified as images of

[201] See also ICRC, *Gendered Impacts of Armed Conflicts and Implications for the Application of IHL*, June 2022, https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/4634-gendered-impact-armed-conflict-and-ihl
ICRC notes that damage to a hospital providing gynaecology and obstetrics services may increase mortality among women and girls and that failure to appropriately value such foreseeable harms may affect proportionality assessments of excessiveness.
[202] Fourth Geneva Convention, Articles 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 38 and 50; ICRC, *Customary International Humanitarian Law Study*, Rules 25, 28, 29 and 134.
[203] Interview by voice call with Enas (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a nurse at Al-Shifa hospital, 5 and 13 May 2026; Interview by voice call with "Ahmad" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a doctor who was present at Al-Shifa hospital during the November 2023 siege, 15 June 2026. For the time frame of the November 2023 attack, siege and raid of Al-Shifa hospital, see OHCHR, *Attacks on Hospitals During the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza* (previously cited).
[204] Interview by voice call with Enas (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a nurse at Al-Shifa hospital, 5 and 13 May 2026.
[205] Interview by voice call with Enas (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a nurse at Al-Shifa hospital, 5 and 13 May 2026. UN agencies also reported the death of two newborn babies in Al-Shifa hospital on 11 November 2023. UN News, "Gaza: UN agencies make plea for international action to end hospital attacks", 12 November 2023, https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/11/1143492

these two babies after they died; an analysis of the metadata of the two photographs of babies confirmed the photographs were taken on 11 November 2023 at Al-Shifa hospital.[206]

"Ahmad" said the oxygen central system was hit and went down, and that hospital staff confirmed this after the siege was over. He said this caused the sudden interruption in oxygen supply to the babies, not a lack of fuel, and that a small generator still functioned. While Amnesty International could not independently confirm the precise cause of the oxygen failure, the doctor's testimony and OHCHR reporting indicate that an Israeli attack had destroyed or damaged oxygen infrastructure at the hospital.[207]

Both "Ahmad" and Enas, interviewed separately by Amnesty International, stated that several hours after the oxygen supply stopped, Israeli forces ordered staff to evacuate the NICU. "Ahmad" described medical staff being given an hour to transfer all the babies out of the NICU to the surgery department and both described medical staff being compelled to carry several babies at a time, several hundred meters without any ambulances or mobile incubators to ensure the babies' continued care during the transfer. "Ahmad" and Enas both also described how Israeli military operations had rendered the environment around the NICU increasingly unsafe, with strikes hitting nearby, IDPs fleeing the area around the maternity ward and NICU, risk of Israeli fire walking between buildings, and an Israeli quadcopter entering the NICU the previous day. The New York Times documented at least two Israeli strikes that hit the upper floors of the nearby maternity ward on 10 November 2023.[208]

According to Enas, as they left the NICU:

"Each one of us carried three babies at once and walked more than 300 meters. I don't know how I managed to carry three babies at once and walk with all the fear and terror around me… The place we went to was a surgery room not equipped for babies. There were beds for adults, not incubators. We put ten babies on one bed."[209]

Enas provided photographs and videos of babies in incubators, as well as images showing multiple babies placed together on a single adult-sized bed, which she said were taken before and after they were moved. Amnesty International verified the metadata of these images, confirming they were taken at Al-Shifa hospital on 11 November 2023.[210] A video of the babies, which shows 36 babies divided between four beds, was taken on 16 November 2023 at Al-Shifa hospital, as confirmed by metadata.[211]

"Ahmad" gave a similar account, describing how the babies were exposed to the cold while being transferred from the NICU to the surgery department without proper clothing or cover, and that the windows in the surgery room were broken due to explosions. This meant the surgery room was particularly unsuitable for babies – many of whom were premature and/or low birthweight – and needed to be kept warm.[212]

The interruption of oxygen, combined with the transfer to conditions lacking incubators, heating and insulation, clean water and adequate medical supplies, created a situation in which premature and medically fragile newborns were unable to receive life-sustaining care.

The babies remained in the surgery room for over a week.[213] During this time, the hospital was fully encircled by Israeli forces on 14 November and raided the following day.[214] Healthcare staff had a functioning generator with some limited power for at least some of the time and tried to keep the babies warm by putting the temperature up, or wrapping them up, but such efforts could not substitute for incubators.

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[206] Images shared with Amnesty International on 1 June 2026.

[207] Interview by voice call with "Ahmad" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a doctor who was present in Al-Shifa hospital during the November 2023 siege, 15 June 2026.
OHCHR reported damage to the oxygen infrastructure during Israeli attacks on the hospital. See OHCHR, *Attacks on Hospitals During the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza* (previously cited), para. 9; OHCHR, *oPt – Hospitals Statement,* 12 November 2023, https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/ohchr-opt-hospitals-statement-12-nov-2023;

[208] New York Times, "Evidence points to Israeli shells in strikes on Gaza's largest hospital", 14 November 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-al-shifa-hospital.html. Other organizations, including the UN CoI and OHCHR, have reported multiple Israeli attacks on Al-Shifa hospital commencing from 6 November, including against the maternity ward. UN CoI, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel*, 11 September 2024, UN Doc. A/79/232, paras 20-22; OHCHR, Attacks on Hospitals During the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza (previously cited), para. 9. As noted above, maternity care had been relocated from Al-Shifa to Al-Helou in late October 2023 in order to accommodate more trauma patients at Al-Shifa.

[209] Interview by voice call with Enas (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a nurse at Al-Shifa hospital, 5 and 13 May 2026.

[210] Images shared with Amnesty International on 1 June 2026.

[211] Images shared with Amnesty International on 1 June 2026.

[212] Interview by voice call with "Ahmad" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a doctor who was present in Al-Shifa hospital during the November 2023 siege, 15 June 2026.

[213] Interview by voice call with Enas (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a nurse at Al-Shifa hospital, 5 and 13 May 2026; Interview by voice call with "Ahmad" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a doctor who was present at Al-Shifa hospital during the November 2023 siege, 15 June 2026.

[214] OHCHR, *Attacks on Hospitals During the Escalation of Hostilities in Gaza* (previously cited), para. 9.

Enas said the babies got sick as a result:

"They had vomiting, diarrhoea, and other complications. We did not have any medications or antibiotics. Even water for milk bottles needed coordination. We were thirsty to a point we drank the glucose and saline solution. Food was scarce… We saved the water available for the baby formula. Any movement was met with shells."[215]

"Ahmad" gave Amnesty International a similar account. He also said that clean water ran out, and at some point they had to use contaminated water from the tap to make formula for the babies.[216] He said the healthcare staff had hurriedly taken some antibiotics and saline as they left the NICU but hadn't had the opportunity to take much more.

Enas and "Ahmad" reported that more babies died in the surgery room after they were transferred from the NICU.[217] Amnesty International has verified five of these deaths through photograph or video evidence on or after 16 November 2023,[218] and, also factoring in reporting at the time, considers six babies died in total after transfer from the NICU.[219]

These accounts are consistent with contemporaneous public reporting by WHO and the UN International Children's Fund (UNICEF), both of which participated in evacuation missions and reported that babies had died at Al-Shifa hospital before the evacuations. WHO stated that the hospital was no longer able to function due to shortages of clean water, fuel, medical supplies and food and that the babies who survived and were evacuated were also left fighting serious infections.[220] WHO also reported that the babies had been moved from the neonatal unit "to a safer area in the hospital, due to lack of electricity to run their life support, and security risks in the hospital". UNICEF likewise described a "total collapse" of services at Al-Shifa that required the evacuations.[221] Reports from the WHO and UNICEF, as well as media reporting from the time, confirm the death of babies at Al-Shifa hospital during the siege and evacuation of surviving babies described as at "imminent risk of death" or "clinging onto life".[222]

On 19 November 2023, the 31 surviving babies were evacuated from Al-Shifa to Emirates Red Crescent hospital in Rafah, southern Gaza; 28 were transferred the next day to Egypt.[223]

The Israeli military reported that it was ready to help the hospital evacuate the babies and accused the Hamas leadership of preventing this.[224] It reported having offered assistance to evacuate the babies, including by providing incubators, and later claimed to have supported the evacuation from Al-Shifa hospital that took place on 19 November.[225] "Ahmad", the doctor, said that Israeli forces provided three incubators,

[215] Interview by voice call with Enas (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a nurse at Al-Shifa hospital, 5 and 13 May 2026.
[216] Interview by voice call with "Ahmad" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a doctor who was present in Al-Shifa hospital during the November 2023 siege, 15 June 2026.
[217] Interview by voice call with Enas (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a nurse at Al-Shifa hospital, 5 and 13 May 2026; Interview by voice call with "Ahmad" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a doctor who was present in Al-Shifa hospital during the November 2023 siege, 15 June 2026.
[218] In addition to the images of the two deceased babies on 11 November 2023 confirmed by metadata, the video from 16 November from the surgery room shows 36 live babies. 31 surviving babies were evacuated alive on 19 November, indicating at least five further deaths between 16 and 19 November. Enas also shared videos showing the bodies of two deceased babies, whom she said died just before the evacuation on 19 November 2023, with metadata confirming the videos were captured on that date. Images shared with Amnesty International, 1 June 2026.
[219] The Director of Al-Shifa Hospital is recorded stating that 37 babies were in need of incubators in a post uploaded by the IDF on 14 November 2026, indicating six babies died in the surgery room before the 31 were evacuated. IDF, "IDF Effort to coordinate transfer of incubators from an Israeli hospital to Shifa hospital", 14 November 2023, https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-israel-at-war/november-23-pr/idf-effort-to-coordinate-transfer-of-incubators-from-an-israeli-hospital-to-shifa-hospital
[220] WHO, "WHO-led joint UN and Red Crescent mission evacuates 31 infants from Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza", 19 November 2023, https://www.who.int/news/item/19-11-2023-who-led-joint-un-and-red-crescent-mission-evacuates-infants-from-al-shifa-hospital-in-gaza
[221] WHO, "WHO-led joint UN and Red Crescent mission evacuates 31 infants from Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza" (previously cited); UNICEF, "31 premature babies at imminent risk of death relocated from Al-Shifa hospital", 19 November 2023, https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/31-premature-babies-imminent-risk-death-relocated-al-shifa-hospital
[222] WHO reported on 19 November that two babies had died the day before or overnight, before the evacuation could take place; they reported that 11 of the babies who were evacuated were in critical condition. WHO, "WHO-led joint UN and Red Crescent mission evacuates 31 infants from Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza" (previously cited); UNICEF reported the death of "several babies" before the evacuation. UNICEF, "31 premature babies at imminent risk of death relocated from Al-Shifa hospital" (previously cited).
Time reported that eight babies died after they were removed from critical care on incubators, Time, "The race to save premature babies in Gaza", 22 November 2023, https://time.com/6338832/gaza-al-shifa-hospital-rescue-mission-babies/; Reuters, "Mother of one of 28 Gaza babies moved to Egypt recounts her ordeal", 20 November 2023, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/group-premature-babies-evacuated-gaza-into-egypt-tv-2023-11-20/
[223] WHO and UNICEF reported 31 babies were evacuated. "Ahmad", the doctor said it was 30.
Interview by voice call with "Ahmad" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a doctor who was present at Al-Shifa hospital during the November 2023 siege, 15 June 2026.
[224] IDF, "Press briefing by IDF spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari", 12 November 2023, https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/israel-at-war/briefings-by-idf-spokesperson-bg-effie-defrin/november-press-briefings/press-briefing-by-idf-spokesperson-rear-admiral-daniel-hagari-november-12th-2015/
[225] IDF, "IDF provide Shifa hospital with 300 liters of fuel; Hamas prevents hospital from receiving fuel", 12 November 2023, https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-israel-at-war/november-23-pr/idf-provide-shifa-hospital-with-300-liters-of-fuel-hamas-

clean water and formula, four or five days after the babies were removed from the NICU where they last had an incubator.[226] Amnesty International received reports that Israeli soldiers were present during the evacuation, but was not able to confirm what, if any, additional support Israeli forces provided to the evacuation efforts beyond "deconfliction" (that is, beyond not attacking it) or why it took over a week after the babies were transferred out of the NICU. Amnesty International asked the Israeli authorities for more information on this topic in a right to reply letter sent to them on 30 September 2026. At the time of publication, Amnesty International had not received a response.

According to the reports received by Amnesty International, Israeli forces flew a quadcopter into and around the NICU on 10 November and would therefore likely have been able to observe the babies.[227] Media reports and appeals by UN agencies at the time further indicate that their vulnerability was widely known.[228] The Israeli military also released an audio recording dated 14 November 2023 in which the Director of Al-Shifa hospital was heard stating that 37 incubators and four oxygen machines were required for the babies,[229] further indicating that the urgent needs of the NICU were communicated and known to the Israeli forces. The small number of incubators, clean water and formula that Israeli forces subsequently provided appears to have been both too late and insufficient to mitigate the life-threatening conditions, with medical staff forced to prioritize among babies for the inadequate number of incubators when the incubators were brought, and placing multiple babies in devices intended for a single baby.[230] Some of the babies had died before this assistance was provided.

In another indicator of the extreme pressure under which the evacuations were carried out from Al-Shifa hospital, the WHO reported that "none of the infants were accompanied by family members, as the Ministry of Health has only limited information, and is not currently able to find close family members".[231] A nurse from Nasser hospital who accompanied the babies to Egypt told Amnesty International that 28 newborns were evacuated through the Rafah crossing on 20 November 2023. He said that some babies had to share incubators at Emirates Red Crescent hospital, were transported without incubators to the Egyptian border, and arrived in Egypt in extremely poor condition due to malnutrition and infections. Few were accompanied by family members. According to his account and media reports, seven further babies died in Egypt.[232] He shared medical documentation of two babies' deaths, indicating they had died from heart failure or acute respiratory failure in January and February 2024, respectively.[233]

Taken together, the evidence suggests that the harm stemming from attacks and forcible evacuations of newborns at Al-Shifa hospital was severe, foreseeable, and to a significant extent preventable. Israeli forces knew, or should have known, that the hospital housed highly vulnerable newborns whose survival depended

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prevents-hospital-from-receiving-fuel/; IDF, "IDF effort to coordinate transfer of incubators from an Israeli hospital to Shifa hospital", 14 November 2023, https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-israel-at-war/november-23-pr/idf-effort-to-coordinate-transfer-of-incubators-from-an-israeli-hospital-to-shifa-hospital/; IDF, "Humanitarian aid & searches for explosives and terror infrastructure: IDF troops continue targeting Hamas in a precise operation in Shifa hospital", 15 November 2023, https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-israel-at-war/november-23-pr/humanitarian-aid-searches-for-additional-explosives-and-terror-infrastructure-idf-troops-continue-targeting-hamas-in-precise-operation-in-the-shifa-hospital/; IDF, "IDF in cooperation With COGAT helps facilitate the safe evacuation of newborn babies from Shifa hospital to receive essential medical attention in Egypt", 20 November 2023, https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-israel-at-war/november-23-pr/idf-in-cooperation-with-cogat-helps-facilitate-the-safe-evacuation-of-newborn-babies-from-shifa-hospital-to-receive-essential-medical-attention-in-egypt/

[226] Interview by voice call with "Ahmad" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a doctor who was present in Al-Shifa hospital during the November 2023 siege, 15 June 2026. Reuters reported on 14 November 2023 an Israeli official told the outlet on condition of anonymity that three transport incubators had been provided by Israeli hospitals, and that these were on standby outside Gaza waiting for an agreed handover. Reuters, "Lives of 36 babies in Gaza hospital at risk despite Israeli incubator offer", 14 November 2023, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/gaza-health-ministry-says-no-objection-moving-babies-no-mechanism-do-so-2023-11-14/

[227] Interview by voice call with "Ahmad" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a doctor who was present in Al-Shifa hospital during the November 2023 siege, 15 June 2026; Interview by voice call with Enas (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a nurse at Al-Shifa hospital, 5 and 13 May 2026.

[228] CNN, "Al-Shifa hospital: Doctors race to save newborns as Israel says it's battling Hamas around Gaza's largest hospital", 13 November 2023, https://edition.cnn.com/2023/11/13/middleeast/gaza-babies-incubators-al-shifa-hospital-israel-intl-hnk; UN News, "Gaza: UN agencies make plea for international action to end hospital attacks", 12 November 2023 (previously cited).

[229] IDF, "IDF Effort to coordinate transfer of incubators from an Israeli hospital to Shifa hospital", 14 November 2023, https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-israel-at-war/november-23-pr/idf-effort-to-coordinate-transfer-of-incubators-from-an-israeli-hospital-to-shifa-hospital

[230] Interview by voice call with "Ahmad" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a doctor who was present in Al-Shifa hospital during the November 2023 siege, 15 June 2026.

[231] WHO, "WHO-led joint UN and Red Crescent mission evacuates 31 infants from Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza", 19 November 2023 (previously cited).

[232] Interview by voice call with "Islam" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a nurse who accompanied the babies to Egypt, 29 April 2026. EL PAÍS, "The return of premature babies evacuated to Egypt from Gaza: "'I will never forget that message saying my daughter was alive'", 4 May 2026, https://english.elpais.com/international/2026-05-04/the-return-of-premature-babies-evacuated-to-egypt-from-gaza-i-will-never-forget-that-message-saying-my-daughter-was-alive.htmlhttps://english.elpais.com/international/2026-05-04/the-return-of-premature-babies-evacuated-to-egypt-from-gaza-i-will-never-forget-that-message-saying-my-daughter-was-alive.html; CBS News, "Premature babies who escaped war in Gaza finally reunited with families after more than 2 years", 26 July 2026, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/gaza-premature-babies-al-shifa-hospital-reunited-families-after-2-years/

[233] On file with Amnesty International. The nurse said he lost other medical records as a result of multiple displacements, and a collapse of functioning records systems at the Ministry of Health.

on uninterrupted access to specialized medical care, including oxygen and temperature-regulated environments. The cumulative impact of the military attacks, the disruption of essential medical systems, the forced transfer of babies to unsafe conditions, and the inadequacy and delay of subsequent assistance appears to have contributed to the deaths of multiple newborns and placed others at acute risk. These findings amount to a failure by the Israeli authorities to take all feasible precautions during their attack on Al-Shifa hospital and underscore the grave consequences of deliberately failing to uphold fundamental protections for the wounded and sick under international humanitarian law.

FAMILIES SEPARATED FROM THEIR NEWBORNS FOLLOWING THE AL-SHIFA HOSPITAL EVACUATION

Families of the babies who were evacuated from Al-Shifa hospital to Egypt were separated for weeks, months and in many cases for more than two years. Many parents could not leave Gaza and reunite with their babies. Several were only able to reunite on 31 March 2026, as 11 children were returned to Gaza.[234] Some parents went weeks or months before knowing their babies were alive.[235]

29-year-old Sondos, mentioned above, told Amnesty International:

"They were announcing on the news about the death of the premature babies [in Al-Shifa hospital] … there was no electricity, shortages of food, shortages of everything … people started to tell me she [her daughter] might have passed and stay strong. People were trying to evacuate them, but no one could give me clear information… I kept telling myself: let her just stay alive, God willing. I held onto that belief…"[236]

Sondos said it took more than seven months to learn her daughter was alive. She was not able to travel to Egypt, despite being on a list for exit, as the Rafah crossing was closed in May 2024. Between October 2023 and May 2024, the Rafah crossing was the sole remaining open crossing for Palestinians who wanted to leave Gaza, but crossing required a complex Egyptian-Israeli approval system and payments to Egyptian brokers that could reach 10,000 USD per individual.[237] When they were finally reunited in Gaza:

"I was afraid she wouldn't accept me. But when she came to me, from the first moment, I felt like I was holding her sister [killed in an air strike] again, like I was holding Habiba. She was the same age when Habiba was killed."[238]

Shaima, aged 25, told Amnesty International how hard it was to have no information on her daughter in the Al-Shifa hospital NICU:

"We had prepared her nursery, and I bought her clothes and everything was ready for her to come. But after the siege started, we lost contact with the doctors and nurses. I heard on the radio that because of the siege, the oxygen was cut off on the incubators. I was still recovering [from the delivery] and just crying all the time. I stopped eating and was just listening to the radio all the time.

"Then there was news about a ceasefire, and we had a signal on my sister's husband's phone. We received a message [from the health ministry] the day before the start of the ceasefire, on 20 November 2023, saying I should go to Rafah crossing because the baby would be transferred to Egypt. We saw the message when the ceasefire started and communications were restored…

"It was such a difficult journey [from north to south Gaza]. There was a lot of shooting from the Israeli forces, although this was during the ceasefire… We slept on the street for a few days in the cold and my caesarean section wound got infected. I went to Nasser hospital [in Khan Younis] asking when we could

[234] Interview by voice call with "Islam" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a nurse who accompanied the babies to Egypt, 29 April 2026.
UNICEF said six of the babies brought back had never been held by their parents. UNICEF State of Palestine, "Babies evacuated out of Gaza delivered safely into parents' hands, two years later", 7 April 2026, https://www.unicef.org/sop/stories/babies-evacuated-out-gaza-delivered-safely-parents-hands-two-years-later
[235] Interview by voice call with "Islam" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a nurse who accompanied the babies to Egypt, 29 April 2026.
[236] Interview by voice call with Sondos Al-Kurd, 6 April 2026.
[237] Mada Masr, "The Argani peninsula", 13 February 2024, https://www.madamasr.com/en/2024/02/13/feature/politics/the-argany-peninsula/
[238] Interview by voice call with Sondos Al-Kurd, 6 April 2026.

travel. They said I would have to wait until I had coordination to travel, but I had no place to go to… I got the approval and travelled to Egypt to see my daughter on 4 December 2023."[239]

Shaima said that because her husband did not get approval to travel to Egypt, the family was separated for over two years, until she returned to Gaza with their child on 31 March 2026.[240]

As of 1 October 2026, one of the children evacuated to Egypt remains there, without family, for ongoing treatment.[241] Her mother has not been granted permission to exit Gaza to reunite with her child.[242]

The prolonged separation of families from their newborns appears to have resulted, at least in part, from the failure to take feasible precautions to protect civilians during the siege of Al-Shifa hospital, where the presence of NICU patients was foreseeable, as well as Israel's illegal blockade. In these circumstances, the treatment of affected families amounted to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and an interference with the right to family life.[243] The families' uncertainty and fear were compounded by the frequent telecommunication cuts, some of which were deliberately caused by Israeli authorities, which made contact with hospitals a near-total impossibility for most. Ongoing intense military operations and the separation of Gaza into two by establishing the military zone referred to by Israel as the Netzarim corridor also affected most families' capacity to reunite.

[239] Interview by voice call with Shaima (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 7 April 2026.
[240] Interview by voice call with Shaima (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 7 April 2026.
[241] Interview by voice call with "Islam" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a nurse who accompanied the babies to Egypt, 29 April 2026.
[242] Communication by voice call with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, Gaza, May 2026; Interview by voice call with "Halima" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), mother of a girl remaining in Gaza requiring ongoing treatment, 25 May 2026.
[243] See section 3.3.

6. DISMANTLING OF MATERNAL HEALTHCARE

Between 7 October 2023 and 1 October 2026, Gaza's already overstretched healthcare system was dramatically degraded through attacks on health facilities, destruction of systems essential to their functioning, and severe restrictions by Israeli authorities on the entry of medical supplies and fuel and distribution of such supplies within Gaza. This, coupled with the immediate dangers of ongoing hostilities, pushed the system to the brink of collapse. It meant that even in the absence – or between – attacks on specific facilities, women's access to maternal healthcare was extremely precarious.

The so-called ceasefire of October 2025 has brought little relief, as the entry of medical supplies into Gaza continued to face severe restrictions, humanitarian actors faced ongoing restrictions, and some medical facilities remained closed or inaccessible within access restricted or no-go zones.

On 25 July 2026, UNFPA stated that 94% of Gaza's hospitals were either destroyed or only partially functional, fewer than half of the health facilities were able to operate at any level, and only 15% of facilities were able to provide emergency obstetric care. Those still operational face critical shortages of medicines, supplies and equipment.

Healthcare professionals reported to Amnesty International between February and May 2026 ongoing shortages of critical drugs for maternal and neonatal healthcare. As of the beginning of October 2026, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, 44% of essential medicines were at zero stock and over half of medical consumables and 83% of laboratory testing materials were unavailable – with maternal and child health being one of the health sectors most badly hit by deficits in 2026. One health worker explained that due to shortages of some of these essential medicines, they were forced to subject infants to additional invasive procedures and avoidable suffering, while complicating care for already medically fragile babies.

6.1 REMAINING FACILITIES OVERWHELMED

Between 7 October 2023 and 1 October 2026, particularly before the so-called ceasefire, hundreds of healthcare facilities in Gaza were reported damaged or destroyed.[244] In a recurrent pattern, hospitals were frequently minimally rehabilitated only to be destroyed or damaged again.[245] Health professionals struggled to keep hospitals functioning or reopen them, often under dire conditions or amid ruin, after they faced attack. The situation remained dire following the so-called ceasefire of October 2025, as at least six major hospitals and numerous clinics and medical points had been forced to remain closed as they fell within or near the "Yellow Line" area, a no-go zone violently imposed by Israeli forces.

Rajaa, a midwife, described a desperate effort to reopen the emergency department of Al-Shifa hospital, Gaza City, a few weeks after Israeli forces ended the first siege of the facility, in December 2023. She described being the only specialist in maternity care present and working day and night, assisting women who had taken great risks to get to the hospital amidst Israeli attacks to deliver: "I worked in extremely tough

[244] WHO, Surveillance of Attacks on Healthcare (SSA), https://extranet.who.int/ssa, "Occupied Palestinian Territory: Attacks on healthcare", (accessed on 28 October 2026).
[245] WHO, "Health system at breaking point as hostilities further intensify in Gaza, WHO warns" (previously cited).

conditions. We had no obstetricians. A volunteer dentist helped me do the stitching of women and other surgeries."[246]

Rajaa said that she delivered eight or nine babies in 15 days after the emergency department first opened: one of the pregnant women had a cardiac arrest but survived. Luckily, none had other complications or needed a caesarean section, as these would have been difficult or impossible to treat.[247]

The destruction and damage to hospitals and health facilities, combined with repeated mass forced displacement, also put extreme pressure on the facilities that remained operational. Healthcare professionals in multiple facilities described dramatic increases in patient load as a result of population movements following large-scale "evacuation" orders that increased the overcrowding of some areas while emptying the zones targeted by Israeli forces, and attacks putting nearby health facilities out of service.[248] Several described maternity patients increasing several-fold over their standard intake during the most difficult periods.[249]

Women described being turned away from overwhelmed hospitals or facing dangerous conditions as they sought healthcare.

"Dima" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), who was seven months pregnant and suffering from a life-threatening pregnancy complication requiring urgent delivery, told Amnesty International how on 29 October 2023:

"I had trouble breathing, couldn't eat and the swelling got worse. First, I went to Kamal Adwan hospital, but they told me they did not have capacity to treat me. I then went to a clinic in Jabalia refugee camp; they told me my situation is critical and I should be in a hospital. I then went to Al-Awda hospital they diagnosed me with pre-eclampsia. They said they couldn't deal with my case and I should go to Shifa hospital and the baby was not well. It was sunset time and there was no transportation."[250]

When she was able to reach Al-Shifa hospital the next morning, she underwent an emergency caesarean section. The baby ultimately survived.

Sara, four months pregnant in February 2026, told Amnesty International:

"I went once for a check-up at Al-Salam Clinic [in Khan Younis]. At first, they refused to see me, saying they only had capacity for priority cases. I insisted, explaining I had travelled far. They eventually checked my blood pressure and did blood tests. They told me I was malnourished. My haemoglobin level was nine [indicating moderate anaemia] … The clinic itself was partially destroyed. During my visit, there was a winter storm, and a large concrete block fell near me and the women waiting outside."[251]

Some hospitals also sheltered large numbers of displaced people. A midwife working at Kamal Adwan hospital told Amnesty International:

"Displaced people were everywhere, even inside the delivery rooms. When we had women delivering, we asked people to leave the room to let the woman deliver, and then they went back. Women were delivering without the room even being cleaned or sanitized after displaced people used them."[252]

Healthcare workers said because of overcrowding, women were sometimes forced to give birth on the floor in the labour ward or in shared beds.[253]

A psychiatrist told researchers he and his pregnant wife were forced to move from north Gaza to the south in early 2024 to be able to access health facilities. When his wife gave birth at Emirates Red Crescent hospital in Rafah, "the facility was so crowded that she had to share the bed with another woman who was also in labour – the two women both gave birth on the same bed [in the labour ward]".[254]

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[246] Interview by voice call with Rajaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), former midwife at Al-Helou hospital in Gaza City, 5 May 2026.
[247] Rajaa said they transferred cases of complicated surgeries to Ahli hospital through coordination with ICRC; however, some patients died while awaiting coordination.
[248] An antenatal midwife told Amnesty International in May 2024 that births at Emirates Red Crescent hospital in Rafah (south Gaza) rose from approximately 700 per month before October 2023, to between 3,000 and 5,000 after attacks on Al-Shifa and Nasser hospital and the displacement of people fleeing south. A doctor from the same facility likewise said they went from delivering 15 to 20 babies per day to between 80 and 100 per day. See also, Al Mezan, *Reproductive health under genocide* (previously cited).
[249] Interviews with several healthcare professionals in Gaza (names withheld at the request of the interviewee), 2024 - 2026.
[250] Interview by voice call with "Dima" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 7 April 2026.
[251] Interview by voice call with Sara (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 27 February 2026.
[252] Interview by voice call with Rawiya (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), nurse at Kamal Adwan hospital, 3 June 2026.
[253] Interviews with two doctors in Gaza (names withheld at the request of the interviewee), May 2024.
[254] Interview by voice call with a psychiatrist in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 23 April 2026.

Another woman who gave birth in Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat Deir al-Balah governorate, in central Gaza, in mid-2024 described to Amnesty International:

"All beds [in the ward] were shared by two or three women at a time. There was no privacy. I was trying to cover and hide myself when I was trying to feed my baby. Or even when the nurses came to check on me and my bleeding. It was such a humiliating and awful feeling."[255]

On 25 July 2026, UNFPA stated that 94% of Gaza's hospitals were either destroyed or only partially functional, fewer than half of the health facilities were able to operate at any level, and only 15% of facilities were able to provide emergency obstetric care. Those still operational face critical shortages of medicines, supplies and equipment. These constraints have had severe consequences for maternal and newborn health outcomes and have left an estimated 55,000 pregnant women struggling to access safe delivery services. [256] Midwives told Amnesty International that, for lack of space, in 2026 there were still cases in which women had to give birth while sharing a bed.[257] They also said that women living near the "Yellow Line" faced particular struggles to access healthcare, as this area was emptied of functioning healthcare services, leaving them with long distances to travel in unsafe conditions.

According to Amnesty International's own documentation, several major hospitals have been rendered inaccessible and forced out of service by Israeli forces as of 1 October 2026 because of their location within access restricted zones.[258] These include Kamal Adwan, Al-Awda and the Indonesian hospitals in the North Gaza governorate; the Gaza European hospital in Khan Younis; Abu Yousef al-Najjar, the Emirates Red Crescent Maternity hospital and Al-Kuwait hospital in Rafah. Amnesty International also documented several other clinics deemed inaccessible as a result of restrictions connected to the expansion of the "Yellow Line", such as Sabha al-Harazin clinic in Shuja'iya and Al-Hurriya clinic in Al-Tuffah, both in eastern Gaza City.

6.2 DENIAL OF ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

The Israeli authorities have continued to restrict the entry of basic supplies, thereby preventing hospitals and health facilities from receiving essential medicines, medical equipment, spare parts, and fuel.[259] Restrictions continued to cause devastating shortcomings across health sectors into October 2026, the end of the review period of this report, with maternal and neonatal health among the worst affected sectors.

Humanitarian organizations and medical professionals linked these shortages to the restrictions on the entry of supplies stemming from Israel's unlawful blockade of Gaza that was further tightened post-October 2023.[260] Physicians for Human Rights found in July 2025 that such restrictions were "deliberate, excessive, unclear, unpredictable and unjustified," resulting in widespread suffering and preventable deaths.[261]

During some periods, no supplies were allowed in at all.[262] During other times, supplies were inconsistent and unpredictable. Some medicines were entirely unavailable for extended periods.[263]

In May 2025, for example, UNFPA reported a severe shortage in essential medicines, and stated that one in three pregnancies were considered high-risk, requiring specialist care that was increasingly unavailable.[264] UNFPA also stated it had over 190 trucks loaded with supplies that were urgently needed in Gaza, but

[255] Interview by voice call with Mozayan (last name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 25 March 2026.
[256] UNFPA Palestine, "UNFPA and France Partner to Restore Life-Saving Maternal and Newborn Care in Gaza", 25 July 2026, https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/news/unfpa-and-france-partner-restore-life-saving-maternal-and-newborn-care-gaza
On 7 August 2026, 20 of Gaza's 37 hospitals were partially functioning, and 17 were non-functioning. See WHO, Health Cluster, Occupied Palestinian Territory: Health Cluster dashboard, https://healthcluster.who.int/countries/occupied-palestinian-territory (accessed on 28 October 2026).
[257] Interview by voice call with Rajaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), former midwife at Al-Helou hospital in Gaza City, 5 May 2026.
[258] Amnesty International's fieldworker observations during field visits to areas close to access restricted zones on 16 September 2026, and follow-up interviews with contacts in the area on 28 September and 3 October 2026.
[259] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited).
[260] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited).
[261] PHR, "'We Could Have Saved So Many More': Anguish and Death Caused by Israel's Restrictions on Medical Supplies in Gaza", 9 July 2025, https://phr.org/our-work/resources/we-could-have-saved-so-many-more-anguish-and-death-caused-by-israels-restrictions-on-medical-supplies-in-gaza/
[262] Amnesty International, '*You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), pp. 60-68.
[263] Interviews with several medical professionals (names withheld at the request of the interviewee), between March 2024 and June 2026. See also Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), pp. 60-68.
[264] UNFPA, "As famine looms in Gaza, pregnant women and newborns face life-threatening health risks", 19 May 2025, https://www.unfpa.org/news/famine-looms-gaza-pregnant-women-and-newborns-face-life-threatening-health-risks

"which have been denied entry at the border during the blockade", including medicines and machines for maternal health.[265]

Even during periods when restrictions have otherwise been loosened, many items remain heavily restricted. The Israeli Ministry of Defense's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) unit classifies thousands of essential goods, including medical supplies and diagnostic equipment, as "dual-use". Vague and unpredictable, the dual-use policy grants COGAT broad discretion, with little to no oversight or transparency, to reject or delay the entry of life-saving items into Gaza.[266]

Healthcare professionals consistently described – from late 2023 until October 2026 (that is the review period of this report) – a system that was thus not only overwhelmed but rendered unable to meet minimum standards of care and dignity of patients, despite extreme personal sacrifices and resourcefulness by staff. Humanitarian workers described having to make difficult choices for the prioritization of essential medicines to bring into Gaza when limited aid was permitted entry, and healthcare workers described strict rationing of many of the items that were brought in.[267]

Shortages affected all stages of pregnancy, beginning with the inability to carry out routine monitoring and prevent complications. Healthcare providers reported that essential prenatal screening, including blood tests and other diagnostic checks, was for the most part unavailable.[268] With damaged or insufficient ultrasound equipment, doctors were also often unable to detect complications or congenital abnormalities in advance, meaning, among other things, that families and healthcare professionals were less prepared for the birth of such babies, or had not planned properly for them (including, for example, an emergency caesarean section when the situation required it).

In March 2026, for example, "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, told Amnesty International that only three ultrasound machines remained functioning across maternity departments, compared to six before October 2023, and that these remaining three were faulty.[269] Amnesty International heard similar reports from other hospitals.[270]

As a result of the shortages and absences of blood tests, ultrasound machines, and other diagnostic equipment, conditions that would normally be identified and managed early – such as anaemia, infections, gestational diabetes – were instead presenting at advanced stages even where pregnant women had been able to reach health facilities. This increased the likelihood of severe complications during labour and delivery.[271]

Preventative treatments were also sometimes unavailable. Several pregnant women described to Amnesty International the unavailability of medications they were prescribed to reduce the risk of pregnancy loss.[272] Anti-D Immunoglobulin – a routine injection given to pregnant women with rhesus-negative blood to prevent their immune system from attacking the red blood cells of a rhesus-positive fetus – was completely unavailable for months at a time during parts of 2024 and 2025.[273] Health professionals reported seeing multiple women daily who required the injection, and by early 2026, reported cases of miscarriages linked to its absence.[274]

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[265] These include mobile maternity units, ultrasounds and portable incubators that are crucial for premature newborns, hygiene and shelter supplies, and maternal health medicines, including those essential for managing obstetric emergencies.
[266] Gisha, "Essential and denied: Israel's dual-use policy in Gaza" (previously cited).
[267] Interviews by voice call or video call with several humanitarian workers (names withheld at the request of the interviewee), between January 2024 and May 2026.
[268] Interview by voice call with "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, 31 March 2026.
[269] Interview by voice call with "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, 31 March 2026.
[270] A senior midwife told Amnesty International in May 2026 that Nasser hospital and Al-Helou each only had two functioning ultrasound machines, and they were mostly old and unable to give clear images. Interview by voice call with Rajaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), former midwife at Al-Helou hospital in Gaza City, 5 May 2026.
[271] Interview by voice call with "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, 31 March 2026; Interview by voice call with a humanitarian worker in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), February 2026.
[272] Interviews by voice call with several women in Gaza, February to May 2026.
[273] Interviews by voice call with a health professional in Gaza, 19 February and 19 March 2026; Interview by voice call with "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, 31 March 2026.
Without Anti-D, some women become sensitized, meaning that in the current or subsequent pregnancies, their bodies may destroy the fetus's blood cells, leading to miscarriage, stillbirth, severe anaemia, or life-threatening complications for the newborn. The UN CoI also documented medical professionals raising the lack of Anti-D. See UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), para. 104.
[274] Interview by voice call with "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, 31 March 2026; Interview by voice call with a health professional in Gaza, 19 February and 19 March 2026.

In addition to the inadequate and expired anaesthesia two healthcare providers reported having to rely on while hospitals were under siege, doctors also reported using expired or inappropriate anaesthesia during childbirth, including caesarean sections, for lack of supplies even outside these periods.[275] One doctor told researchers about a period in which the lack of anaesthesia available to him in late 2023 meant that he could only give local anaesthesia during caesarean sections.[276] A senior midwife, on the other hand, said in May 2026 that most caesarean sections were done with full anaesthesia, because spinal anaesthesia was in shortage and had to be rationed.[277]

The lack of spare parts was also an issue. One doctor described a case where a failed spinal anaesthesia for a caesarean section patient required switching to general anaesthesia, but the machine was non-functional. The doctor was able to move his patient mid-procedure to another room with a functioning machine but said: "If that room had been busy, we would have lost her".[278]

The senior midwife also told Amnesty International about shortages in pain relief for women having vaginal births.

"There is an acute shortage of painkillers, so women had to experience all the pain of labour and delivery. We helped women in pain with warm water when we could and helped them do some exercise to minimize tears and [the need for] stitches."[279]

Health professionals have also reported shortages of medicines required to manage labour safely, including oxytocin and prostaglandins used to induce or regulate contractions and manage post-partum haemorrhage.[280] In some cases, the absence of these medicines, combined with limited diagnostic capacities, led to increased reliance on emergency caesarean sections,[281] which may have lasting consequences for women's reproductive health.[282]

When complications arose, as they frequently did, the lack of essential resources proved critical. Health professionals described being unable to secure sufficient blood for obstetric emergencies, due to both widespread malnutrition reducing the availability of donors locally and delays bringing it into Gaza.[283] One doctor described a woman in late pregnancy who died after a placental abruption following a bombing because they ran out of blood units for transfusion.[284] Several other healthcare professionals gave similar examples. In some cases, where blood was lacking, hospital staff themselves donated blood or obtained units by sending staff onto nearby areas with a megaphone to call for donors.[285] The wider collapse of

[275] Interviews by voice call with two health professionals in Gaza (names withheld at the request of the interviewees), 19 February and 19 March 2026. UNFPA has likewise reported about a lack of anaesthesia for pregnant women who needed life-saving surgeries. UNFPA, "After a month of siege, bombardments and a health system obliterated, pregnant women in Gaza are caught in a catastrophe", 9 November 2023, https://www.unfpa.org/news/after-month-siege-bombardments-and-health-system-obliterated-pregnant-women-gaza-are-caught

[276] Interview by voice call with a healthcare worker in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), May 2026. UNFPA also reported that women were being forced to undergo caesarean sections with only partial anaesthesia. See UNFPA, "'Absolute catastrophe' at only functioning maternity hospital in Gaza City", 11 March 2024, https://www.unfpa.org/video/%E2%80%9Cabsolute-catastrophe%E2%80%9D-only-functioning-maternity-hospital-gaza-city

[277] Interview by voice call with Rajaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), former midwife at Al-Helou hospital in Gaza City, 5 May 2026.

[278] Interview by voice call with "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, 31 March 2026.

[279] Interview by voice call with Rajaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), former midwife at Al-Helou hospital in Gaza City, 5 May 2026.

[280] PHR and GHRC, *Destroying Hope for the Future* (previously cited), p. 19.

[281] Interview by voice call with "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, 31 March 2026.

[282] According to an independent consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist Amnesty International consulted, while a caesarean section would have been a safe way to protect women in the context described, caesarean sections can adversely affect a woman's future reproductive health; with each caesarean delivery, a woman is increasingly likely to require a caesarean with each future pregnancy. Multiple caesareans carry increasing risks of haemorrhage, abnormal placentation, and hysterectomy. Thus, this increased reliance on caesarean sections will continue to have ripple effects for the reproductive health of these women. Written communication with an independent consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, 31 August 2026.

[283] Interview by voice call with "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, 31 March 2026. See also, for example, WHO, "WHO says 4,500 blood units monthly needed in Gaza amid critical shortfall", 28 March 2025, https://www.anews.com.tr/middle-east/2025/03/28/who-says-4500-blood-units-monthly-needed-in-gaza-amid-critical-shortfall; UN OCHA, "Gaza humanitarian response update: 16-29 March 2025", 3 April 2025, https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-humanitarian-response-update-16-29-march-2025

[284] Interview by voice call with a health professional in Gaza, 19 February and 19 March 2026.

[285] Interview by voice call with a health professional in Gaza, 19 February and 19 March 2026; Interview by voice call with "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, 31 March 2026.

diagnostic services further constrained care, with only three CT scanners reportedly remaining operational across Gaza by September 2026, compared with 18 before October 2023.[286]

The risks extended into post-partum care. Women described lacking access to basic essential medicines, such as antibiotics. 34-year-old Mozayan (last name withheld at the request of the interviewee), a case manager with a women's NGO from Nuseirat refugee camp, explained:

"I couldn't find the antibiotics that were prescribed to me when I was discharged [after giving birth]. It was not available at the hospital's pharmacy or any other pharmacy [I could reach]. I only found a vaginal wash. Then I started to have so much pain as I had a bad infection because of not taking the antibiotics… I kept suffering from pain in the area for months and months."[287]

The so-called ceasefire of October 2025 led to limited improvement, but Israel continued to severely restrict the entry of supplies and the restoration of services essential for the survival of the civilian population, including by blocking the entry of equipment and material necessary to repair life-sustaining infrastructure and required to remove unexploded ordnance, contaminated rubble and sewage, all of which posed serious and potentially irreversible public health and environmental risks.[288]

Medical professionals interviewed by Amnesty International between February and May 2026 reported that these shortages continued to affect their ability to provide safe care after the so-called ceasefire of October 2025, including the inability to carry out necessary screening and continued use of expired or substandard supplies.

In April 2026, UNFPA reported that Gaza continued to face severe shortages of essential maternal and reproductive health supplies, significantly constraining the provision of life-saving care for women and newborns.[289]

In June 2026, UN OCHA reported that critical medical supply shortages, including antibiotics, continued to severely impact the health response in Gaza and the humanitarian organizations attempting to fill the gap.[290] As of the beginning of October 2026, according to the Ministry of Health, 44% of essential medicines were at zero stock and over half of medical consumables and 83% of laboratory testing materials were unavailable – with maternal and child health being one of the health sectors most badly hit by deficits in 2026.[291]

6.3 DEGRADATION OF NEONATAL CARE

Neonatal care likewise suffered from shortages in essential medicines, spare parts and power. Health professionals reported a sharp increase in neonatal deaths linked to both an increase in the proportion of babies born in need of neonatal intensive care and the systematic degradation of neonatal intensive care capacity. The degradation of neonatal care has continued for the best part of three years; as of 1 October 2026, the end of the review period of this report, the situation remained desperate.

A healthcare professional working in north Gaza told Amnesty International in 2024 that the hospital witnessed "[an] increase in premature births... We had to watch these premature babies die, without the ability to provide the intensive care, medicines, nutrients, and antibiotics they urgently need."[292]

Some women said their babies could not access neonatal emergency care at all. 27-year-old "Azza" (name changed at the request of the interviewee) said her twins died shortly after birth and that Al-Sahaba hospital in Gaza City, where she delivered, did not have functioning incubators then. She described how she started getting cramps and bleeding in late pregnancy after being near an air strike and that, a few weeks later, on 30 December 2023:

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[286] Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), "ICHR Warns of the Complete Collapse of CT Scanning Services in the Gaza Strip", 1 October 2026, https://en.pngoportal.org/post/4138/ICHR-Warns-of-the-Complete-Collapse-of-CT-Scanning-Services-in-the-Gaza-Strip; Al Jazeera, "The waiting game: Gaza's CT scan shortage causing worries and worse", 31 July 2026, https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2026/7/31/the-waiting-game-gazas-shortage-in-ct-scans-causing-worries-and-worse

[287] Interview by voice call with Mozayan (last name withheld at the request of the interviewee), case manager of the Women Affairs Centre, 9 March 2026.

[288] Amnesty International, "Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza continues unabated despite ceasefire" (previously cited).

[289] UNFPA, *Situation Report: Crisis in Palestine (January-March 2026)*, 17 April 2026, https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unfpa-situation-report-crisis-in-palestine-january-march-2026/

[290] UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Situation Report*, 26 June 2026, https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ocha-humanitarian-situation-report-26-june-2026/

[291] Ministry of Health in Gaza statistics, shared with Amnesty International.

[292] Interview by voice call with a doctor in north Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 28 April 2024.

"[T]he cramps got worse and we rushed to the Patient's Friends hospital [in Gaza City] at 7am. They checked me and did an ultrasound and said the babies were fine [and sent me back home]. At 12pm, I had strong contractions. I went to the bathroom and half of one of the babies was out. I could feel his feet out. My husband hardly found anyone who agreed to take me to the hospital. We went to Al-Sahaba hospital [in Gaza City] and delivered both babies, but they needed to be immediately taken to the NICU, which the hospital did not have [then]. They died half an hour later. The situation was very bad; there was no way to transport them to Al-Shifa hospital because it was under siege. They did not let me see the babies."[293]

Two healthcare professionals told Amnesty International, for example, how in May 2024 in the Emirates Red Crescent hospital in Rafah, the number of babies in neonatal care increased dramatically due to the closure of other hospitals, while infections rose sharply due to overcrowding and lack of equipment. Babies were often forced to share incubators, increasing the risk of infection.[294]

One healthcare professional, for example, told Amnesty International how:

"Initially our nursery was housing 20 babies; however, our hospital experienced a surge to 70 babies following the transfer of all Gaza children to the Emirates Red Crescent hospital – following the closure of Nasser hospital and Al-Shifa hospital. The bacterial bloodstream infections increased by 400%, resulting in the death of 3 babies per day."[295]

At various points since 7 October 2023, as many as five babies were recorded to be sharing an incubator in Gazan hospitals.[296]

"Hanaa" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 26, described how her newborn son died from a congenital heart disease after contracting an infection in a shared incubator in Nasser hospital in November 2025. He had been on a waiting list to exit Gaza for heart surgery abroad when he died:

"He died after 20 days. They said it was congenital deformations. He also had a heart problem and needed urgent heart surgery, and he also caught a blood infection. They said… they could not keep him on the oxygen machine enough time because of the shortages in oxygen."

"Hanaa" told Amnesty International she believed the infection was from sharing an incubator:

"On the first day [after his birth], he was put in the incubator with another baby. Someone who worked in the NICU and knew my husband told him that the other baby had a blood infection and should not be with other babies. My husband complained and put pressure to remove my son or the other baby, and they did; 4-5 days later, doctors told us that our son caught a blood infection."[297]

"Hanaa" told Amnesty International her firstborn son had the same heart condition but had survived after receiving surgery in Jerusalem four years earlier for a similar condition.

Power failures also had devastating results across hospitals for newborns. On 14 July 2025, for example, an MSF doctor working at Al-Helou hospital in Gaza City reported: "a baby, who could have survived, was lost because the power went off and therefore the oxygen supply went off".[298]

The so-called ceasefire of October 2025 has only brought limited relief for neonatal healthcare. The lack of incubators remains a problem across the Gaza Strip.

In January 2026, UNFPA reported that neonatal units were operating at 150-170% capacity, with up to three newborns sharing an incubator. In May 2026, a neonatal nurse at Al-Helou hospital reported that up to five newborns had to rely on a single resuscitation unit – equipment intended to provide life-saving respiratory support to one infant at a time – severely constraining the ability to deliver adequate emergency care.[299]

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[293] Interview by voice call with "Azza" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 14 April 2026.
[294] Interviews by voice call with two healthcare professionals at the Emirates Red Crescent hospital (names withheld at the request of the interviewee), 8 and 9 May 2024.
[295] Interview by voice call with a healthcare professional in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 8 May 2024.
[296] Interviews by voice call with two healthcare professionals at the Emirates Red Crescent hospital (names withheld at the request of the interviewee), 8 and 9 May 2024; MSF, Gaza: "Premature babies fighting for their lives", 23 July 2025, https://msf.org.uk/article/gaza-premature-babies-fighting-their-lives; HRW, *"Five Babies in One Incubator"* (previously cited).
[297] Amnesty International viewed a medical referral certificate issued 8 December 2025 for "Hanaa"'s son. At the time of interview, "Hanaa" said she was also waiting to exit Gaza to receive treatment outside Gaza for both a dissection of the aorta and hip fracture. Interview by voice call with "Hanaa" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 10 March 2026.
[298] MSF, "Gaza: Premature babies fighting for their lives" (previously cited).
[299] Interview by voice call with Enas (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a nurse at Al-Shifa hospital, 5 and 13 May 2026.

Healthcare professionals reported ongoing shortages of critical drugs for neonatal healthcare to Amnesty International between February and May 2026.[300] They also raised concerns about ongoing challenges in securing nappies and baby formula, including formula for babies with special nutritional needs, such as anti-regurgitation formula. One explained that due to shortages of some of these essential medicines, they were forced to subject infants to additional invasive procedures and avoidable suffering, while complicating care for already medically fragile babies.[301]Furthermore, Gaza's specialised maternity hospital, the Emirates Red Crescent hospital in Rafah, forced out of service in May 2024, remains inaccessible due to its location in the "Yellow Line".

LEGAL ANALYSIS REGARDING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The catastrophic humanitarian impact of the widespread damage to and destruction of critical infrastructure and other objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population was clearly known to Israeli authorities, particularly in light of their role in much of this damage and destruction following 7 October 2023, their extensive presence on the ground and sophisticated surveillance systems, and the extensive documentation of the pre-existing chronic humanitarian crisis in Gaza as a result of Israel's illegal blockade. As the occupying power, the Israeli authorities had, and have, an obligation under international humanitarian law and international human rights law to ensure the civilian population under their effective control has adequate access to food, medical and other essential supplies.[302]

This obligation also extends to ensuring hospitals and health facilities can secure essential supplies and equipment, as needed. The Israeli authorities have claimed that the restrictions they maintained are necessary for security reasons and that, if Gaza lacks supplies, it is due to other factors, such as failures by humanitarian organizations or challenges like aid diversion and looting within Gaza.

While Amnesty International recognized that a range of factors affected humanitarian operations in Gaza, including the effects of active hostilities and other constraints on aid delivery, as well as aid diversion and mass looting, it found that Israeli authorities deliberately restricted both the entry of essential supplies into Gaza and the distribution of the limited supplies available. Amnesty International concluded that in doing so, Israel had violated its obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

These restrictions included severe limitations on humanitarian access through crossing points, attacks and measures that undermined UNRWA's ability to operate, total blockades and sieges, restrictions on humanitarian organizations and aid convoys, and the imposition of new aid distribution mechanisms / militarized aid distribution schemes despite already severe levels of hunger and malnutrition. In all three of its decisions in 2024, the ICJ indicated provisional measures regarding unimpeded access to humanitarian aid.[303]

Amnesty International concluded that these measures were a central driver of the deprivation experienced by Palestinians in Gaza.[304]

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[300] This included those for respiratory conditions often due to pre-term birth, underdeveloped lungs, antibiotics for serious, resistant infections like pneumonia, bloodstream infections, and chronic pulmonary infections, and medications for treating breathing disorders in premature babies, or epilepsy and severe seizures.

[301] A nurse at Nasser hospital told Amnesty International that because of the shortages of intravenous caffeine citrate used to treat apnoea in premature infants, NICU staff were forced to administer oral formulations via nasogastric tubes, including to critically ill newborns who would ordinarily receive intravenous treatment, causing them unnecessary suffering. Interview by voice call with a nurse at Nasser hospital (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 20 May 2026.

[302] Fourth Geneva Convention, Articles 55-56; Additional Protocol I, Article 69; ICESCR, Articles 11-12; CESCR, General Comment 12: On the Right to Adequate Food, 12 May 199, UN Doc. E/C.12/1999/5; CESCR, General Comment 14: The Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health (Article 12), 11 August 2000, UN Doc. E/C.12/2000/4.

[303] As early as January 2024, the Court ordered Israel to "take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip". ICJ, Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip *(South Africa v. Israel)*, Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures, order, 26 January 2024, https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf

[304] For more, see, for example, Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), Chapter 6; Amnesty International, "Law to ban UNRWA amounts to criminalization of humanitarian aid", 29 October 2024, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/10/israel-opt-law-to-ban-unrwa-amounts-to-criminalization-of-humanitarian-aid/; UN OCHA, "Gaza humanitarian response update | 28 September-11 October 2025", October 2025, https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-humanitarian-response-update-28-september-11-october-2025

The militarized aid distribution scheme is discussed further in section 8.4 below.

Israel's intention to use aid as a political tool or to collectively punish the population of Gaza was evident in statements made by Prime Minister Netanyahu and two cabinet ministers.[305]

Israel's legal obligations were particularly significant for pregnant women and maternity cases, who are entitled under international humanitarian law to protection and respect. International humanitarian law also specifically provides for the passage of relief consignments intended for expectant mothers and maternity cases.[306] The restrictions documented in this report therefore had particularly grave consequences for pregnant women, newborns and maternity services, undermining access to essential healthcare, medicines and assistance.

6.4 HEALTHCARE RENDERED INACCESSIBLE

Pregnant and post-partum women consistently told Amnesty International that they rarely or inconsistently reached health facilities for prenatal and postnatal appointments. They explained this was due to bombings and insecurity, distances, non-availability of fuel and high transport costs. Women still faced a myriad of barriers to reach health facilities even after the so-called ceasefire of October 2025, particularly those who lived near the "Yellow Line" areas.

The sheer frequency and intensity of air strikes and other attacks often stopped women seeking reproductive healthcare, especially during and in the first few months after October 2023. Several women in north Gaza reported receiving no antenatal care at all as it was impossible for them to leave the schools or other locations in which they were sheltering.

Ambulance workers and other health professionals also told Amnesty International of instances in which women could not reach healthcare facilities to give birth. One paramedic, "Rami" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), who worked in north and south Gaza, told researchers he had personally provided assistance in around ten cases of women giving birth outside medical facilities, primarily because air strikes or sieges stopped women from being able to get to a healthcare facility.

"Giving birth in these circumstances is very hard. It is not sanitary; we're talking about homes that are damaged or destroyed that families are trying out of desperation to live in, often covered in rubble or dust, or tents. There is no privacy or dignity, and a huge risk of infection. There is also fear, as women are giving birth during ongoing bombings nearby… I experienced many complications when helping women deliver at home, including internal bleeding, or in some cases, the placenta stayed attached."[307]

Two other paramedics, "Mahmoud" and his colleague "Anwar" (names changed at the request of the interviewees), working in central Gaza, told Amnesty International they would respond to three to four calls a month before the so-called ceasefire of October 2025 to women who had given birth at home or who ended up giving birth in their ambulance.[308]

Giving birth in an ambulance, even with a trained healthcare professional present, carries risks compared to the hospital setting, as, among other things, the fetal heart rate cannot be monitored continuously, and obstetric emergencies cannot be managed in this setting.[309] The paramedics said their concerns that birthing women might have complications they are not prepared to deal with in the ambulance have been exacerbated by both the weaker condition women have and continue to be in since 7 October 2023 (with higher rates of malnutrition, for example, leading to more complications during childbirth), and the poor condition their ambulances are in due to the lack of spare parts available for them.[310]

"Mariam" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), displaced in Nuseirat refugee camp, told Amnesty International that she attended prenatal appointments two times in her first trimester (mid-2025),

[305] Prime Minister's Office of Israel, "Statement from the Prime Minister's Office", 2 March 2025, https://www.gov.il/en/pages/spokesperson-message020325; Times of Israel, "Defense minister: Aid will enter Gaza only once civilian mechanism built to bypass Hamas", 16 April 2025, https://www.timesofisrael.com/defense-minister-aid-will-enter-gaza-only-once-civilian-mechanism-built-to-bypass-hamas/; Times of Israel, "Defense minister: Aid will enter Gaza only once civilian mechanism built to bypass Hamas", 16 April 2025, https://www.timesofisrael.com/defense-minister-aid-will-enter-gaza-only-once-civilian-mechanism-built-to-bypass-hamas/
[306] Fourth Geneva Convention, Articles 16 and 23.
[307] Interview by voice call with "Rami" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a paramedic in Gaza, 17 March 2026.
[308] Interview by voice call with "Mahmoud" and "Anwar" (names changed at the request of the interviewee), two paramedics in Gaza, 2 April 2026.
[309] Written communication with an independent consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, 31 August 2026.
[310] Interview by voice call with "Mahmoud" and "Anwar" (names changed at the request of the interviewee), two paramedics in Gaza, 29 September 2026.

but then stopped as she had a history of miscarriages and didn't want to risk taking donkey carts on bumpy roads, especially as medication she was prescribed to reduce the risk of miscarriage was unavailable. On 10 October 2025, in her ninth month of pregnancy, she had intense pain, dizziness and palpitations. Despite living a few minutes from the hospital, the ambulance took around 40 minutes to arrive. While "Mariam" survived, her baby did not. She believed, from her conversations with doctors, that her baby would have survived if the ambulance had been able to respond faster.[311] While Amnesty International was not able to confirm this specific case, paramedics told Amnesty International that the number of functional ambulances had fallen as a result of damage to ambulances during military operations and the inability to repair or replace vehicles due to restrictions on the entry of spare parts. They also described near-impossible road conditions and insecurity as causes of additional delays.[312]

Other women – particularly later in the conflict – said it was too far to walk to health facilities, especially during the periods of the most extreme food deprivation and famine, including in mid-2025,[313] or they couldn't find affordable transport.

While some women told Amnesty International that since the so-called ceasefire in October 2025, they have been able to reach appointments more frequently, others said insecurity, destroyed roads and transport availability and costs continued to be a major barrier, particularly as so many hospitals or other healthcare facilities had been forced to close down. The situation remained particularly bleak for women in north Gaza, who faced long distances to reach maternity care.

In April 2026, "Mahmoud" and "Anwar", paramedics mentioned above, said that they were still seeing two to four cases of women a month who gave birth outside health facilities, often near the "Yellow Line".[314] They later reported that they continued to receive cases of women giving birth in their ambulance, including a case near the "Yellow Line" in August 2026.[315] They said the reasons were that local medical facilities were destroyed or inaccessible, or that fears of being shot by Israeli forces prevented people from reaching medical facilities themselves.[316]

[311] Interview by voice call with "Mariam" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 1 April 2026.
[312] Interview by voice call with "Mahmoud" and "Anwar" (names changed at the request of the interviewee), two paramedics in Gaza, 2 April 2026. UN OCHA, "Gaza humanitarian response update | 16–29 March 2025, March 2025, https://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-humanitarian-response-update-16-29-march-2025; UNFPA, "Holding on to life: Restoring essential sexual and reproductive health care in Gaza", 16 April 2026, https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/news/holding-life-restoring-essential-sexual-and-reproductive-health-care-gaza
[313] For more on food deprivation and famine, see Chapter 8.
[314] Interview by voice call with "Mahmoud" and "Anwar" (names changed at the request of the interviewee), two paramedics in Gaza, 2 April 2026.
[315] Interview by voice call with "Mahmoud" and "Anwar" (names changed at the request of the interviewee), two paramedics in Gaza, 29 September 2026.
[316] See section 5.2.2.

7. FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SHELTER, SAFETY AND DIGNITY

Since 7 October 2023, the Israeli military has displaced over 90% of Palestinians in Gaza, mostly on multiple occasions and following large-scale and overly broad "evacuation" orders. As of 1 October 2026, most Palestinians remain in displacement settings, many in tents or overcrowded shelters, and Amnesty International continues to document new forced displacements. Across Gaza, 76.6% of homes have been damaged or destroyed, and around one million people are prohibited from returning to their homes and agricultural lands essential for their livelihood that lie within access restricted zones that encompass 65% of Gaza's land.

The mass, repeated forced displacement of civilians across Gaza and wide-scale destruction of homes has created devastating conditions of life for the population. Large parts of Gaza's population have been displaced multiple times, under coercive, chaotic and often life-threatening circumstances, and into environments that fail to meet even minimum standards of safety, shelter, sanitation or dignity. For many, there is no end in sight.

The destruction of homes and forced displacement has taken a particular toll on women. Women described the loss of their home not only as the loss of shelter and belongings, but as the erasure of a deeply personal space tied to their privacy, dignity and autonomy and, as one Palestinian feminist put it, memories and history.

For many, the home was the one place where they felt safe and in control of their lives. Women described displacement as involving humiliation, unsafe living conditions, heightened risks during pregnancy and childbirth, and deep anxiety about their children's safety and future.

Women at risk of domestic violence have also suffered particularly from displacement, while Gaza's two domestic violence shelters were in areas subjected to "evacuation" orders and were later destroyed or damaged. Gaza's dedicated women's groups worked tirelessly to pick up the pieces.

7.1 MASS FORCED DISPLACEMENT, OFTEN UNDER FIRE

Displacement in Gaza has been widespread, repeated and took place under coercive and inhumane conditions. As of 1 October 2026, 90% of Palestinians in Gaza had been displaced at least once, many

having been displaced up to ten times or more, and the vast majority remained displaced.[317] As of October 2026, 86% of Gaza's population remains displaced, according to the Danish Refugee Council and Agricultural Development Association.[318]

The initial mass displacement from areas north of Wadi Gaza in October and November 2023 occurred when the Israeli military ordered approximately 1.1 million people to move south, originally within 24 hours. Following that, the Israeli army issued further waves of "evacuation" orders as hostilities shifted geographically. In December 2023, large parts of central Gaza and Khan Younis were designated for "evacuation", forcing hundreds of thousands of people – many already displaced from the north – to flee again, primarily towards Rafah and the coastal area of al-Mawasi, which lacked the requisite infrastructure and services to support life.[319] In early 2024, as military operations intensified in Khan Younis, additional "evacuation" orders by the Israeli military triggered further mass displacement towards Rafah.

By mid-2024, Israel's long-threatened ground invasion of Rafah itself, which at the time had been housing over 1.4 million Palestinians, led to further waves of displacement, with civilians again forced to relocate, often back towards central Gaza or into increasingly overcrowded areas.[320]

Israel knew well the disastrous consequences of the mass displacement of Rafah both for the civilians sheltering there and for the entirety of Gaza's humanitarian response, but still went ahead with the Rafah operation despite numerous warnings by humanitarian organizations and UN bodies and in defiance of an order by the ICJ to halt the military operations in Rafah.[321]

Throughout late 2024 and into 2025 – with the exception of a brief respite during the truce from January-March 2025 – "evacuation" orders continued in shifting, overlapping and at times contradictory patterns. By October 2025, the Israeli army had issued at least 161 "evacuation" orders.[322] Before the so-called ceasefire of October 2025, the entirety of Gaza City had been facing mass "evacuation" orders, including threats by Israel to consider civilians who do not leave Gaza City as "terrorists and terror supporters", hence at risk of direct targeting by their forces.[323]

Successive waves progressively confined civilians into smaller areas, leaving many with no safe or viable place of refuge. Areas designated for displaced people, including so-called humanitarian zones, were themselves repeatedly struck by Israeli attacks or lacked adequate shelter, basic services and items essential to human survival. "Evacuation" orders were frequently issued with little notice and without provision of safe routes, transport or adequate shelter, rendering compliance extremely difficult.[324]

The Israeli authorities have claimed that the "evacuation" orders were for civilians' protection.[325] However, Amnesty International and other organizations have documented that these orders failed to meet the required legal threshold of being effective under IHL. They were often unclear, contradictory, impossible to comply with safely, and directed civilians to areas that were themselves unsafe or later attacked.[326] B'Tselem concluded that repeated evacuation orders formed part of a broader, systematic policy aimed at the mass displacement of the population, rather than isolated or temporary measures justified by specific military necessity.[327] Given the lack of any guarantees for the displaced population's safety, Amnesty International considers that Israel's repeated "evacuation" orders violate the prohibition of mass forcible transfer.[328]

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[317] UNICEF, "Humanitarian situation report 38", 30 April 2025, https://www.unicef.org/sop/media/5126/file/UNICEF%20State%20of%20Palestine%20%20Humanitarian%20Situation%20Report%20No.%2038%20-%2030%20April%202025.pdf.pdf; UN OCHA, "Humanitarian situation update #302 | Gaza Strip", 2 July 2025, https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-302-gaza-strip-enhe; UN OCHA, "Watch: Palestine – humanitarian situation and population – press conference by Andrea De Domenico, head of UN OCHA's OPT office", 3 July 2024, https://www.un.org/unispal/document/watch-palestine-humanitarian-situation-ocha-03jul24/

[318] Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC), "Confined by design: the human cost of protracted displacement", 1 October 2026, https://drc.ngo/en/documents/confined-by-design-the-human-cost-of-protracted-displacemnt/

[319] The New Humanitarian, "Inside Gaza's supposed 'safe zone', where displaced Palestinians struggle for survival", 11 January 2024, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2024/01/11/inside-gaza-supposed-safe-zone-displaced-palestinians-struggle-al-mawasi; The New Humanitarian, "Ground fighting reaches one of Gaza's last supposed 'safe zones'", 31 January 2024, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2024/01/11/inside-gaza-supposed-safe-zone-displaced-palestinians-struggle-al-mawasi

[320] Amnesty International, '*You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited); B'Tselem, *No Place Under Heaven: Forced displacement in the Gaza Strip, 2023–2025*, December 2025, https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/2025-12/202512_no_place_under_heaven_eng.pdf

[321] ICJ, *South Africa v. Israel*, order, 24 May 2024, https://www.icj-cij.org/node/204091

[322] B'Tselem, *No Place Under Heaven* (previously cited), p. 6. See also documentation of the evacuation orders at Gaza Maps, Gaza - IDF Forced Displacement Maps, https://gazamaps.com/gaza (accessed 4 October 2026).

[323] Amnesty International, "Catastrophic wave of mass displacement under inhumane conditions as Israel obliterates Gaza City", 3 October 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/10/catastrophic-mass-displacement-as-israel-obliterates-gaza-city/

[324] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited).

[325] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited).

[326] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), B'Tselem, *No Place Under Heaven* (previously cited).

[327] B'Tselem, *No Place Under Heaven* (previously cited), pp. 12-17.

[328] Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 49(1); Amnesty International, '*You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), p. 133.

Families were unable to return home for multiple reasons, including because their homes were damaged or destroyed, structurally unsafe, or located within access restricted zones. According to media investigations and statements by the Israeli Prime Minister and other senior Israeli officials, these access restricted areas have expanded since the ceasefire agreement of October 2025, including through the introduction of the "Orange Line", forcing more people into displacement as part of a deliberate policy aimed at increasing the area of Gaza inaccessible to Palestinians.[329] Women and families described the repeated, exhausting and dangerous nature of displacement.

MARAM'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE NETZARIM MILITARY CHECKPOINT

Maram, from north Gaza, described in November 2023 her harrowing displacement journey alongside her family, following weeks of relentless bombardment of the area they were displaced to in Jabalia refugee camp. Her husband was detained at the Netzarim military checkpoint.

"On Sunday, 19 November, at dawn, we prepared to leave Jabalia refugee camp, where we had been staying after fleeing Beit Lahiya, where our home was bombed. We started moving at around 8am and of course there were no cars, so we had to ride a donkey-drawn cart as it [was] the only available means of transport in the north. Many others who cannot afford even that walk on foot all the way.

"We were, I think, 10-11 passengers on the cart, including six children, an elderly woman who uses a wheelchair, and an elderly man who also uses a wheelchair. After a two-hour ride, we had to get off the cart as we reached al-Kuwaiti roundabout and then we had to walk through what they call the corridor. It is a rugged sandy hill, a terrible walk.

"I was holding Yafa's hand, my six-year-old daughter. My nine-year-old son, Yazan, was walking next to me, and just behind us, Mosaab [my husband] was carrying Mustafa, our three-year-old son. We only left Jabalia with our most essential belongings. We packed a few items of clothing in backpacks, including Mosaab's laptop, which I kept in my backpack, and our identifying documents…

"We walked for half an hour, I think; it was very complicated. The path was riddled with tree trunks, very rugged. Yafa lost her footing and tripped several times. People who use wheelchairs, people who cannot walk, including the elderly, were carried on people's shoulders; it was like people were carrying coffins. At the same time, people also had to carry the wheelchairs, as they could not be used on that hill or pushed. The hill is very tricky.

"We reached the checkpoint at about 10.30am. It was a very, very long queue. If the soldiers sensed that people were trying to push their way, or walking faster, they would start firing shots on the ground or in the air, and start shouting at people.

"And in Arabic, the soldier would say, 'If you don't go quiet and slow, I will shoot you and then would fire a shot on the ground again'. There were military jeeps and bulldozers. I saw with my eyes a soldier in his tank fire in the air to order the queue to remain quiet…

"Every half an hour, they would allow something like 100 people to go through. Everyone was pushing, hundreds of thousands, it was like the day of judgment. You need to hold tight to your children; my child tripped again, she was trampled upon by the crowd, and I had to quickly pick her up. You are even scared to kneel or look down. Whenever the soldiers shoot in the air or on the ground, it's like mayhem, children start screaming and crying. Two old women fell on the ground and were also stamped on. And then the occupation soldiers would order the crowd to hurry, to walk more quickly, and you're just trying to hold tight to keep an eye on everyone with you in the group, to make sure we don't lose each other in the crowd. "Mosaab and Mustafa were three meters behind us. And then you reach something like a cubicle. It's very narrow and makes you suffocate when you are inside. It's very small, very narrow. Within one minute, you need to go through. And it's one person at a time; we have to walk. You have to raise your arms, and hold your ID up, look to your left. The soldier looking at you is holding a gun. It was terrifying for the children, for

[329] Reuters, "How Israel moved its 'Yellow Line' deeper into a shattered Gaza City neighbourhood" (previously cited); The Guardian, "Gaza's yellow line creeps forward as Israeli forces expand zone of control" (previously cited); Times of Israel, "Netanyahu says he ordered IDF to seize 70% of Gaza Strip, well beyond terms of ceasefire deal", 28 May 2026, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-says-he-ordered-idf-to-seize-70-of-gaza-strip-well-beyond-terms-of-ceasefire-deal/
See also section 3.3.

us, the first time going through an Israeli checkpoint, seeing Israeli tanks. The soldier looks at us through binoculars. And how it goes, the soldier just shouts, 'You, the guy wearing the black undershirt, throw everything you're holding'.

"And then he shouted at Mosaab, in Arabic, 'You, who is wearing a black jacket and holding a child wearing a grey jacket, throw your child on the floor, and come here.' Just like that, they didn't even tell him to hand the child to a family member; he was ordered to throw the child on the ground and move. I had to quickly pick up Mustafa, but the moment Mosaab had to leave him, he started crying, shouting baba baba. Mosaab was ordered to move to the right. And he was taken then. I do not know how many people were taken; it's hard to estimate, but I think from our group, there were at least fifty. You were not allowed to wait for the person who was taken away; the soldier shouted at you, 'I will shoot you if you wait, move on.' And then a sniper fired on the ground. I was scared, maybe a stray bullet would hit some of us, a child, it was crazy, I could not wait for Mosaab, I had to continue on my way with my children, but also try to calm down Mustafa."[330]

The UN CoI documented sexual violence, harassment and gender-based humiliation by Israeli forces against Palestinians during evacuations and at checkpoints in Gaza, including forced stripping, public nudity, invasive searches, threats and verbal abuse. Women and girls were subjected to forced removal of veils, sexual harassment and, in some cases, physical abuse when they refused orders, while men and boys were routinely stripped, humiliated and abused in public.[331]

Women in late pregnancy or who had recently given birth were not spared from these conditions. "Munir" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), whose wife was killed on 19 October 2024 in an ambulance in Jabalia shortly after she gave birth,[332] told Amnesty International about the gruelling and violent displacement conditions they were subjected to in late 2023 and early 2024 before her death:

"We stayed [sheltering] in the school [in north Gaza] for around four months until the Israeli forces invaded the area and placed it under siege. They ordered people in the school to leave to western Gaza City… My wife got injured in her face by shrapnel from the Israeli shelling. We were in our classroom in the school, and the Israeli forces started to shoot at us to force us to evacuate the school. The kids were terrified when they saw her face and neck covered with blood…

"We left and were displaced for the second time in a school in the Tal al-Hawa area in western Gaza City. Two or three months later, the same thing happened. They invaded the area and asked people in the school to leave the middle of Gaza City, around Al-Shifa hospital. Another incursion happened and at that time the Israeli forces had withdrawn from parts of north Gaza, so we moved to a school in Jabalia. An incursion happened and we went back to the Sheikh Zayed area, then to Al-Nasr Street in the middle of Gaza City. Throughout these repeated displacements, I had to walk with my wife and three children – before and during her last pregnancy – from one area to another carrying our clothes and belongings on our backs, often under fire during the worst days of starvation."[333]

"Munir" also described how his three children – aged between five and ten years old – were left unaccompanied during a forced displacement in October 2024 as the Israeli military was launching the "Generals' Plan". He had left his family to travel to Gaza City a few days earlier to try and secure a space for them in a school-turned-shelter. Due to the magnitude of the demand caused by successive waves of mass displacement from the North Gaza governorate into Gaza City, finding a tent or a space at a school was a challenge. He then realized he was blocked by Israeli forces from returning north.

"On the same day my wife got killed, the Israeli forces ordered the displaced people in the school where [my children] were to evacuate. They left with their uncle, but he got arrested by the Israelis. They ended up without any family members with them. The people who left the school took them and walked from the Sheikh Zayed area to the Al-Nasr area where I met them. Three children walked under fire for that long, each one of them carrying two or three suitcases of their belongings after being starved for months. They refused to leave their stuff in

[330] Interview by voice call with Maram (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 21 November 2023. Mosab was released several days after he was detained at the checkpoint.
[331] UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), paras 102-111.
[332] "Munir"'s wife was killed in an ambulance that exploded after she was evacuated from Al-Awda hospital as it came under siege. For more details see section 5.4.
[333] Interview by voice call with "Munir" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 24 February 2026.

school. They knew they wouldn't find other clothes. They arrived at midnight in a state of complete exhaustion. The next day, we learned about what happened to my wife."[334]

"MUNIR"'S STRUGGLE TO REUNITE WITH HIS BABY AFTER HIS WIFE WAS KILLED

After "Munir"'s wife was killed in an attack the day after she gave birth in Al-Awda hospital, a paramedic took their one-day-old baby to Kamal Adwan hospital. Again, however, "Munir" couldn't go to his baby because of "evacuation" orders in effect by Israeli forces. The situation became increasingly precarious. He told Amnesty International that a week later:

"The Israeli forces invaded the area of Kamal Adwan hospital and ordered people staying in the area to evacuate to Gaza City. They had checkpoints set up on Salah Al-Din Road [one of the two main roads running between the north and south of Gaza] to search the displaced people. When I heard the news, I was terrified that the Israeli forces would raid the hospital … [and] my son would die in the incubator. I talked to a few people and begged them to take my son with them when they left. I knew I was asking them for too much responsibility. One of the men agreed at first. But when I called him the next day, he told me that he'd already left with his wife and children and they had already walked 500 meters from the hospital. He said it would be extremely difficult for him to go back and take my son, and they were carrying so much stuff they wouldn't be able to carry a baby as well.

"At that moment, I lost all hope of being reunited with my son and even having him stay alive. One minute later, the man called me back and said that he could not leave the baby alone and he actually went back to the hospital and took him. He told me that they would walk toward the south and I should meet them near the checkpoint on Salah Al-Din Road."[335]

"Munir" described waiting to see his baby:

"Time felt unbearably slow while I was waiting to see my child for the first time. Six or seven hours later, a big group of people started to arrive… It felt like a scene from a horror movie; people looked exhausted from walking and passing through the checkpoint. They were full of dust and carrying so much stuff. There was a lot of smoke and heavy shooting, and people were running in all directions, carrying their children and belongings on their backs. They looked as if they had come out of hell… I met the family and took my son. When I held him, my heart broke when I saw him wrapped in a dirty, worn-out blanket with no clothes at all, with an injury on his face. He was only one week old. He hadn't had any milk since they left the hospital. I remembered my wife and how she was eager to have the baby. I cried."[336]

Another woman, 36-year-old Walaa, told Amnesty International about passing through an Israeli checkpoint located at the Al-Kuwaiti Roundabout, a major intersection on Salah al-Din Road southeast of Gaza City, in her last trimester of pregnancy while fleeing from north Gaza southwards with her husband and three children.

"We walked for a long distance. It was extremely difficult for me, being pregnant with twins and the fear of being shot, arrested, or even losing one of my children. The situation at the checkpoint looked like a horror movie. If I did not hold on to my kids, they'd have been lost; there would be no way to find them because we were not allowed to do any movement except waiting in line and not even looking back or around, waiting for our turn to be checked and pass through the checkpoint. Tanks were shooting around us, and soldiers were giving us orders on what to do. I saw how they arrested people. It was terrifying."[337]

Several other women likewise recounted to Amnesty International gruelling accounts of being forced to leave their homes and find a new place to shelter while in late stages of pregnancy or immediately post-partum. One woman, Ola (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), for example, described how she was forced from her home in Gaza City into displacement shortly after having a caesarean section, following an attack which killed her 14-year-old son and 36 members of her husband's family.[338] Another, "Basma" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), described being displaced while still recovering from a

[334] Interview by voice call with "Munir" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 24 February 2026.
[335] Interview by voice call with "Munir" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 24 February 2026.
[336] Interview by voice call with "Munir" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 24 February 2026.
[337] Interview by voice call with Walaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 7 June 2026.
[338] Interview by voice call with Ola (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 16 April 2026.

miscarriage and a dilation and curettage procedure a few days earlier, while also suffering malnutrition.[339] Others also described family separations during forced displacement, including as some family members felt compelled to stay behind or were unable to travel, families desperately struggled to find transport, and communication networks were often non-functional.

"Azza", 27 (mentioned above), who was experiencing a high-risk pregnancy, told Amnesty International that while she was displaced multiple times from eastern Gaza and then within Gaza City, she was unable to move south following "evacuation" orders in late 2023.

"All grocery stores were closed or ran out of food, and most people were displaced in the south. I could not go to the south. There was no transportation, and it was not possible for me to walk all the way to the south with my condition. I would have lost the babies on the way. I could not find even a wheelchair to move from one place to another."[340]

Save the Children reported some women self-induced labour to deliver early as they feared their babies would not survive another displacement.[341]

Each subsequent displacement also meant significant material loss, as families struggled to take essential items with them from one place to another, and frequently had to start over in new sites, without basic items such as tents, mattresses, or kitchen supplies, or clothes for cold weather. The severe shortages and high prices made any loss difficult to replace.

Safaa, a case manager for the Women's Affairs Centre in Gaza, described the impossible decisions displacement entailed:

"The displacement has been the hardest on women because it meant leaving your safe and stable life to be displaced multiple times, not knowing where to go, what to take and what to leave and most importantly, how to keep your children safe. I personally was displaced four times, and every time I faced the hardest question: what clothes should I take for my children? Should I prioritize food or medicine or even some kitchen stuff… Displacement is humiliation."[342]

Another woman explained: "With every displacement, I lose basic essentials – even containers to store water."[343]

Those already in the most precarious social and economic situations, such as women whose husbands were killed or missing, were particularly affected. In particular, mass displacement compounded the impact of loss, forcing women into difficult choices.

"Noura" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), who said her husband was killed in an Israeli attack on 12 October 2023, told Amnesty International:

"In addition to losing my husband, our home was destroyed. I stayed for a while with my parents, but they don't have the means to support me and my four children, and they, too, are displaced. I had to give up custody of my four children to my in-laws because I simply cannot afford the costs of raising them. I don't even have a home for them."[344]

Likewise, 23-year-old "Ruba" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), whose husband was killed in Beit Lahia, north Gaza, during an attack that killed around 30 members of his family on 27 December 2023 while she was pregnant, told Amnesty International she didn't have the approximately USD 1,000 needed for a tent at the time. As a result, she had to live with 10 of her family members, including her parents and siblings, in a shared tent in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza. The fFamily had lost a previous tent:

"We returned to the north after the first ceasefire. We stayed in a tent close to our house, when we were displaced again. The quadcopter was shooting at us; we couldn't take the tent, we fled under fire…"[345]

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[339] Interview by voice call with "Basma" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 14 February 2026.
[340] Interview by voice call with "Azza" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 14 April 2026.
[341] Save the Children International, "Women self-inducing labour and facing life-threatening complications in pregnancy after nine months of Gaza conflict", 8 July 2024, https://www.savethechildren.net/news/women-self-inducing-labour-and-facing-life-threatening-complications-pregnancy-after-nine
[342] Interview by voice call with Safaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a case manager of Women's Affairs Centre, 9 March 2026.
[343] Interview by voice call with Ola (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 16 April 2026.
[344] Interview by voice call with "Noura" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 15 February 2025.
[345] Interview by voice call with "Ruba" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 6 May 2026.

She said she dreamed of having her own tent to have autonomy in how she raised her son.

Additionally, as noted by UN Women, women-headed households in Gaza face greater difficulties accessing healthcare, basic necessities, and humanitarian assistance, while evidence collected in mid-2025, through household surveys, found significant gender-based barriers to housing and land rights.[346]

Women who have returned to their homes have found themselves displaced again. On 6 August 2026, 58-year-old Amal – who had returned to her home after four forced displacements – told Amnesty International how five days earlier, she had been forced out of her home in Abu Al-Ajeen area, east of Deir Al-Balah, in the vicinity of the "Yellow Line", as Israeli forces expanded the area outward.

"We were asleep, and all of a sudden, without any prior warning, tanks came from every direction. There was shooting everywhere. Many of our neighbours had already sought shelter with us. We [had] thought it was still a somewhat safe area… [We heard] the sound of the tanks. Earlier, around dinner time, shells had started falling near us. We thought it was like every other time, just movement around the "Yellow Line". Then suddenly they came right up to us… The Israelis, they stayed in their tanks, but moved toward the houses. There was bulldozing, tearing up the asphalt road, shooting, and gunfire. They moved the yellow blocks and continued firing… The next morning we started packing up and moving our things. They didn't give us any grace period, unlike what happened elsewhere, where people got a day or two. It was like leaving everything, forty years of your life, behind.

"When we first began leaving, we came under gunfire. My husband kept waving a white cloth while we were running under fire, young and old alike, until we reached Salah al-Din Road. The night before last, my sons went back to collect some belongings. A drone missile hit them. Thank God, it struck the sand rather than directly hitting them. Their injuries were serious, but today we heard they are doing better, God willing."[347]

7.2 'I WAS THE QUEEN OF MY HOUSE': MASS DESTRUCTION OF HOMES

According to a joint assessment by the UN, World Bank and European Union in April 2026, the scale of destruction to Gaza's housing stock has been catastrophic. Approximately 371,000 housing units – equivalent to 76.6% of all housing in Gaza – have been damaged or destroyed, with nearly 84.6% of affected units reported as destroyed. These levels of destruction have rendered around 1.2 million people, approximately 60% of Gaza's population, homeless.[348] According to the NRC in August 2026, more than four in five households in Gaza face critical or catastrophic living conditions in their current shelter.[349]

Amnesty International's investigations between October 2023 and May 2026 have identified a pattern of systematic and unlawful destruction of civilian areas in Gaza by the Israeli military.

In September 2024, Amnesty International investigated extensive destruction of property and agricultural land in four areas on the Eastern perimeter of Gaza between October 2023 and May 2024, as part of the Israeli military's campaign to expand a "buffer zone" along Gaza's eastern boundary. The organization found that the destruction of property and agricultural land, which was a lifeline for Palestinians, was unlawful because it was carried out after Israeli forces had acquired operational control over the areas and fighting had largely ceased, and therefore cannot be justified by imperative military necessity as required under international humanitarian law.[350] Israeli forces also completely razed what remained of the town of Khuza'a

[346] UN Women, *Gender Matters Bulletin No. 4: Sustaining Families Alone: The Experiences of Crisis-Affected and Displaced Women-Headed Households in Gaza (October 2025)*, 19 February 2026, https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gender-matters-bulletin-no4-sustaining-families-alone-experiences-crisis-affected-and-displaced-women-headed-households-gaza-october-2025; Housing, Land and Property Area of Responsibility (HLP AoR), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Protection Cluster, *Guidance Note on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) and Mine Action in Gaza*, March 2026, https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/guidance-note-housing-land-and-property-hlp-and-mine-action-gaza-march-2026
See also section 4.5

[347] Interview by voice call with Amal (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 6 August 2026.

[348] EU, UN and World Bank, *Gaza Strip Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (April 2026)*, 20 April 2026, https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-strip-rapid-damage-and-needs-assessment-april-2026-enar, p. 22.

[349] NRC, Gaza: "94 Per cent of households in need of shelter aid", 20 August 2026, https://www.nrc.no/news/2026/gaza-94-per-cent-of-households-in-need-of-shelter-aid

[350] Amnesty International, "Israeli military must be investigated for war crime of wanton destruction in Gaza – new investigation", 5 September 2024, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/09/israel-opt-israeli-military-must-be-investigated-for-war-crime-of-wanton-destruction-in-gaza-new-investigation/

in southern Gaza in May 2025, with much of the destruction appearing to have been deliberately and methodically carried out outside active combat.[351]

Amnesty International also investigated the Israeli military's levelling of at least 13 multi-story residential and commercial buildings across Gaza City between September and October 2025. The high-rise buildings had housed thousands of people. The Israeli authorities provided no evidence that the high-rises were being used for military purposes, and Amnesty International's investigations found no indications of such use. Statements by Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz indicated the buildings were destroyed to inflict collective punishment on the civilian population to exert pressure on Hamas and as part of a mass forced displacement campaign.[352]

In each of these three investigations, Amnesty International called for the destruction to be investigated as war crimes of wanton destruction and collective punishment.

Since the so-called ceasefire of October 2025, there have been reports of continued destruction and demolition of large numbers of homes and agricultural fields located in the "Yellow Line" area where Israeli forces exercise direct control. In January 2026, the *New York Times* reported that Israel had destroyed over 2,500 buildings since the ceasefire agreement, mostly beyond the "Yellow Line", according to their analysis of satellite imagery.[353]

In Amnesty International's interviews with women across Gaza, they described the devastating physical loss of shelter and their belongings, including their and their children's clothes or toys. Women also described the loss of their homes as a profound emotional rupture. Amal Siyam, Gaza-based feminist activist and director of WAC, explained:

"A home is not just walls. It is not just a sofa, furniture, table; for women, it's a place where we feel safe, where we feel comfortable… Losing our home is losing part of our history, part of our body. It is our pictures, our memories. It is where we got married, had children, where our children grew up, where we would sit and talk. For all of us, our homes kept our memories. When we remember them, we cry, it was our life."

Mozayan (mentioned above) described:

"Most of the women we deal with have an 'open psychological wound' caused by the loss of their houses that they say they would never heal from. Sometimes I notice some of them arriving at their sessions already distressed and looking very sad. When I ask them whether something happened to them, they say they saw something on the way that reminded them of their house. Sometimes they see a chair or another woman wearing a piece of cloth that they had a similar one. These are tiny details but big triggers for them. They keep comparing how their life was before and after.

"I, myself, cried for a very long time after I lost my house. I was so depressed. Before I left my house, I went around in every room as if I was saying goodbye to the walls."[354]

[351] Amnesty International, "Satellite imagery reveals total razing of Khuza'a in May 2025 in further evidence of Israel's wanton destruction and genocide in Gaza", 4 June 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/06/satellite-imagery-reveals-total-razing-of-khuzaa-in-may-2025-in-further-evidence-of-israels-wanton-destruction-and-genocide-in-gaza/

[352] Amnesty International, "Israel's systematic destruction of high-rise buildings must be investigated as war crimes of wanton destruction and collective punishment", 12 May 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/05/israel-opt-israels-systematic-destruction-of-high-rise-buildings-must-be-investigated-as-war-crimes-of-wanton-destruction-and-collective-punishment/

[353] New York Times, "Israel is still demolishing Gaza, building by building", 12 January 2026, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2026/01/12/world/middleeast/israel-cease-fire-gaza-demolition.html

[354] Interview by voice call with Mozayan (last name withheld at the request of the interviewee), case manager of the Women Affairs Centre, 9 March 2026.



A woman searches the rubble for salvageable items, Khan Younis, June 2026. © Anadolu via Getty Images

Reham, whose home in Tal al-Hawa, west of Gaza City, was destroyed in an Israeli attack, described the physical and psychological impact on her: "After the ceasefire, seeing my house levelled to the ground shocked me. I actually fainted when I saw what happened to my house. I was so happy in there. I was the queen of my house."[355]

Many women told Amnesty International that without a home, they struggled to see a future for themselves or their families, particularly as Israel continues to condition reconstruction in Gaza on the disarmament of Hamas.

7.3 PREGNANCY AND PARENTING IN TENTS AND OVERCROWDED SHELTERS

Women described extreme hardship during pregnancy and after birth in displacement.

"Sara" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 27-year-old, displaced from a residential compound in northern Gaza, told Amnesty International how, in late 2023:

"We stayed [sheltered] in the school laboratory. I was seven months pregnant and had to sleep with my son, my mother-in-law, and my sister-in-law on the stairs leading to the lab. Inside the lab itself, there were at least 30 women and children. The men had to sleep outside in the cold because there was no space for them inside the classrooms. We remained there for two months. During that time, I became seriously ill due to the lack of hygiene and caught a severe infection that caused intense diarrhoea. The food was inadequate, especially for a pregnant woman; we survived mainly on canned food. At the same time, I carried full responsibility for caring for my child and supporting the entire family. I was under constant pressure to prepare food, wash clothes, and clean for everyone, all while living in extremely harsh conditions."[356]

"Sara" told Amnesty International that her situation in early 2026 was not much better.

[355] Interview by voice call with Reham (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 14 April 2026.
[356] Interview by voice call with "Sara" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 27 February 2026.

"Now I am four months pregnant. We have been living for four months in what used to be Al-Katiba prison. It was abandoned after being targeted and partially destroyed. The conditions are unbearable. Water leaks from the ceiling. It is full of rats and filth. Around 50 families are living here. Once, part of the upper floor collapsed while people were inside".[357]

"Azza", described above, shared a similar experience in her last months of a high-risk pregnancy:

"I had to walk up the stairs to the sixth floor to reach the classroom we were staying in. In my condition, I was not supposed to walk a lot and needed so much rest. Instead, I slept on the floor with no mattress and used squat toilets."[358]

By early 2026, "Azza" was still displaced, living in a tent with her husband and three members of her husband's family. The death of her twins shortly after they were born is documented in Chapter 4.

Women also described acute fears about the safety of their newborns in displacement settings, particularly during the winter months. Makeshift tents and informal shelters provided little protection from rain, wind or low temperatures, and many families lacked adequate blankets, clothing or heating. Healthcare workers and humanitarian workers shared these concerns, with the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza reporting seven deaths of children from hypothermia documented between 1 December 2025 and 14 January 2026.[359]

"Samar" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a NICU nurse at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis, told Amnesty International about being forced to discharge women and their premature babies early because the hospital was overcrowded, adding: "Mothers came begging us in the winter to keep their premature babies because they were living in tents. Sometimes, I had to keep the mother and baby on a mattress instead of sending them to freeze."[360]

Other women, such as 22-year-old Rawan, in her third trimester of pregnancy at the time of the interview, described the emotional impact of the lack of dignity and safety for women parenting in displacement:

"I've always dreamed about building my own house and a happy family life where my kids would sleep in their rooms, feeling safe and enjoying the warmth of their beds. I wanted to provide them with the childhood I had myself. I wanted them to have the best education and the best future. I will not be able to secure that for my first baby, who will not be born in a safe house and will not sleep in a nursery."[361]

Rawan also told Amnesty International she had to drop out of her engineering studies as, without electricity in her tent, she was unable to charge her laptop or access the internet to follow the course.

7.4 DIGNITY, PRIVACY AND MENSTRUAL CARE IN DISPLACEMENT

Women described displacement conditions as degrading and unsafe.

Ranin, a 24-year-old artist, described to Amnesty International a period of displacement with extended family after her family home was damaged by an air strike while they were home in October 2023.

"It was during those nine months that I learned that without a home, you are worth nothing… The first night away from your home, when you are sleeping on someone else's bed, you feel naked, stripped of your identity, no place, even though you are at home… The house where we stayed was small, but we had to make it fit for the 13 of us, displaced together. I had no privacy; we would all sleep next to each other, you don't have a room of your own, you don't have anywhere to change clothes, your only space was your mattress…

The first person who returned to our building was uncle. We started cleaning and clearing the rubble and making the house habitable again, doing some repairs with the very limited material available to us… We returned around July 2024, but almost a month later we were ordered to evacuate again to Al-Mawasi by the sea. Then I was working as a freelance designer for a company based in Germany, but displacement meant I couldn't

[357] Interview by voice call with "Sara" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 27 February 2026.
[358] Interview by voice call with "Azza" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 14 April 2026.
[359] UN OCHA, "Humanitarian situation update #353 | Gaza Strip", 14 January 2026, https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-353-gaza-strip
[360] Interview by voice call with "Samar" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 20 May 2026.
[361] Interview by voice call with Rawan (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 16 March 2026.

continue my job. Before the evacuation order was officially issued to our street, we kept refreshing the page where the evacuation map is posted, to see the colour of our block. They turn you into a robot, dictated, shaped by these colours on an evacuation map". [362]

Overcrowded shelters also offered little privacy and limited access to water and sanitation. One woman told Amnesty International:

"I am staying in this house with only two bedrooms. The hardest thing was when I came back from the hospital after birth. I was in pain; I needed a quiet, clean and private place to rest. With 11 people living in the house, it was impossible to rest or have any privacy." [363]

Around 90% of water and sanitation infrastructure in Gaza has been damaged or destroyed, leaving most households without adequate access to clean water.[364] This has compounded a pre-existing water crisis: even before October 2023, only around one in ten people in Gaza had direct access to safe water, while 96% of water from the coastal aquifer was considered unfit for human consumption.[365]

Women and girls in displacement settings frequently lack access to adequate washing facilities, often sharing limited sanitation infrastructure with large numbers of people, while facing acute shortages of basic hygiene items such as soap.[366]

Medical personnel interviewed by Amnesty International said that most women who come to deliver in hospitals suffer from waterborne diseases, vaginitis and other infections because of polluted water and unsanitary conditions.[367] Women also described being unable to wash themselves after being discharged from hospital after giving birth, or unable to keep stitches from vaginal births and caesarean sections hygienic. Some spent weeks without being able to change their clothes, especially in the early days of displacement, as they fled without a change of clothing.[368]

Many women also described access to bathrooms as a constant struggle. Where there were shared toilets in displacement sites, some told Amnesty International they could only use them at night, when there were fewer lines and more privacy. Others described not drinking in the evenings to avoid needing to leave their tents at night for fear of being harmed. Yet others struggled with makeshift toilets in their tent.

Two women separately told Amnesty International in August 2026 how only three toilets served the 150 tents in their displacement location near Al-Aqsa hospital in the city of Deir al-Balah. One of the women, 45-year-old with 7 daughters and one surviving son, told Amnesty International she suffered from urinary incontinence and had to ask others for help each time she needed the toilet; she described how in her house – now beyond the "Yellow Line" – she used to have three toilets. Her neighbour told Amnesty International how the camp toilets would sometimes be inaccessible or locked at night; both women described using buckets in the tent at night, which they would clean in the morning.[369]

NAJIA'S ACCOUNT OF TOILETS DURING DISPLACEMENT

*As posted on her Facebook Page and shared with Amnesty International.[370]

"The world speaks about human rights, and the first thing that comes to mind when I think of this supposed humanity is the toilet.

In our first displacement, the toilet was 30 meters away, out in the open with no roof, shared by 13 families. I was carrying out a slow suicide, refusing to drink so I would not have to stand exposed beneath a hail of

[362] Interview by voice call with Ranin (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 30 September 2026.
[363] Interview by voice call with "Salam" (name withheld for privacy), 16 February 2026.
[364] OHCHR, "'Thirst as a weapon': UN experts condemn Israel's deliberate deprivation of water", 29 July 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/thirst-weapon-un-experts-condemn-israels-deliberate-dehydration-and; UNRWA, "Situation report #219 on the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip", 29 April 2026, https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-219-humanitarian-crisis-gaza-strip-and-occupied-west-bank
[365] UNICEF noted that prior to October 2023, only one in ten people in Gaza had direct access to safe water and that 96% of water from Gaza's sole aquifer was unfit for human consumption. UNICEF, *WASH:* Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - Providing clean water to children in the State of Palestine, https://www.unicef.org/sop/what-we-do/wash-water-sanitation-and-hygiene (accessed on 28 October 2026).
[366] UN OCHA, "Humanitarian situation report, 27 March 2026", 27 March 2026, https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-27-march-2026
[367] UNFPA has likewise stated: "With barely any access to clean water or hygiene facilities, infectious diseases and sexually transmitted infections are also reportedly on the rise, including among pregnant women, which makes them even more vulnerable to complications". UNFPA, "As famine looms in Gaza, pregnant women and newborns face life-threatening health risks" (previously cited).
[368] Interview by video call with Amal Siyyam, Director of the Women's Affairs Centre, Gaza, 23 March 2026.
[369] Interviews by voice call with "Kawthar" and "Shayma" (names changed at the request of the interviewee), 6 August 2026.
[370] Najia Mahmoud, Personal Facebook page, 2 May 2026, on file with Amnesty International.

bombs and glares, until it felt like my kidneys would burst. Nighttime was another story of humiliation and horror: a bucket in the corner of the tent became my parents' last resort to preserve the dignity of an old age afflicted by diabetes. The suffocating smell that clung to our clothes reminded us every night that we were merely numbers in a queue for extermination.

As for the shower, it was another ordeal, especially during the summer. I would declare a state of emergency: empty the tent, especially the floor, bring a bucket of cold water during a shortage of cleaning supplies, and wash only with cold water while my mother stood guard at the entrance of the tent. And when I finished, it was as though I had not showered at all, because the dirt covering the tent's floor would turn into a swamp, and restoring the tent to its previous state would leave me in a state warranting a shower all over again.

In our second displacement, our toilet was "promoted" to a muddy pit shared by three families, beneath a sheet of corrugated metal and curtains made from worn-out blankets. In winter, the rain mixed with filth and the stench of death rose from the ground. With every bombardment, I would run outside, terrified I would be buried alive in the dirt and sewage. Yet I felt more at ease there because at least I was sharing it with my own family, not with strangers.

In our third displacement, to Rafah, the toilet was next to a real wall. Just a wall, but to us it represented luxury.

And now, in our latest displacement, we are basking in the glow of extravagance: a white chair behind a tarpaulin, and empty dishwashing-liquid bottles serving as a bidet sprayer. It is a real blessing because there is water nearby and we can carry buckets to clean after every use. Thank God, water is available. But the problem remains at night, when the cold gnaws at our bones, and stray dogs lurk behind the fabric walls, all whilst the drones overhead are specifying the coordinates of our intimacies. I wonder: are they filming us now? Does the world see how a simple cover for one's body in my country has become a miracle worthy of gratitude?"

Women and girls also faced acute challenges managing menstruation. There are approximately 700,000 women and girls of menstruating age in Gaza; they have been and are attempting to manage their periods in conditions of severe deprivation. Women and adolescent girls told Amnesty International that they used materials such as torn cloth and often stayed inside their tents or shelters for the duration of their menstruation. Meanwhile, organizations including UNFPA reported that, as a result of the Israeli blockade, trucks loaded with hygiene supplies were stalled at the crossing with Gaza for weeks or months.[371]

Access improved in the months after the so-called ceasefire, at which point UNFPA also reported rapidly expanding distributions of hygiene items.[372] However, some women that Amnesty International spoke to still reported struggling to access pads, as they are not widely available and they have to go without as they cannot afford them.

7.5 FORCED DISPLACEMENT OF WOMEN AT RISK OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The repeated forced displacement and overcrowded living conditions have had severe consequences for women and girls facing domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence. As families were displaced into tents, schools and overcrowded shelters, women lost many of the limited protections

[371] UNFPA, "From natural process to nightmare: How Gaza's women and girls cope with their periods in a war zone", 2 June 2025, https://www.unfpa.org/news/natural-process-nightmare-how-gaza%E2%80%99s-women-and-girls-cope-their-periods-war-zone; UNFPA, "Women of Gaza: Finding strength in safe spaces", 6 July 2025, https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/news/women-gaza-finding-strength-safe-spaces; UNFPA, *Palestine Situation Report #12 - November 2024*, December 2024, https://www.unfpa.org/resources/palestine-situation-report-12-november-2024

[372] UNFPA, *Palestine Situation Report (October–December 2025)*, 21 January 2026, https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/publications/palestine-situation-report-october-december-2025

previously available to them. At the same time, organizations and institutions providing support to women were themselves damaged, displaced or forced to shut down.

Zainab Al-Ghonaimi, Director of CWLRCP, told Amnesty International: "Since the start of the genocide, all protection systems have been affected, all the justice and law-enforcement system, including Sharia courts, official institutions and all civil institutions."[373]

Before October 2023, CWLRCP operated a shelter in Gaza City on the fifth floor of their premises, one of two domestic violence shelters available to women in Gaza.[374] Residents were forced to leave in October 2023 following "evacuation" orders, and in the context of intense bombardment and military operations, with less than 24 hours' notice. Women's activists in Gaza struggled to find safe spaces for women at risk and with nowhere else to go while managing their own struggles to survive.[375]

In November 2023, the centre's shelter was attacked by Israeli forces and rendered non-operational. Zainab Al-Ghonaimi explained:

"The room where the cameras were installed was blown up, as were the solar panels on the rooftop… later, due to the strikes on the area, the walls started collapsing, so in large parts of the building there are no walls."[376]

Israeli soldiers also left gendered and sexualised insults in graffiti in Hebrew on the walls of the centre, for example: "Motherfuckers, we came here to fuck you up and your mothers too" written on the stairs, next to an image drawn of a penis.[377]



CWLRCP shelter for women at risk of gender-based violence, Gaza City, taken 17 February 2025 and shared with Amnesty International, May 2026. © CWLRCP

[373] Interview by voice call with Zainab Al-Ghoneimi, Director of the Centre for Women's Legal Research, Counselling and Protection (CWLRCP), 7 March 2026. For the barriers for women to be able to access their rights on divorce, see for example, PCHR, *"Absence of Justice and Suspension of Rights: Women's Reality amid the Collapse of the Sharia Judicial System during the Genocidal War"*, 25 December 2025, https://pchrgaza.org/palestinian-centre-for-human-rights-Issues-a-report-on-the-collapse-of-the-sharia-judicial-system-in-gaza-and-its-impact-on-women-2/

[374] Interview by video call with Amal Siyyam, Director of the Women's Affairs Centre, 3 March 2026.

[375] Interview by voice call with Zainab Al-Ghoneimi, Director of CWLRCP, 7 March 2026.

[376] UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited); Interview by voice call with Zainab Al-Ghoneimi, Director of CWLRCP, 7 March 2026.

[377] Photographs received from Zainab Al-Ghoneimi, on file with Amnesty International; Amnesty International translation from Hebrew. See also, UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), para. 86.



CWLRCP shelter for women at risk of gender-based violence, Gaza City, taken 17 February 2025 and shared with Amnesty International, May 2026. © CWLRCP

The UN COI investigated this attack, finding that it was "deliberate", "consistent with firing from a tank" and without any military justification.[378]

After a period when no services at all operated, CWLRCP were able to open a women's shelter in Khan Younis in July 2024, before moving it to Deir al-Balah after the so-called ceasefire in October 2025.[379]

Amnesty International spoke to a woman who was living in CWLRCP's Deir al-Balah shelter in May 2026. "Maysa" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), in her late twenties, told Amnesty International that she was referred to CWLRCP from a hospital after treatment for injuries inflicted by her abusive husband. He was in his sixties, and she said she married him earlier in 2026 because she desperately needed a tent or other shelter for herself and her two children after a divorce in 2024 from her first husband. Her parents' home in northern Gaza had been destroyed in an Israeli air strike, and surviving family members would not accept her and her children in their tents.[380] She told Amnesty International that if she had known of CWLRCP earlier, or if her family home had not been destroyed, she would not have felt compelled to marry someone much older whom she barely knew. Her experience illustrates how the destruction of homes, repeated displacement and the loss of safe alternative accommodation can constrain women's choices and increase their exposure to gender-based violence, particularly where pre-existing gender inequalities and family rejection already limit their access to housing and economic security.

Zainab Al-Ghonaimi told Amnesty International that she observed a sharp rise in domestic violence during the conflict as poverty, displacement and the collapse of normal life intensified tensions inside households.[381] Abeer, a case manager working with CWLRCP, similarly observed that wide-scale displacement left women at risk of gender-based violence:

"Women who lost their houses, which presented a refuge and protection in case the husband was killed, detained or missing. At least, they could have stayed in their homes in privacy, but the reality is many women live in tents with their children. Sexual abuse perpetrators watch this category of women, sometimes use their kids to collect information, approach the women asking them what they need, offer them for the first time food, water or other needs… [and] drive them into sexual exploitation."[382]

Two case managers from WAC, which supports a range of women, including those at risk or subjected to gender-based violence, shared similar sentiments. In April 2025, UNFPA reiterated these concerns, warning that gender-based violence was rising sharply in Gaza as repeated displacement, unsafe conditions and the

[378] UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), para. 57.
[379] Interview by voice call with Zainab Al-Ghoneimi, Director of CWLRCP, 7 March 2026.
[380] Interview by voice call with "Maysa" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 19 May 2026.
[381] Interview by voice call with Zainab Al-Ghoneimi, Director of CWLRCP, 7 March 2026.
[382] Interview by voice call with Abeer (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), case manager of CWLRCP, 9 March 2026.

breakdown of social protection systems left women and girls increasingly exposed to intimate partner violence and sexual violence.[383]

Despite these conditions, women-led organizations such as CWLRC, WAC and others continued attempting to provide shelter, counselling, legal aid and psycho-social support while themselves operating under bombardment, repeated displacement and severe resource shortages, often going far beyond their professional obligations.

Repeated displacement and the destruction of homes, amidst economic collapse, uncertainty and the omnipresent threat of shelling and bombardment, forced girls and women to stay with abusive family members or partners, further shrinking their already slim chances of rebuilding their lives away from abuse.

The heightened risk of gender-based violence during Israel's military operations in Gaza was entirely foreseeable. Following the 2014 hostilities, UN OCHA documented a significant increase in violence against women and girls linked to displacement, overcrowded living conditions, economic hardship and psycho-social distress, while subsequent research found elevated levels of violence against women in affected households after Operation Protective Edge. These findings provided an early indication that the large-scale displacement, destruction of civilian infrastructure, impoverishment and social fragmentation resulting from renewed hostilities would likely have serious repercussions for women's safety and exposure to violence.[384]

[383] UNFPA, *Palestine Situation Report – April 2025*, 18 May 2025, https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/publications/palestine-situation-report-april-2025.
[384] UN OCHA, *The Gaza Strip:* "The long term impact of the 2014 hostilities on women and girls – December 2015", 6 January 2016, https://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-strip-long-term-impact-2014-hostilities-women-and-girls-december-2015; Mustafa M. Al-Natour, "Violence against women in the Gaza Strip after the Israeli military operation Protective Edge 2014", Journal of International Women's Studies, Volume 18, No. 4, 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319320348_VIOLENCE_AGAINST_WOMEN_IN_THE_GAZA_STRIP_AFTER_THE_ISRAELI_MILITARY_OPERATION_PROTECTIVE_EDGE_2014, pp. 137-151.

8. THE GENDERED IMPACT OF STARVATION, DEPRIVATION AND EXPLOITATION

Since 7 October 2023, starvation, deprivation and denial of humanitarian aid have been central features of Israel's genocidal policies in Gaza. While the level of restrictions has varied over time, Palestinians in Gaza have been denied adequate nutritious food and other goods essential for survival throughout the conflict. During periods of extreme scarcity, people were forced to survive on animal fodder, wild plants, water, or irregular meals from community kitchens. Many went days without food. In an alert published on 29 July 2025, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) stated that famine thresholds for food consumption had been reached across most of Gaza, and that starvation deaths would continue to rise. WHO reported 421 malnutrition-related deaths in Gaza during that year.

Women often bore the heaviest burden of this deprivation. Pregnant women were unable to sustain healthy pregnancies, post-partum women unable to breastfeed, parents unable to feed or sacrificing their own food for their children, and women and girls exposed to violence, harassment and exploitation while seeking aid.

While the so-called ceasefire of October 2025 increased the entry of some food into Gaza, restrictions and deprivation persisted. Women interviewed by Amnesty International in 2026 consistently said that nutritious food, baby formula and supplements were sometimes available, but often remained unaffordable or irregularly distributed. Many said they continued to skip meals or sacrifice so their children could eat. An IPC assessment published in July 2026 found that more than 1.2 million people were facing crisis-level or worse food insecurity and reported continuing risks of acute malnutrition among children and pregnant and breastfeeding women, while projecting a further deterioration in conditions through the end of 2026.

The deprivation was compounded by other harms documented throughout this report, including displacement, destruction of housing, loss of livelihoods, family separation, injury, detention and bereavement. Some women described being compelled to choose between hunger, exploitation, and risking their lives at militarized aid distribution sites.

8.1 THE HUMAN COST OF STARVATION AND DEPRIVATION

Amnesty International has previously documented how Israel dramatically tightened its unlawful restrictions on the entry of food and other goods into Gaza as part of the broader pattern of conduct amounting to genocide.[385] The scarcity of fresh and nutritious food also resulted from Israel's systematic destruction of food production sources in Gaza, including agricultural land, farms and greenhouses during Israeli military operations.[386]

The impact was particularly severe during periods of near or total siege, including a total siege imposed on the whole of Gaza in October 2023; north of Wadi Gaza from January to April 2024; north Gaza governorate from October to December 2024; and the whole of Gaza from March to May 2025.[387]

In an alert published on 29 July 2025, the IPC stated that famine thresholds for food consumption had been reached across most of Gaza, and that starvation deaths would continue to rise.[388] Data collected by the Nutrition Cluster the following month reflected the same reality,[389] as did Amnesty International's interviews with Palestinians across three displaced persons encampments around the same time.[390]

WHO has stated that 421 malnutrition-related deaths were reported during the year 2025.[391]The publicly available data does not appear to disaggregate malnutrition-related deaths by gender.

Although Israel's unlawful blockade and restrictions on food affected the entire Palestinian population in Gaza, women and girls were often the last to eat and the first to sacrifice. Women described to Amnesty International giving children their own portions or skipping meals for days.[392] Their experience was not unique; according to a study in June 2024 by the Global Nutrition Cluster, almost 100% of households reported having to skip meals or eat less food to ensure their children could eat.[393]

The deprivation intersected with loss, displacement and widowhood. Women whose husbands had been killed, detained, disappeared, injured or disabled were often left solely responsible for feeding children without income or reliable access to aid. Displacement, caregiving responsibilities and the loss of household income left many women heading households with fewer means of accessing food and aid amid severe scarcity. The Women's Affairs Centre reported that bereaved women frequently faced barriers to assistance in shelters and aid distribution centres.[394]

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[385] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited); Amnesty International, "Gaza: Evidence points to Israel's continued use of starvation to inflict genocide against Palestinians", 3 July 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/07/gaza-evidence-points-to-israels-continued-use-of-starvation-to-inflict-genocide-against-palestinians/, Amnesty International, "New testimonies provide compelling evidence that Israel's starvation of Palestinians in Gaza is a deliberate policy," 18 August 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/08/israel-opt-new-testimonies-provide-compelling-evidence-that-israels-starvation-of-palestinians-in-gaza-is-a-deliberate-policy/

[386] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), pp. 100-110.
UN Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) found that 86% of Gaza's permanent crop fields had significantly declined in health and density as a result of conflict-related activities, including razing, bombing, shelling and heavy machinery. See UNOSAT and FAO, Damage to Cropland Overview Map, 29 July 2025, https://unosat.org/products/4160
In May 2025, Amnesty International documented the total razing of what had remained of Khuza'a, east of Khan Younis, which contains some of Gaza's most fertile agricultural lands, Amnesty International, "Satellite imagery reveals total razing of Khuza'a in May 2025 in further evidence of Israel's wanton destruction and genocide in Gaza" (previously cited).

[387] Amnesty International, "Two months of cruel and inhumane siege are further evidence of Israel's genocidal intent in Gaza", 2 May 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/05/israel-opt-two-months-of-cruel-and-inhumane-siege-are-further-evidence-of-israels-genocidal-intent-in-gaza/; UN OCHA, "Humanitarian access snapshot: Gaza Strip, End-January 2024", February 2024, https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-access-snapshot-gaza-strip-end-january-2024; UN OCHA, "Humanitarian situation update #253, Gaza Strip", 9 January 2025, https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-253-gaza-strip; UN OCHA, "*Gaza humanitarian access snapshot, January-June 2025*, https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/Humanitarian_access_Jan_Jun_2025_0.pdf (accessed on 28 October 2026).

[388] IPC, IPC Alert – "Worst-case scenario of famine unfolding in the Gaza Strip", 29 July 2025, https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_GazaStrip_Alert_July2025.pdf

[389] Nutrition Cluster data indicated that over 13,000 cases of acute malnutrition admissions for treatment among children were recorded in July 2025, the highest monthly figure since October 2023; of these, at least 2,800 (22%) were cases of severe acute malnutrition. UN OCHA, "Humanitarian situation update #313: Gaza Strip", 13 August 2025, https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-313-gaza-strip

[390] Amnesty International, "New testimonies provide compelling evidence that Israel's starvation of Palestinians in Gaza is a deliberate policy" (previously cited).

[391] WHO, Health Emergency Appeal 2026: Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2026, https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/emergencies/2026-appeals/2026-hea-occupied-palestinian-territory.pdf

[392] For more information on the impact of ongoing deprivation on mothers, See MSF, "Deliberate restriction of food and aid led to alarming malnutrition levels in Gaza", 7 May 2026, https://www.msf.org/deliberate-restriction-food-and-aid-led-alarming-malnutrition-gaza

[393] GNC, *Nutrition Vulnerability and Situation Analysis: Gaza*, February 2024, https://www.nutritioncluster.net/sites/nutritioncluster.com/files/2024-02/GAZA-Nutrition-vulnerability-and-SitAn-v7.pdf, p. 2.

[394] Women Affairs Centre Gaza, الفتيات الصغيرات بين مطرقة الحرب وسندان التزويج المبكر ["Young Girls Between the Hammer of War and the Anvil of Early Marriage"], 9 April 2025, https://www.wac.ps/Issues#Issue1 (in Arabic).

While the so-called ceasefire of October 2025 led to the increase in the entry of some food into Gaza, restrictions and deprivation persisted. Women interviewed by Amnesty International in the first half of 2026 consistently said that food, baby formula and supplements were sometimes available, but often remained unaffordable or irregularly distributed, and they continued to miss meals. Many said they continued to skip meals or sacrifice so their children could eat.[395]

An IPC assessment issued in July 2026 found that, between mid-April and 30 June 2026, more than 1.2 million people, representing 59% of Gaza's population, faced crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above), including 212,000 people facing Emergency conditions (IPC Phase 4). The assessment reported continuing risks of acute malnutrition among children and pregnant and breastfeeding women, while projecting a further deterioration in conditions through the end of 2026.[396]

In August 2026, UNICEF announced that a new population-based nutrition survey conducted in accessible areas of Gaza "shows a complex nutritional picture: relatively low acute malnutrition among children in the accessible population, concerning rates of chronic malnutrition (stunting), maternal malnutrition, very poor dietary quality, suboptimal infant and young child feeding practices, and a substantial burden of childhood illness."[397]

For many women, the most painful aspect of the deprivation was witnessing the effects of hunger on their children. Women described watching their children become weak, distressed or sick from lack of food, or searching for scraps.

These experiences formed part of a broader pattern in which women bore the emotional and physical burden of sustaining life under conditions of severe deprivation.

8.2 PREGNANCY AND PARENTING DURING MALNUTRITION AND STARVATION

Pregnant and breastfeeding women are physiologically more vulnerable to malnutrition because pregnancy and lactation increase nutritional and micronutrient needs.[398] Severe and prolonged food deprivation can materially increase the risk of fetal loss and other adverse pregnancy outcomes through maternal undernutrition.[399] Likewise, newborn babies and infants are particularly susceptible because of their rapid growth and dependence on adequate nutrition during the earliest stages of life.

The consequences of inadequate nutrition during pregnancy thus extend beyond the woman herself, increasing risks for poor maternal health, impaired fetal growth, adverse birth outcomes and newborn illness and mortality.[400] These harms were compounded by the devastation done to maternal and neonatal healthcare services across Gaza.

MSF reported identifying the first cases of child malnutrition – an issue previously highly uncommon in Gaza – in January 2024. Between then and February 2026, the organization reported admitting 3,336 pregnant and breastfeeding women in outpatient nutritional programmes and 4,176 children under 15 years old – 97% under five – for acute malnutrition in outpatient and inpatient programmes.[401] The scale of need was

[395] See also HRW, "Gaza: Israel curbs aid, kills civilians during ceasefire", 19 May 2026, https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/05/19/gaza-israel-curbs-aid-kills-civilians-during-ceasefire

[396] IPC, *Gaza Strip:* Acute Food Insecurity Situation for 16 April-30 June 2026 and Projection for 1 July-31 December 2026, July 2026, https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1165303/?iso3=PSE (accessed on 27 October 2026).

[397] UNICEF, "New SMART survey provides updated assessment of child and maternal nutrition in accessible areas of Gaza", 24 August 2026, https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/new-smart-survey-provides-updated-assessment-child-and-maternal-nutrition-accessible

[398] Linus Pauling Institute noted that energy and micronutrient requirements increase significantly during pregnancy and lactation due to physiological and fetal demands. Linus Pauling Institute, Pregnancy and Lactation, https://lpi.oregonstate.edu/mic/life-stages/pregnancy-lactation (accessed on 27 October 2026).

[399] Victora CG, and others, "Revisiting maternal and child undernutrition in low-income and middle-income countries: variable progress towards an unfinished agenda", The Lancet, Volume 397, Issue 10282, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00394-9, pp. 1388-1399; Christian P, Smith ER, and others, "Maternal anemia and risk of adverse birth and health outcomes in low- and middle-income countries: systematic review and meta-analysis", American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Volume 120, no. 2, 2024, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajcnut.2024.05.011, pp. 242-255; Imdad, A. and Bhutta, Z.A. "Maternal nutrition and birth outcomes: Effect of balanced protein-energy supplementation", 2012, Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology, 26: 178-190. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-3016.2012.01308.x

[400] According to WHO, early nutrition is critical for growth, development and survival, and infants are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition. WHO, Infant Nutrition, https://www.who.int/health-topics/infant-nutrition (accessed on 27 October 2026).
See also Annex: Health Consequences of Starvation Compounded by Limited Access to Health Care, in PHR and GHRC report, *Destroying Hope for the Future* (previously cited).

[401] MSF, *Starving for a Solution: Gaza's Man-made Malnutrition Crisis,* 7 May 2026, https://msf.org.au/article/stories-patients-staff/starving-solution-gazas-man-made-malnutrition-crisis

likely far greater than these figures suggest, as they reflect only people reached and admitted to MSF nutritional programmes amid severe restrictions on humanitarian access, repeated displacement and the widespread destruction of Gaza's health system.

Pregnant women survived on little more than canned food, community kitchen meals, and on the worst occasions on animal fodder or nothing at all.

One man in northern Gaza described how his pregnant wife became dangerously weak during pregnancy in north Gaza in early and mid-2024.

"For 45 days, I would go and collect wild mallow, cook it with water, and we ate it with lemon, using a spoon. This is what my children and pregnant wife survived on for 45 days. When my wife was eight months pregnant [in September 2024], she had to stay for 15 days at Al-Awda hospital because she started to feel dizzy to such a point that she could not stand. When we arrived at the entrance of the hospital she fell down and the medical staff took her on a stretcher and put her on a bed… [They said] this was a result of living in poor conditions and lack of healthy, nutritious food… She had to eat animal fodder to replace the bread.[402]

"Dalia" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 25 years old, who was displaced in the governorate of Deir al-Balah, gave birth twice since October 2023. She described how food scarcity affected her first pregnancy in mid-2024.

"There was no wheat to make bread. Food was not available or too expensive. We received meals from the food distributed by community kitchens, but the quality of the food was bad for a pregnant woman. Once, I spent three days with no food. My husband had to borrow 1kg of wheat from his friend to bake some bread, but this was not enough to feed 11 people. As a result, my first baby was born at 7 months and was only 1.7 kg."[403]

"Basma" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a 30-year-old woman, who was five months pregnant after suffering three recent miscarriages, described "severe hunger" during her last two pregnancies in mid-2025 and between late 2025 and early 2026:

"We used to wake up and go to bed hungry. There were days when we did not eat anything and survived on water alone. There were days when my children felt dizzy, and I was unable to stand due to weakness caused by lack of food. I would make my children sleep during the day to avoid feeling hungry. People told me I looked frightening and that my facial bones were visible because I had lost so much weight. During pregnancy check-ups, my weight dropped to around 40 kilograms… I had to prioritize my children, and I gave them any meals or supplements charities were distributing for pregnant women. The hardest thing has been seeing my children hungry or looking for decent food."[404]

Many others shared similar accounts.

Save the Children announced that 43% of the pregnant and breastfeeding women in their clinics during the first half of July 2025 were malnourished.[405] Doctors and midwives told Amnesty International that lack of nutritious food and supplements had contributed to anaemia, low haemoglobin levels, poor fetal growth, increased rates of miscarriage, low birth weight, and the need for blood transfusions in severely malnourished pregnant women.[406] Data from two MSF-supported NICUs found neonatal mortality to be twice as high among infants born to mothers affected by malnutrition compared with those born to mothers without malnutrition.[407]

The worst episodes of starvation in Gaza were directly connected to the severity of Israeli-imposed blockades. The unlawful blockade and access restrictions imposed by Israel on residents living north of Wadi Gaza resulted in catastrophic levels of hunger between January and April 2024, forcing some families, who stayed on despite the relentless bombardment, to leave south in order to feed their children. During that period hundreds of Palestinians were killed or wounded as Israeli forces opened fire on crowds waiting for aid trucks at Al-Nabulsi and Al-Kuwaiti roundabouts. Palestinians referred to those killings as the "flour massacres".

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[402] Interview by voice call with "Munir" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 24 February 2026.
[403] Interview by voice call with "Dalia" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 16 February 2026.
[404] Interview by voice call with "Basma" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 14 February 2026.
[405] Save the Children International, "Gaza: Over 40% of pregnant and breastfeeding women in Save the Children clinics malnourished," 4 August 2025, https://www.savethechildren.net/news/gaza-over-40-pregnant-and-breastfeeding-women-save-children-clinics-malnourished
[406] Interviews by voice call with three healthcare professionals in Gaza (names withheld at the request of the interviewee), 19 February and 19 March 2026.
[407] MSF, *Starving for a Solution: Gaza's Man-made Malnutrition Crisis* (previously cited).

Only after the USA pressured Israel to ease some of the restrictions following the killing of World Central Kitchen staff in April 2024 did Israel allow more food in, demonstrating that Israel was using starvation as a tactic of forced displacement.[408]

During that same period, hundreds of Palestinians were killed or injured by Israeli forces in what became known by Palestinians as the "flour massacres" while waiting for trucks of aid near al-Kuwaiti and Al-Nabulsi roundabouts.[409] Instead of complying with its legal obligation as an occupying power to allow humanitarian organizations to distribute food safely, Israel was deliberately only allowing a limited number of food trucks to enter either late at night or at dawn, in dangerous areas, as tens of thousands of desperate, starved people would be waiting for food. This pattern was repeated from May to August 2025, this time affecting the whole of Gaza and following a 77-day total siege imposed by Israel between March and May 2025, during which Israel completely blocked the entry of aid and commercial goods into Gaza.[410]

Deprivation continued into 2026. Women described having inadequate food to eat and said they struggled to be able to access or afford fresh fruit, vegetables, meat or dairy. Many pregnant women and new mothers told Amnesty International in the first half of 2026 they had been prescribed iron, calcium, vitamin D and other supplements because of their poor diet, but these supplements were hard or impossible to obtain.[411] Some reported receiving the supplements but giving them to their children as they were also in need.

"Dima", 24 (name changed at the request of the interviewee), was eight months pregnant when she spoke to Amnesty International in February 2026. Despite being anaemic, she said she could not afford the iron IV infusion she needed, or access iron-rich food or other vitamins during her pregnancy.[412] Other women gave similar accounts.

Women also frequently described being unable to breastfeed because they themselves were not eating enough, while baby formula was often unavailable, unaffordable or unsuitable.[413] Lina, 28, told Amnesty International how her family struggled in north Gaza in early 2024:

"When we ran out of formula, my son cried non-stop from hunger, so I had to give him dates when he was only two months old. I peeled the dates and put them in his mouth to suck on. I gave him two dates a day. My husband was looking for formula every day. He walked for hours to find a pharmacy that had formula. I spent days with no sleep at all trying to breastfeed my son, but he just cried… I was about to collapse."[414]

Other women gave similar accounts. Amnesty International has previously documented the death of tens of babies in Gaza as a direct result of malnutrition-related conditions, including lack of formula milk, especially specialized formula milk, caused by the Israeli blockade and siege on Gaza.[415]

Amnesty International spoke to women who were pregnant in 2026, most reported being able to breastfeed, but several said they still struggled to access formula or specialized formula milk.

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[408] The White House, "Readout of President Joe Biden's call with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel", 4 April 2024, https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/04/04/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-call-with-prime-minister-netanyahu-of-israel-3/ (accessed on 30 July 2026); The White House, "Readout of President Joe Biden's Call with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel", 28 April 2024, https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/04/28/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-call-with-prime-minister-netanyahu-of-israel-4/ (accessed on 30 July 2026); Times of Israel, "After PM's call with Biden, ministers okay steps to swiftly ramp up aid flow to Gaza", 5 April 2024, https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-pms-call-with-biden-ministers-okay-steps-to-swiftly-ramp-up-aid-flow-to-gaza/

[409] OHCHR, "UN experts condemn 'flour massacre', urge Israel to end campaign of starvation in Gaza", 5 March 2024, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/03/un-experts-condemn-flour-massacre-urge-israel-end-campaign-starvation-gaza.

[410] UN OCHA, "Humanitarian situation update #288 | Gaza Strip", 14 May 2025, https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-288-gaza-strip; UN, "Worst-case scenario" unfolds as brutal aid blockade threatens mass starvation, 2 May 2025, https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/05/1162851; HRW, "Israel Again Blocks Gaza Aid, Further Risking Lives", 5 March 2025, https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/03/05/israel-again-blocks-gaza-aid-further-risking-lives

[411] See also Amnesty International, "Israel's genocide in Gaza inflicts compounded harms on women and girls" (previously cited).

[412] Interview by voice call with "Dima" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 16 February 2026.

[413] Infant formula could be unsuitable because many families lacked the clean water, fuel, refrigeration and sanitation conditions necessary for its safe preparation and storage.

[414] Interview by voice call with Lina (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 6 June 2026.

[415] Amnesty International, "Israel's use of starvation evidence of genocide against Palestinians" 3 July 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/07/gaza-evidence-points-to-israels-continued-use-of-starvation-to-inflict-genocide-against-palestinians/

8.3 SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, HARASSMENT AND CHILD MARRIAGE

Starvation and restrictions on access to food and humanitarian assistance, particularly in the context of displacement, increased women's and girls' exposure to gender-based violence, including harassment, sexual exploitation and child marriage. Humanitarian crises frequently increase the risk of sexual exploitation where access to essential resources becomes concentrated in the hands of those able to control them.[416]

In Gaza, women described these dynamics precisely. Women heading families without broader family support networks described being targeted by men who exploited their economic desperation and offered food, clothing or assistance in exchange for sexual access. Several women described avoiding aid distribution points because of harassment or fear of exploitation, even when this meant greater hunger for themselves or their children.

"Amina" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), mentioned above, whose husband went missing when Al-Shifa hospital was raided by Israeli forces,[417] described the social and financial precarity she faced:

"My situation is so miserable. We depend on the community kitchens to eat. I line up to fill water, and I collect wood and cardboard to set fire to heat water to shower my kids. I can't afford to buy food, new clothes, or any necessities for my children. When you called me earlier, I was in the market trying to convince a vendor to let me buy warm clothes for my youngest and to pay for him later. He said to me, 'and what do I get in return?' I said I could do work for him. He said, 'No, I want something else'…

"One time, I was lining up for bread, a man asked me for my phone number. He said we could talk on WhatsApp. He pretended he could help me get assistance. He said I can give you an address to come get your assistance. He said many women between the ages of 17 and 30 come to this place. I refused to go. I stopped going to look for aid so that I don't get exploited or harassed. Instead, I go late and collect whatever is left over in the distribution sites."

The risk of sexual exploitation therefore further restricted her ability to safely access humanitarian assistance, forcing her to seek whatever remained at distribution sites after others had left. She continued:

"Sometimes, when I am in pain and can't walk, my eight-year-old daughter goes out to collect the leftovers of vegetables and fruits after the market closes. She has to go out and beg for money. One time, a man held her for the whole day because he caught her collecting the leftovers of his fruits and vegetables. He accused her of stealing. I looked for her the whole day until someone told me where she was. I had to go and beg him to let her go. She stopped going to school. Going to school needs money, clothes, books, stationery, steady internet and at least a smartphone or a tablet; I can't afford any of that."[418]

"Eva" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), aged in her late twenties, told Amnesty International that she divorced early in the conflict, but when she went to register for aid as a separate household from her former husband, "a man asked for my phone to register me, then call me and ask to spend the night with me or send pictures in return for aid. When I refused, he refused to register me."[419] She said something similar happened on a second occasion, leaving her feeling unsafe and fearful.

These testimonies and several others documented by Amnesty International reflect broader concerns raised by Palestinian women's organizations and service providers, who reported that Israeli policies and practices were leaving women and girls increasingly exposed to harassment, coercion and exploitation.

Economic desperation, displacement, hunger and the collapse of social protection mechanisms also contributed to rising rates of child marriage.[420]

Amnesty International spoke to 15-year-old "Karama" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), who told the organization she married in late 2025 at age 14. She said she hadn't known what marriage meant,

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[416] See, for example, Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing Risk, Promoting Resilience and Aiding Recovery*, 2015, https://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-IASC-Gender-based-Violence-Guidelines_lo-res.pdf, Chapter 1.
[417] See section 5.4.
[418] Interview by voice call with "Amina" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 10 March 2026.
[419] Interview by voice call with "Eva" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 20 May 2026.
[420] Under Palestinian law, the minimum legal age of marriage is 18, following the adoption of Decree Law 21 of 2019, although judicial exceptions remain possible in certain circumstances. See Al-Marsad, "The Marriage of minors in Palestine: Social and economic policies monitor", 6 June 2022, https://www.almarsad.ps/index.php/en/content/publications/the-marriage-of-minors-in-palestine.html

and the day of her wedding felt sad because she was leaving her family. She described her "husband" as emotionally and physically abusive, and said he beat her if she refused sex.[421] Her mother, who was present during the interview, explained that since being displaced, the family often went hungry, and that her daughter would not have been married so young had the family been able to look after her better. Before the war, she said, they had a farm, so had access to food, but their house was destroyed in an attack, and their land is now beyond the "Yellow Line". "Karama"'s older sisters were married before the genocide between ages 17 and 20.[422]

"Karama"'s experience illustrates how child marriage in these conditions can expose girls to further gender-based violence, including sexual violence, while severely constraining their bodily and sexual autonomy.

A case manager from the Women Affairs Centre in Gaza told Amnesty International:

"Some married or widowed young women come to our offices and safe spaces asking for support. We found out they were as young as 15 or 16 years old. What is sad is that people reached a good level of awareness about the prevention of child marriage before the war. But unfortunately, the number of cases is on the rise again due to the overload of responsibility on the parents."[423]

UN Women has similarly warned that the war is reversing decades of progress in reducing child marriage in Gaza.[424] In April 2026, UNFPA announced that at least 400 girls aged 14 to 16 were granted marriage permissions over just four months in 2025.[425]

8.4 'I WALKED OVER DEAD BODIES': MILITARIZED AID DISTRIBUTION SITES

From late May 2025 until the so-called ceasefire of October 2025, coinciding with the peak of the famine, the establishment of the GHF fundamentally transformed how Palestinians accessed food.

The GHF was a US- and Israeli-backed aid distribution mechanism that operated centralized aid distribution sites in Gaza run by the Israeli military and US security contractors, outside the traditional UN-led humanitarian system. Under the GHF, rather than obtaining food through a network of 400 UN and NGO distribution points across Gaza working in line with humanitarian principles, the distribution points in Gaza were reduced to four militarized sites.[426]

Amnesty International and other organizations described the system as forcing Palestinians to choose between starvation and gunfire.[427]

People were forced to travel long distances through insecure areas to chaotic distribution sites where Israeli forces and private security contractors would frequently open fire, unlawfully targeting civilians. For many families, obtaining food became inseparable from the risk of death and serious injury. OHCHR has recorded more than 2,000 Palestinians killed seeking aid at the GHF or in the vicinity of GHF sites between May and September 2025.[428] The vast majority were men, leaving families grieving and women widowed, with the heartbreak and socio-economic marginalization that often followed. MSF has also reported that "Many women also reported experiencing extreme stress and anxiety related to the significant risks faced by male family members attempting to secure food at GHF sites and intense aerial bombardments and resulting displacement. MSF teams observed a high number of miscarriages during this period, with high stress identified as a contributing factor."[429]

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[421] Interview by voice call with "Karama" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 19 May 2026.
[422] Interview by voice call with "Karama" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 19 May 2026. At the time of the interview, "Karama" had returned to live with her parents and was receiving assistance from the Centre for Legal Rights and Counselling to obtain a divorce.
[423] Interview by voice call with Mozayan (last name withheld at the request of the interviewee), case manager of the Women Affairs Centre, 9 March 2026.
[424] In 2022, registered marriages of girls under 18 had dropped to 17.9%, from over 28% in 2009. UN Women, "The Cost of War in Gaza on Women and Girls" (previously cited).
[425] UNFPA, "Surge in Child Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancy Threatens a Generation of Girls in Gaza", 6 April 2026, https://www.unfpa.org/press/surge-child-marriage-and-adolescent-pregnancy-threatens-generation-girls-gaza
[426] MSF, *Starving for a Solution: Gaza's Man-made Malnutrition Crisis* (previously cited); Amnesty International, "Starvation or gunfire – this is not a humanitarian response", 1 July 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/07/gaza-starvation-or-gunfire-this-is-not-a-humanitarian-response/
[427] Amnesty International, "Starvation or gunfire – this is not a humanitarian response" (previously cited).
[428] UN, "UN rights office alarm over escalation in Gaza City, annexation plans for West Bank", 4 September 2025, https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/09/1165774 https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/09/1165774
[429] MSF, *Starving for a Solution: Gaza's Man-made Malnutrition Crisis* (previously cited).

Dozens of women were also killed or injured at the GHF sites.[430]

Women interviewed by Amnesty International described going to GHF distribution points because their husbands had been killed, disappeared, detained, injured, sick or disabled. They said at one period, the GHF operated women-only days, but this offered little improvement. The testimonies describe gunfire, chaos, humiliation, injury, exhaustion and, at the end of it, the inadequacy of any aid obtained.

"Amina" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), referred to above, explained:

"I had to risk my life and go to the Shakoush [GHF] point [in Rafah] during the worst days of the famine. I could not reach the points of distribution. Only strong men could fight and reach there; I only went every other day to collect leftovers from what fell from the carts. I would come back with one or two kilos of flour. Sometimes, when I was feeling so sick and was in pain, I had to take my kids to help me carry stuff. I can't carry heavy things because of my [emergency obstetric] surgery. We had to walk for about one hour each way; it broke my heart to see my kids, especially the youngest, tired from walking and terrified from the shooting. One time, I fainted, and people carried me back home…

"There was frequent shooting at people looking for aid. I saw people who got shot dead. I saw a lot of horrible incidents there. One time, I saw shrapnel directly hitting a woman in her heart. I had to walk over wounded people. I remember one wounded young man asked me for water, I could not stop to help him because there was heavy shooting, and I had to run. I thought risking my life was better than being exploited by men. I walked over dead bodies. I also saw a woman who got shot and lost her arm. It felt like a mousetrap."[431]

"Shireen" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 40, a mother of four, said she was shot and injured at this same distribution site. She said she went for her family as her husband was injured:

"Every time is a scramble to get to the front because there is never enough for everyone, so everyone tries to push to get something and often Israelis shoot. I got a bullet in the left leg; it went in below the knee and out above the knee… The bone was shattered, and I still have the metal rods in the leg to repair the bone… On the same day that I was injured, many others were also injured and killed. The men pushed and got inside the gate, and the Israelis or the Americans shot."[432]

"Huda" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 34, married with six children, described going to the same GHF distribution point while pregnant because her husband, who had lost a leg during the 2014 Israeli military offensive, could not walk far or stand for long:

"I had to walk for hours to go and come back and stand for hours to get very little food. But I had no choice…The soldiers at the site used tasers if we didn't do what they said. The situation was chaotic, and it was difficult to know what to do."[433]

Other women also described the pain of sending or allowing their children to go to militarized aid sites, out of desperation.

Abir, from Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza, told Amnesty International that her husband had been killed in an air strike on their neighbour's house on 10 October 2023, leaving her the sole provider for their four children aged 2-12, and forced into displacement in a tent. She described how in 2025, her son, now aged 13, risked his life to collect food:

"During the famine conditions [in 2025], my younger son, who was 13 years old, used to go to Netzarim [GHF site] and bring me a kilo of flour, a kilo of sugar, and a kilo of rice. [One time] he was shot. A bullet hit him in the back. They removed it after it passed from his back toward his abdomen. He spent a month in the American Hospital. I used to tell him, 'Son, don't go'. He would answer, 'Mum, we're hungry, we need food'. He saw us hungry, saw his brothers and little sister without food or water. She was only three or four years old and would cry from hunger. It broke his heart. He tried to help us however he could. But nobody ever asked about us or checked on us… I

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[430] MoH reported that 53 women were killed in aid centres or while seeking aid, MoH, Statistical Report on Aid Centres and People Waiting for Aid, 17 September 2026, shared with Amnesty International. PCHR reported that they documented five cases of women killed "inside US aid centres". See PCHR, *GHF Aid Distribution Centers in Gaza: Starvation, Killings, and Humiliation of Women*, 9 January 2026, https://pchrgaza.org/pchr-publishes-report-on-ghf-aid-distribution-centers-and-the-targeting-of-women-through-starvation-killing-and-humiliation/
See also MSF, *Starving for a Solution: Gaza's Man-made Malnutrition Crisis* (previously cited), BBC News, "Gaza aid site offered a 'women only' day. It didn't stop the killing", 26 July 2025, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c74z4gy5g31o

[431] Interview by voice call with "Amina" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 10 March 2026.

[432] Interview by voice call with "Shireen" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), November 2025.

[433] Interview by voice call with "Huda" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), November 2025.

spent a month in the American Hospital with him. If it weren't for the hospital providing food and drink, I don't know what we would have done."[434]

The largest-scale killings of aid seekers, mostly because of direct Israeli gunfire, were documented in February and March 2024 at the Nabulsi and Kuwaiti roundabouts in Gaza City, - with a particularly deadly pre-dawn incident documented on 29 February 2024 at the Al-Nabulsi Roundabout on Al-Rashid Coastal Road, where 118 aid seekers were reported killed - and from May to September 2025 at GHF distribution sites and along aid truck routes.435 Women described to Amnesty International how, following these killings or life-changing injuries of spouses, they became sole providers for their families or how their teenage sons had to risk their lives.

Throughout the genocide, Israeli authorities, with the backing of the USA, introduced a series of dangerous mechanisms designed to undermine the UN-led humanitarian response system and trap Palestinians in Gaza in an engineered cycle of hunger and deprivation, often forced to choose between starvation or gunfire.[436] Rather than adhere to its obligations, as the occupying power, to facilitate the safe and dignified distribution of basic supplies, including food, Israel created mechanisms that were lethal and humiliating by design. The bodily and mental scars inflicted by these mechanisms continue to be endured by Palestinian women and families amidst Israel's ongoing restrictions on humanitarian organizations.

[434] Interview by voice call with Abir (surname withheld for sec security reasons), 6 August 2026.
[435] NBC News, "How did 118 people die in Gaza's Al-Rashid aid convoy violence?", 14 March 2024, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/gaza-aid-convoy-deaths-al-rashid-israel-idf-hamas-rcna141497
[436] Amnesty International, "Starvation or gunfire – this is not a humanitarian response" (previously cited).

9. DESTRUCTION OF REPRODUCTIVE AUTONOMY

Since 7 October 2023, the destruction of reproductive healthcare, the denial of access to essential medicines and services, displacement and starvation have collectively eroded women's ability to exercise reproductive autonomy and make meaningful reproductive choices.

The infrastructure supporting assisted reproductive technologies in Gaza, particularly in vitro fertilization (IVF), has been devastated, and the reproductive material of thousands of Palestinians destroyed. Subjected, along with other Palestinians in Gaza, to Israel's near-blanket closure policy and thus prevented from leaving Gaza to pursue treatment elsewhere, women who rely on such services have been left without options.

More broadly, women have also described the loss of the possibility of safely bearing and raising children in the context of ongoing danger, deprivation and displacement – a pattern that two case managers at a women's NGO, and a psychiatrist and a paediatrician, each independently highlighted to Amnesty International as common among their clients and patients. These accounts reflected not merely fear or grief, but the assessment by many women that the material conditions necessary for safe pregnancy, childbirth and parenting no longer existed.

At the same time, women reported significant barriers to accessing contraception and difficulties avoiding unwanted pregnancies. Together, these impacts demonstrate the erosion of reproductive autonomy, including the right to decide freely and responsibly whether and when to have children.[437]

9.1 DESTRUCTION AND CLOSURE OF FERTILITY CLINICS

The destruction and closure of fertility clinics in Gaza as a result of Israeli attacks and unlawfully imposed blockade has resulted in the near-total collapse of assisted reproductive services. Facilities that previously provided IVF and other forms of fertility care have been damaged or rendered inoperable, including Gaza's main IVF centre, Al-Basma in Gaza City.[438] Fertility treatment forms part of the right to reproductive healthcare and, for some women, represents the only available pathway to pregnancy. The destruction of IVF facilities therefore limited the possibility of pursuing pregnancy for many women who could not conceive without medical assistance. It represented not only the destruction of medical infrastructure, but also the destruction of women's and families' existing possibility of achieving a wanted pregnancy.

[437] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Article 16(1)(e).
[438] Interview by voice call with Dr. Baha Ghalayini, Director of Al-Basma Fertility Clinic, 31 March 2026; Interview by voice call with "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, 31 March 2026; Interview by exchange of audio messages with a fertility doctor in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 21 June 2026.

Amnesty International and other human rights investigators have documented widespread damage to healthcare infrastructure across Gaza.[439] The two fertility doctors and a gynaecologist that Amnesty International spoke to stated that of the nine or ten fertility clinics that existed prior to October 2023, by mid-2026 only one remained partially functional, offering limited services but not IVF, and that others had closed due to damage or destruction.[440]

The three doctors, interviewed separately, also told researchers in mid-2026 that even where equipment had been preserved, essential materials required for IVF were no longer available, including specialized liquid media needed.[441]

Baha Ghalayini, director of Al-Basma Clinic, told Amnesty International that prior to October 2023 there were ten clinics across Gaza providing IVF services, of which Al-Basma was the largest and was the only one providing certain services like genetic testing.

"Almost 90% of fertility services were available in Gaza. This included traditional methods of management, all the different types of IVF, plus the general services linked to IVF, such as diagnosis, management of hereditary and congenital diseases, chromosomal and genetic abnormalities to isolate the good embryos… Fertility services were advanced in Gaza; our centre was using advanced technology. We would see 800 to 900 patients a week at our clinic, sometimes a thousand."[442]

According to testimony and multiple images analysed by Amnesty International, Al-Basma IVF centre was struck during hostilities in late December 2023, resulting in extensive damage to equipment and infrastructure. The facility had served as a central provider of fertility services for patients across Gaza.

Baha Ghalayini explained that the clinic closed to patients on 8 October 2023 because the intensity of air strikes was such that healthcare professionals and patients struggled to reach it. It was last seen in functional condition around 21 December 2023. In the last week of December, a contact attempted to check on the facility but was unable to approach due to the presence of tanks and heavy shooting. When access became possible approximately one week later, the clinic was found to have been severely damaged:

"He reported that all the material [in the embryology lab] was damaged and covered in rubble. The three tanks of nitrogen with embryos were destroyed, as were the sperm banks, as the lids had all opened from the vacuum of the explosion… Most damage was in the embryology lab and the theatre."[443]

Although Amnesty International was not able to independently assess the absence of military objectives in or near the clinic, the organization also viewed photographs of the centre taken in January 2024 which show heavy damage to the facility including what appear to be two tanks with lids open.[444]

Baha Ghalayini estimated that approximately 5,000 items of reproductive material were affected, including around 4,000 embryos and 1,000 sperm or eggs.[445] For many patients, these materials embodied years of medical intervention, financial cost and emotional investment. In some cases – where patients were approaching the end of their reproductive age or for other medical reasons – the impact was irreversible.

"Mustafa" (name changed), a second fertility doctor that Amnesty International spoke to, said that his fertility clinic, in Gaza City, was also damaged in attacks. In addition, because his clinic was inaccessible for a protracted period in the early months after 7 October 2023, it was not possible for him or his staff to maintain the tanks of nitrogen, also leading to the liquid nitrogen evaporating and the reproductive material inside being destroyed.[446]

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[439] See sections 4 and 5.
[440] Interview by voice call with Dr. Baha Ghalayini, Director of Al-Basma Fertility Clinic, 31 March 2026; Interview by voice call with "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, 31 March 2026; Interview by exchange of audio messages with a fertility doctor in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 21 June 2026.
[441] Interview by voice call with Dr. Baha Ghalayini, Director of Al-Basma Fertility Clinic, 8 March 2026; Interview by voice call with "Ayman" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Al-Awda hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, 31 March 2026; Interview by exchange of audio messages with a fertility doctor in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 21 June 2026.
[442] Interview by voice call with Dr. Baha Ghalayini, Director of Al-Basma Fertility Clinic, 8 March 2026.
[443] Interview by voice call with Dr. Baha Ghalayini, Director of Al-Basma Fertility Clinic, 8 March 2026.
[444] The UN CoI reported on the destruction of Al-Basma Clinic, saying that "the extensive damage to the building's exterior and interior was caused by a large calibre projectile, most probably a shell fired from an ISF tank," and that Israeli forces "intentionally attacked and destroyed the Basma IVF clinic [and that the Commission…] did not find any evidence that this IVF clinic was a legitimate military target at the time that it was attacked by the [Israeli Security Forces]." UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), paras 42, 175.
[445] Interview by voice call with Dr. Baha Ghalayini, Director of Al-Basma Fertility Clinic, 8 March 2026.
[446] Interview by exchange of audio messages with a fertility doctor in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 21 June 2026.

In March 2026, Baha Ghalayini explained that although he hoped to reopen Al-Basma clinic, doing so was currently impossible:

"We have some equipment ready to go into Gaza when the situation is different. But most of the drugs and the disposables we need are absolutely not available in Gaza in these conditions. We haven't started trying to import these yet. We know even the food is restricted, so why would we try to import this now? It would be a waste of time."[447]

"Mustafa" added that it was also impossible to provide IVF services without an adequate and reliable electricity source. He told researchers that trying to resume fertility services in Gaza had been "like trying to move mountains".[448]

The forced closure of fertility clinics has therefore had immediate consequences. Women who were undergoing treatment have had those processes abruptly terminated. Others who had been planning to begin treatment are now unable to do so. In the absence of functioning facilities, there is no realistic pathway to access fertility care within Gaza.

For women dependent on assisted reproductive technologies to achieve a wanted pregnancy, the destruction of fertility services, combined with barriers to leaving Gaza to seek treatment elsewhere, has therefore not merely delayed healthcare but, in some cases, permanently foreclosed reproductive choices.

9.2 DENIAL OF ACCESS TO FERTILITY TREATMENT

The destruction of facilities has been compounded by the absence of viable alternatives. Not only is there no meaningful access to IVF or specialized fertility care within Gaza, but Israel's restrictions on the movement of Palestinians and the broader closure policy imposed on Gaza (see the background and context section) have closed other options. As "Mustafa" told Amnesty International: "Every single day, my heart breaks when I have people coming to my clinic desperately asking about IVF treatment and they are not able to travel to receive the treatment outside Gaza."[449]

As noted above, Israeli authorities have prohibited Palestinian from leaving Gaza into Israel and therefore the West Bank to stay there or travel abroad, or to leave Gaza by sea or by air. The border to Egypt – currently the only other way for Palestinians to leave Gaza except for some medical evacuations – is also closed for most people, with only limited exceptions made. More than 18,000 people with a referral to exit Gaza for medical evacuations are waiting to do so to or through Egypt. Only a small number of people are allowed to exit on a daily basis, and only on some days as the border is frequently fully closed.[450]

Opportunities to travel outside Gaza for IVF treatment were severely constrained by restrictions on movement and the collapse of the medical evacuation system, which was overwhelmed by patients requiring urgent and life-saving treatment unavailable in Gaza.[451]

As a result, women requiring IVF are effectively excluded from pathways to access care outside Gaza.

Amnesty International interviewed women who had been undergoing or preparing for fertility treatment at the time Israel's military offensive on Gaza began. Three women who had been clients at Al-Basma fertility clinic told Amnesty International that there was no longer any place to get IVF in Gaza, though one woman reported one unsuccessful treatment with insemination in mid-2025. They reported suffering high levels of anxiety, grief and pain at the destruction or closure of all avenues to fertility care.

"Azza", 27 years old, mentioned above, told researchers how she began IVF treatment before the war after struggling with fertility issues. She sold gold from her wedding to fund treatment, endured painful and intrusive procedures and was overjoyed to find out that she was pregnant with twins. However, both babies died shortly after birth, on 30 December 2023.[452]

In the following months, she became determined to become pregnant again.

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[447] Interview by voice call with Dr. Baha Ghalayini, Director of Al-Basma Fertility Clinic, 8 March 2026.
[448] Interview by exchange of audio messages with a fertility doctor in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 21 June 2026.
[449] Interview by exchange of audio messages with a fertility doctor in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 21 June 2026.
[450] See Chapter 3, Background and context.
[451] WHO, "Statement on WHO's role in medical evacuation from Gaza via the Rafah crossing to Egypt", 10 April 2026, WHO notes that patients are referred for treatment unavailable in Gaza, prioritized by a Ministry of Health referral committee according to medical priority, and then submitted for approval and security clearance.
[452] The deaths of "Azza"'s two babies in the context of a heavily disrupted healthcare system are discussed further in section 6.3.

"After the babies died, my husband went to check on the clinic as we lost contact with them. He saw it destroyed. After many trials, I managed to talk to the nurse on the phone and asked her if they were able to save the embryos; she said everything was destroyed. At this point, I felt I had lost everything and felt hopeless… I live in a tent with my husband, my mother-in-law, her daughter and granddaughter. I often sit by myself crying or sleeping. I stopped going to see my friends who have children and avoid engaging with people because they keep asking me why I did not have children again. My heart breaks every time I see children around me."[453]

"Azza" said she has been unable to obtain a medical referral to leave Gaza, as her case is not considered urgent.

"Amira" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 36 years old, had been trying to conceive for 17 years and had undergone multiple IVF cycles. She had five embryos stored at Al-Basma clinic and was preparing to begin another cycle:

"In August 2023, we did all the tests again and went through the whole cycle to prepare for the retrieval again. While I was waiting for my period so that I could start the hormone injections and plan for the retrieval day, the war started. The first thing I did after we realized the scale of the war was to call the clinic. They told me we have to wait for the war to end. We thought it would last for one week or one month in the worst-case scenario. But now our lives are destroyed. Everything we did was lost… When I heard the [Israeli forces] withdrew from the area and that the Al-Basma clinic was damaged, we went to see it. I saw it destroyed and saw all my dreams, hopes and future destroyed in front of me."[454]

"Amira" told researchers she remains desperate to have children and was able to obtain a referral for treatment outside Gaza but has been waiting for one year with no indication if or when she may be able to travel.

Five other people Amnesty International interviewed who had been doing IVF at Al-Basma clinic before 7 October 2023 gave similar accounts of the complete devastation they felt at losing their reproductive material that was destroyed in the clinic. They all described high emotional, physical and financial costs of retrieving and collecting their reproductive material, and the pain of being left with no way to restart IVF treatment in Gaza or being able to leave for treatment outside. Two had received a referral but were still waiting, over a year later, to be permitted to travel, but the remainder had not been able to get a referral.

The cumulative effect of the destruction of IVF facilities, restrictions on medical supplies entering Gaza, and prohibition on Palestinians exiting Gaza, including delays even where women have obtained medical referrals to travel for fertility treatment, is the effective denial of access to fertility treatment. Women who require such care to conceive are left without options. This constitutes a serious interference with their reproductive autonomy, including their right to decide freely whether and when to have children.

9.3 CONDITIONS UNDERMINING REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES ABOUT PREGNANCY

Thirteen women interviewed by Amnesty International described delaying, abandoning or reconsidering plans for future pregnancies because of the conditions created by Israel's genocide in Gaza.

A paediatrician, psychiatrist and two NGO case managers also told Amnesty International that this was part of a broader pattern they saw among their patients and clients.[455] Women framed this not as a matter of preference, but as a response to conditions that make safe pregnancy and parenting virtually impossible.

Women cited ongoing hostilities and mass killings and injury, lack of access to healthcare, food insecurity, the incredible difficulties accessing baby formula and nappies, and the absence of safe shelter as reasons for delaying or avoiding pregnancy. They likewise described the psychological toll of ongoing violence and uncertainty, including feelings of overwhelming guilt.

[453] Interview by voice call with "Azza" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 14 April 2026.
[454] Interview by voice call with "Amira" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 23 March 2026.
[455] Two Interviews by voice call with Mozayan (last name withheld at the request of the interviewee), case manager of the Women Affairs Centre, 9 and 25 March 2026; Interview by voice call with Safaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a case manager of the Women Affairs Centre, 9 March 2026; Interview by voice call with a psychiatrist in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 23 April 2026; Interview by voice call with a paediatrician in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 4 June 2026.

"Rima" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 36, and mother of two boys and a girl told Amnesty International in April 2026:

"Before the war, I was hoping to have a sister for my daughter, as I am a single daughter and I wanted my daughter to have company. But from what I heard, pregnant women miscarried while walking to the hospital, lost their babies, had awful experiences. Even today, people are being killed by air strikes in Gaza. There is no way I am going to bring another child into this life. It makes me feel very sad, but even if I decided to try, there is no proper nutrition for me, no proper nutrition for my baby; it's not like a normal woman outside Gaza, who can plan for their children. I can't plan to go to the beach, or do a birthday party for my children here… It's just destruction and suffering, tents and displaced people here now".[456]

"Aseel" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), from Jabalia, described how she had been planning to conceive prior to October 2023, but the war forced her to change her plans:

"Before the war, I was planning to get pregnant… On 7 October, it was the first day of my period and I was hoping to get pregnant during that cycle. My doctor told me I had no problem… everything was going as planned and [I felt] my chances were very high."[457]

A few days later, she witnessed the aftermath of a nearby air strike:

"Our neighbours' house was targeted by an air strike which resulted in the killing of at least 15 people, including women and children… I rushed to help… I saw horrible things. People's heads were separated from their bodies and others were blown into pieces… I rushed back home crying and had a nervous breakdown… The next day, my period suddenly stopped, and I never had it again until today."[458]

Her ability to seek medical care and continue her plans to conceive was further undermined by displacement and insecurity.

"At the beginning I could not reach my doctor. I stayed in the north for a while and I was told he was in the south and the trip from the north to the south felt like a death sentence before the ceasefire. Then I just lost the willingness to continue with my plan [to have another child]. Even if I still have a chance to be treated and have another child, how would I do that in the conditions I am living in? I have been in constant displacement and live in inadequate conditions to be pregnant and have a newborn… Last month, a bullet from a sniper hit our tent and almost killed my daughter."[459]

Reflecting on her reproductive plans, "Aseel" said: "If war did not happen, I would have the third child I was dreaming of by now."[460]

Amnesty International was not able to establish the cause of the cessation of her periods. However, severe psychological stress and traumatic experiences are recognized as a potential cause of amenorrhea, the absence of menstruation in someone who would otherwise be expected to have menstrual periods.[461]

Reflecting on a difficult first pregnancy, delivery and post-partum experience during displacement and in overwhelmed hospitals without supplies in early 2024, Mozayan (mentioned above) said:

"My heart wants more children, but my brain tells me there is no way I could have another child as long as the situation is the same. I am still traumatized… I cannot decide now. I hope the situation will improve so I can make that decision."[462]

Mozayan's account illustrates how conditions in Gaza constrained the exercise of reproductive autonomy even where the desire to have further children remained.

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[456] Interview by voice call with "Rima" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 14 April 2026.
[457] Interview by voice call with "Aseel" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 21 April 2026.
[458] Interview by voice call with "Aseel" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 21 April 2026.
[459] Interview by voice call with "Aseel" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 21 April 2026.
[460] Interview by voice call with "Aseel" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 21 April 2026.
[461] Gordon CM, Ackerman KE, Berga SL, and others, "Functional hypothalamic amenorrhea: An endocrine society clinical practice guideline", Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism, Volume 102, No. 5, 2017, https://doi.org/10.1210/jc.2017-00131, pp. 1413-1439.
[462] Interview by voice call with Mozayan (last name withheld at the request of the interviewee), case manager of the Women Affairs Centre, 25 March 2026.

As a case manager with WAC, Mozayan also told Amnesty International: "Many women told me they will never think of having children as long as the genocide is still ongoing."[463]

A psychiatrist told Amnesty International that his family had reached the same conclusion, and that such cases were also common among the hundreds of women he was treating.

"Personally, my wife and I decided not to have another child. We don't want to repeat what we went through [with our first child, also born in early 2024] or bring another child into these impossible conditions.

"I'm also hearing this from so many of my patients, who have changed their life plans because of the devastation of the war, and don't want to get pregnant in these circumstances. One woman told me, for example, 'I don't want to bring another child into the unknown; I can't even feed the ones I have.' This is the sentiment many of my patients have."[464]

A paediatrician likewise told Amnesty International that his niece, who gave birth in late 2023, had such a terrible experience of pregnancy, delivery and trying to feed her child that she had decided not to have another. He said this was a very common pattern, and that he was constantly being asked by mothers of young children how to access contraception for this reason.[465] Amnesty International also spoke to his niece, a 28-year-old woman, who described giving birth in a hospital under siege and desperately struggling to breastfeed or find formula as she and her baby suffered malnutrition. She confirmed that she had been left to decide she no longer wanted to get pregnant again and said: "I wish my first pregnancy and birth experience were different. I wish I could go back in time and never even have become pregnant."[466]

These accounts and others documented by Amnesty International illustrate how women's reproductive decisions were being constrained through conditions of insecurity, displacement, starvation and deprivation, collapse of healthcare and fear for their own and their children's survival.

TAHANI'S PREGNANCY LOSS

Tahani, a librarian and NGO worker from north Gaza, became pregnant shortly before October 2023, but suffered pregnancy loss.

Soon after Israel's military operations began, she experienced spotting and severe pain but was unable to attend follow-up appointments because "the security situation was impossible for us to move safely", while her doctor had already been displaced.

During the first ceasefire in late November 2023, doctors suspected a molar pregnancy but told her that confirmation required a laboratory test that hospitals were struggling to perform because of electricity shortages. At Al-Sahaba hospital in Gaza City, she recalled:

"They couldn't do the test in their lab because this test required two hours of constant power with no interruption, which the hospital did not have... The doctors were checking me vaginally using their phones' flashlights.

"Also, the situation at the hospital was so bad, there were not even bedsheets or blankets for me to cover myself when they checked me. This was the case in all hospitals. It was humiliating, and I was so embarrassed to be exposed in front of the other women and patients. A doctor told me they did not have bed sheets or blankets because they had to use them to wrap and cover, out of respect, the dead bodies of the women who were killed in air strikes as they arrived with their clothes completely torn."

During a later hospital admission, Tahani was offered a blanket that had previously been used to wrap a dead body because no others were available:

"The blanket smelled so bad that my sister covered my nose so that I wouldn't smell it and feel more sick."

While waiting in the emergency room for the test results in Al-Awda hospital in north Gaza again on 1 December 2023, she said:

[463] Interview by voice call with Mozayan (last name withheld at the request of the interviewee), case manager of the Women Affairs Centre, 9 March 2026.
[464] Interview by voice call with a psychiatrist in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 23 April 2026.
[465] Interview by voice call with a paediatrician in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 4 June 2026.
[466] Interview by voice call with Lina (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 6 June 2026.

"I heard an explosion that shook the hospital; people started to run, saying they hit the administration office.. My cramps became even worse. When the bombing happened, everyone around me ran away except me. I couldn't because of the pain."

Tahani described repeatedly moving between hospitals seeking diagnosis and treatment over the following few months amid bombardment, electricity shortages, severe overcrowding and shortages of basic supplies. She described how the ordeal, compounded by famine conditions in which she survived for a period on orange juice, lemonade and plain rice while recovering, forced displacement, the destruction of her home, and the loss of family members, left her with lasting physical and psychological trauma and made her fearful of becoming pregnant again.

Reflecting on how the experience had affected her willingness to become pregnant again, she told Amnesty International:

"I still dream of having another child, but whether I can or want [to], I have no idea. Until now, I cry hard when I remember all that happened to me. I won't try again. I am terrified of having the same experience. It is true I had a miscarriage before [October 2023], but I was able to receive dignified medical care [that is now no longer available]... The psychological scar now [from my pregnancy loss in December 2023] is so big and deep."

Tahani's account also illustrates how the conditions in which pregnancy loss and reproductive healthcare were experienced – not pregnancy loss alone – affected her willingness to pursue another wanted pregnancy.

9.4 BARRIERS TO CONTRACEPTION

At the same time as access to fertility treatment has been eliminated, access to contraception and family planning services has been severely restricted. Several women who were pregnant told Amnesty International that they had not wanted to become pregnant, and health care providers and international humanitarian agencies confirmed a broader pattern as women struggled to access health facilities, and health facilities lacked continuous supplies of contraception options.

A case worker with a women's NGO in Gaza told Amnesty International:

"Many women told me they don't want to bring children [into the world] to die. They don't want to experience this pain and loss. Many women were forced to get pregnant because they had no access to contraception and family planning services. I personally used to take contraception before the war, but when it became unavailable during the war, I got pregnant. I definitely did not want to bring a child while living under these conditions."[467]

"Hind" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), a 35-year-old mother of six who has breast cancer, told Amnesty International that she had been using an IUD since 2019 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer, because she had to undergo chemotherapy and was advised to avoid getting pregnant. However, as conditions deteriorated due to the full siege imposed by Israel in March 2025, she was unable to have her IUD replaced and she fell pregnant in May 2025. She gave birth to a boy on 20 January 2026, but the baby was born with an acute respiratory condition and remained in intensive care in hospital as of 15 February 2026.

She told Amnesty International how she struggled during her pregnancy because she was in poor health and was also looking after her five children – having to rely exclusively on the food she could obtain from the community kitchen to feed her family. Her husband has mental health issues, the family have been displaced multiple times and their home, beyond the "Yellow Line" where Israel implements an effective no-go zone, was destroyed. She described the distress and guilt she experienced at being unable to meet her children's health and basic needs in these circumstances:

"My baby needs help to get better. His [poor health] condition is because I was not in good health, and for this reason, I did not want to get pregnant, but now all I want is for my baby to get better and I can't do anything for

[467] Interview by voice call with Safaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), a case manager of Women's Affairs Centre, 9 March 2026.

him. I spend as much time as possible with him in the hospital, but I have five other young children who also need looking after, and my 12-year-old son is in very bad condition because last year he was injured in the face by shrapnel in an Israeli bombardment, and he also needs medical care, which he has not been able to get here in Gaza. I cannot cope".[468]

30-year-old "Basma" (name changed at the request of the interviewee) told researchers that after three miscarriages since the war began, she was five months pregnant at the time of the interview. She told researchers she had not planned to become pregnant the last time, especially after a last miscarriage where her care was disrupted as healthcare professionals feared the hospital was coming under siege,[469] but she struggled to access suitable contraception. First, she struggled to access facilities due to the intensity of air attacks. Then, she was told that IUDs weren't available because of the blockade.

"Basma" told researchers how:

"I started rejecting sexual relations with my husband out of fear of getting pregnant again. But he pressured me heavily, leading to serious arguments. He threatened to leave me and marry another woman. To avoid further conflict, I gave in, and I became pregnant.

"…I blame myself every day for this pregnancy. I cannot sleep at night because I constantly worry about what will happen to the baby. The baby is due in July [2026], during the hottest period of the year. I fear the baby will not survive the heat in the tent."[470]

Her account indicates how barriers to accessing contraception combined with sexual and reproductive coercion within her marriage constrained her ability to exercise meaningful control over sexual relations and whether to become pregnant.

A senior midwife told Amnesty International in May 2026 that since October 2023, contraception was not consistently available and women became pregnant during the period of famine or while suffering malnutrition when they did not want to or when their bodies were not well enough to sustain a pregnancy. She added:

"Contraception is still not available. The IUD that is available now is expired, so women get pregnant even with it…The [contraceptive] pills are only sometimes available; it's linked to [the opening of] the crossings, so there is no sustainability."[471]

These dynamics are further reinforced by the rise in child marriage as a coping strategy, as stated in section 8.3, which increasingly constrains girls' ability to exercise meaningful control over their reproductive lives. As noted by UNFPA, the increase in child marriage has been accompanied by a surge in adolescent pregnancies. According to UNFPA and Ministry of Health in Gaza data, adolescent birth rates have more than doubled compared to pre-war levels.[472] As UN agencies have set out, early marriage undermines reproductive choice by limiting girls' ability to freely and meaningfully decide whether, when, and with whom to have children. Girls married early are often exposed to pressure for early pregnancy, reduced access to education and contraception, and unequal power dynamics that constrain their control over decisions related to sex, pregnancy, and their future lives.[473]

[468] Interview by voice call with "Hind" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 15 Feb 2026.
[469] See section 5.4.
[470] Interview by voice call with "Basma" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 14 February 2026.
[471] Interview by voice call with Rajaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), former midwife at Al-Helou hospital in Gaza City, 5 May 2026.
[472] UNFPA, *Situation Report Palestine January–March 2026*, 17 April 2026, https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/publications/palestine-situation-report-january-march-2entity26
[473] UNICEF, Child Marriage, https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-marriage

10. DETENTION AND GENDER-BASED HARMS

Detention became another means through which the Israeli authorities subjected Palestinian women to serious violations of their rights, including to dignity, bodily autonomy and family life. While the number of women and girls detained since 7 October 2023 was significantly lower than the number of men and boys, detention practices also had devastating consequences for women in Gaza as both direct and indirect victims. Dozens of women were detained and subjected to ill-treatment, while hundreds of others were left searching for missing or disappeared husbands, sons, fathers and brothers.

Amnesty International has previously identified a pattern of incommunicado detention, torture and other ill-treatment, including sexual violence, against Palestinians from Gaza by Israeli forces since October 2023.[474] The organization estimates that at least 85 Palestinian women and girls from Gaza were detained by Israeli forces, held in Israel or the occupied West Bank, and released since 7 October 2023.

All 12 women and girls who were former detainees that Amnesty International interviewed consistently described detention practices characterized by violence, humiliation, coercion and severe psychological abuse. Women reported witnessing family members killed or threatened with death while they were being detained, and enduring detention without knowing their loved ones' fate. They were subjected to repeated invasive strip-searches and threats of rape, amounting to sexual violence, as well as the denial of adequate menstrual products, beatings, and other efforts to humiliate them.

Descriptions by former detainees suggest that some women were detained not as individuals accused of unlawful conduct, but because of their connections to male relatives, households or communities viewed collectively as suspect, as potential sources of intelligence, or as a form of putting pressure on or coercing male relatives. Additionally, six male detainees who spoke to Amnesty International following their release said that they were threatened that their wives or daughters would be raped, either while being transported to a detention centre or during interrogation.

10.1 UNLAWFUL AND DISCRIMINATORY DETENTION OF WOMEN

Following 7 October 2023, Israeli forces carried out mass arbitrary arrests of thousands of Palestinians across Gaza during military raids, attacks on homes and hospitals, and screening operations at checkpoints established during displacement operations. Palestinians from Gaza were primarily detained under the Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law (the Unlawful Combatants Law) of 2002 and related emergency measures allowing prolonged detention without ordinary criminal process, and in some instances to institutionalize the use of enforced disappearance.[475]

[474] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), pp. 233-235; Amnesty International, "Israel must end mass incommunicado detention and torture of Palestinians from Gaza", 28 July 2024, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/07/israel-must-end-mass-incommunicado-detention-and-torture-of-palestinians-from-gaza/

[475] The law allows the military to detain Palestinians from Gaza without a detention order for up to 45 days and to prevent them from meeting a lawyer for up to 90 days. It denies detainees any semblance of due process, facilitating rampant torture and other ill-treatment. See Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), p. 234.

Amnesty International is not aware of any official figure for the number of women and girls from Gaza detained by Israeli forces. However, Amnesty International has estimated that at least 85 Palestinian women and girls from Gaza have been held in Israeli detention facilities in Israel or the occupied West Bank and released back to Gaza since 7 October 2023. This is based on Amnesty International's interviews with former detainees as well as other documentation, including by UNRWA, of released detainees.[476] While most appear to have been detained in the initial months following October 2023, cases of detention of women from Gaza continued to be reported in 2024 and 2025, with a release still documented in early 2026.[477] Amnesty International is not aware of any women and girls from Gaza currently in detention but cannot exclude this possibility. Amnesty International requested information about the number of women from Gaza detained by Israeli forces in a letter sent to the Israeli authorities on 30 September 2026. At the time of publication, Amnesty International had not received a response.

At least four of the female detainees held in Israel or the occupied West Bank were under 18.[478] One of the 12 former detainees Amnesty International interviewed said she was only 15 at the time of her detention by Israeli forces for 55 days. Researchers also spoke to the family of a seven-year-old girl who was detained overnight with her father within Gaza before being released with him; the girl's mother told Amnesty International that at the time her daughter was detained, she was in hospital giving birth.[479]

The family of two women – mother and daughter Huda and Aisha Al-Aqqad – have been searching for them since they last saw them in December 2023, following an Israeli military operation near their home in Khan Younis. They had been presumed dead, but in May 2024 an Israeli soldier posted a photograph of them on Instagram showing them blindfolded in an Israeli military vehicle. Israeli authorities were quoted in the media as saying they had released the women in Gaza shortly after the photograph was taken but have provided no evidence of this.[480] A request for information about the status or fate of these two women was also included in Amnesty International's letter to the Israeli authorities on 30 September 2026, which did not receive a response.

Israeli forces detained women during raids on homes, on displacement sites, or at military checkpoints while they were attempting to move south, most in the first few months after 7 October 2023 or early 2024. Most women described being held first in Anatot military camp, in an illegal Israeli settlement in the West Bank near Jerusalem, and then transferred to Damon Prison run by the Israeli Prison Service in Haifa. Some women reported being detained for short periods of days or a couple of weeks in other locations, including Ashkelon detention facility, Sde Teiman military camp in southern Israel, and the Russian Compound, known in Arabic as Al-Maskobiya, in Jerusalem.

Women from Gaza consistently described being accused of being "terrorists," "illegal fighters" or threats to Israeli security despite little or no evidence being put to them. Some described to Amnesty International being interrogated extensively about husbands, sons, brothers or neighbours rather than about their own conduct. Several women reported being forced to provide a DNA sample, with at least one explicitly told it was to check if she had relatives killed in Israel on 7 October 2023 and threatened to face "big consequences" if one was found. She was also invited to collaborate with the authorities and be paid.[481]

The accounts suggest that some women were treated not as individuals suspected of specific criminal conduct, but as extensions of male relatives, households or communities viewed collectively as suspect, or as potential sources of intelligence or pressure. Detaining women or girls because of perceived affiliations of male family members, rather than individualized suspicion of wrongdoing, would amount to arbitrary detention and constitute discrimination and collective punishment.[482]

In other cases, the legal basis for women's detention was also unclear.

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[476] Based on interviews with female former detainees who gave Amnesty International estimates of how many other Palestinian women from Gaza they were detained with, and from information provided by UNRWA, updated April 2024, reporting that as of 4 April 2024, 1,506 detainees from Gaza had been released through Kerem Shalom crossing, including 84 women and 43 children (39 boys, four girls). See UNRWA, *Detention and alleged ill-treatment of detainees from Gaza during Israel-Hamas War*, 16 April 2024, https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_on_detention_and_alleged_ill-treatmentupdated.pdf
Amnesty International also received information about several other women released to Gaza since April 2024.

[477] Interviews by voice call with 12 female former detainees from Gaza, 2024-2026.

[478] UNRWA, *Detention and alleged ill-treatment of detainees from Gaza during Israel-Hamas War* (previously cited).

[479] Interview by voice call with "Manal" (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 6 February 2026.

[480] Sky News, "Gaza investigation: A family's fight to find their missing relatives," 6 May 2026, https://news.sky.com/story/gaza-investigation-a-familys-fight-to-find-their-missing-relatives-13540688; Global Legal Action Network (GLAN), "GLAN and Sky News investigation seeks truth from Israeli forces over the disappearance of civilian women in Gaza", 6 May 2026, https://glanlaw.org/news/glan-and-sky-news-investigation-seeks-truth-from-israeli-forces-over-the-disappearance-of-civilian-women-in-gaza

[481] Interview by voice call with "Ohood" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 30 March 2026.

[482] Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD), Opinion 51/2018 (United Arab Emirates), UN Doc. A/HRC/WGAD/2018/51, paras 96-97.

"Sawsan" (name changed at the request of the interviewee) told Amnesty International: "They said that because Hamas took our girls and women, we are doing the same in return… I was told I would stay [in detention] until the war ends with Hamas."[483]

The women said they were not allowed to speak to lawyers, although at least three had an online court session. They described these as under five minutes in duration, during which time they barely had the opportunity to speak. One woman explained: "They put me in a room; they brought a laptop and someone talked to me for two or three minutes and told me I would remain in detention. When I tried to ask about the actual accusation or the lawyer, they turned off the computer."[484] Women also told Amnesty International they were not allowed to speak to family members or receive any communication for the duration of their detention.

10.2 FAMILY SEPARATION, ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE AND UNCERTAINTY

The detention of thousands of Palestinians from Gaza since 7 October 2023 and the widespread system of incommunicado detention had devastating consequences for women and family life. Because those detained were overwhelmingly men and boys, women were often left searching for missing relatives, caring for children and other dependants alone, and living with prolonged uncertainty about the fate and whereabouts of husbands, sons, fathers and brothers.[485]

As of early 2026, approximately 1,200–1,300 detainees from Gaza – likely all or overwhelmingly men and boys – were being held in Israel mostly without charge or trial under Israel's "unlawful combatants" law, alongside a smaller number held for investigation or prosecution under other detention regimes.[486] The UN CoI and OHCHR have reported that male detainees have been subjected to widespread and systematic human rights abuses, including torture and other ill-treatment, including rape and other sexual violence, and denied healthcare, food, family and counsel visitation.[487]

According to data compiled by Israeli human rights organizations, at least 104 Palestinians are known to have died or been killed in Israeli custody or during arrest since October 2023 as of 1 October 2026, although the true figure is likely higher as the Israeli authorities regularly fail to provide figures or release the bodies of those who died in detention, as part of their ongoing policy to withhold the bodies of Palestinian who are killed in alleged attacks or Palestinian detainees on so-called "security grounds".[488] This policy has

[483] Interview by voice call with "Sawsan" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 2 April 2026.
[484] Interview by voice call with "Manal" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 2 March 2026.
See also, B'Tselem, *Welcome to Hell: The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps*, August 2024, https://www.btselem.org/publications/202408_welcome_to_hell, Chapter 3.
[485] Investigations based on Israeli military data indicate that approximately 6,000 Palestinians from Gaza were arrested and held in detention since October 2023, the majority of whom were civilians and overwhelmingly men and boys; see, for example, +972, "Israeli intelligence data: Militants account for only 1 in 4 Gaza detainees," 4 September 2025, https://www.972mag.com/israeli-intelligence-database-militants-civilians-gaza-detainees/
Amnesty International has previously documented cases in which Palestinians from Gaza were held in prolonged incommunicado detention, which Amnesty International found in some instances amounted to enforced disappearance. See, for example: Amnesty International, "Urgently investigate inhumane treatment and enforced disappearance of Palestinians detainees from Gaza", 20 December 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/12/urgently-investigate-inhumane-treatment-and-enforced-disappearance-of-palestinians-detainees-from-gaza/; Amnesty International, "Israel must end mass incommunicado detention and torture of Palestinians from Gaza" (previously cited); Amnesty International, "My only crime was being a doctor": Dr Ahmad Muhanna on his 22 months in Israeli detention", 13 May 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2026/05/my-only-crime-was-being-a-doctor-dr-ahmad-mhanna-on-his-22-months-in-israeli-detention/
See also, HaMoked Center for the Defence of the Individual (HaMoked), Enforced Disappearances of Gaza Residents in Detention, 11 May 2026, https://hamoked.org/document.php?dID=Documents5282
[486] Times of Israel, "Israel still holding 1,287 Gazans under illegal combatants law, 41 arrested since ceasefire", 7 January 2026, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/israel-still-holding-1287-gazans-under-illegal-combatants-law-41-arrested-since-ceasefire/
[487] UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), para. 119; B'Tselem, *Living Hell: Sexual violence, starvation and systematic abuse*, 20 January 2026, https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20260120_living_hell; OHCHR, *Palestinian Detainees Held Arbitrarily and Secretly, Subjected to Torture and Mistreatment,* 31 July 2024, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/un-report-palestinian-detainees-held-arbitrarily-and-secretly-subjected; PCHR, *"Torture and Genocide: The Shattered Futures of Former Palestinian Detainees in Gaza"*, May 2025, https://pchrgaza.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Torture-and-Genocide-The-Shattered-Futures-of-Former-Palestinian-Detainees-in-Gaza.pdf, pp. 55–64.
[488] As of July 2026, at least 104 Palestinians had died or been killed while in the custody of Israeli authorities, either during arrest or detention. This includes 92 individuals who had died or been killed in detention since 7 October 2023, whose names have been compiled by Israeli human rights organizations, also on file with Amnesty International, 53 of whom are from Gaza.
The Israeli authorities have also announced the deaths of 56 Palestinians from Gaza in military custody in the Gaza Strip since 7 October 2023, however, they have not provided names and it is not clear to Amnesty International or other human rights organizations whether these names overlap or are in addition to the 102 known cases. The failure to consistently provide names of the individuals who died in Israeli custody, or release any of their bodies, creates additional pain and suffering for family members who are left without answers about

inflicted immense pain on Palestinian families, denied their right to truth and closure, and continues to be used as a collective punishment tool.[489]

Women whose relatives had been missing or disappeared for long periods of time often only learned that they were still alive through accounts from former detainees who reported seeing them, or when their relative was released.[490] While a limited tracing procedure was introduced by the Israeli authorities in May 2024, enabling most families to access some confirmation if loved ones were in detention after that point, human rights organizations have continued to document cases in which individuals reported as detained by released detainees were not officially acknowledged by the Israeli authorities.[491]

Two women interviewed by Amnesty International in 2026 said they had received information from former detainees that their husbands were alive in Israeli detention but had received no official confirmation from the Israeli authorities despite their requests for information, leaving them uncertain where their loved ones were or if they were alive.

The uncertainty surrounding missing relatives has had devastating consequences. Women described living in limbo, a state of prolonged ambiguity, unable to mourn, unable to reunite with loved ones, and unable to make decisions about the future – not knowing if their loved ones were forcibly disappeared or killed. Amnesty also received credible information that this deliberate uncertainty exposed women and families to risk of deceit or exploitation by individuals alleging to be lawyers and possess information about their missing or disappeared loved ones.

31-year-old "Haneen" (name changed at the request of the interviewee) from Jabalia in north Gaza told Amnesty International she last saw her husband in their home in December 2024. She said she was displaced to the south with their children and he stayed behind to protect the family home from theft and looting.

"This was the last time I saw or spoke to my husband; since then, I don't know where he is or what happened to him … It's a very difficult feeling; I cannot explain how much psychological pressure there is between this open trauma and life that doesn't stop. I am displaced with my four children in a tent… I have to keep going for the kids."[492]

"Haneen" said a relative who was released from detention told her he saw and spoke to her husband in Ketziot prison, referred to by Palestinians as the Naqab prison, before the October 2025 so-called ceasefire; that her husband asked this man to let his family know he was alive in detention. She also believes she saw a brief image of her husband in a video posted on social media by Israeli forces. However, she said the Israeli authorities denied having him in their custody.

26-year-old Aya, with two young children, also gave Amnesty International a detailed account of when she last heard from her husband in mid-2024; he had stayed behind in their area with his father. He was on the phone to their daughter when he said there was a knock at the door and told her he suspected the knock to be Israeli forces who had been carrying out a house-by-house search of the area. Aya said a neighbour reported being detained with her husband and father-in-law; several former detainees reported seeing her father-in-law searching for her husband in detention, and one person reported seeing them both together in

whether their loved ones are alive or dead. See, for example, Gisha, "Abuse of the dead", 8 July 2026, https://gisha.org/en/abuse-of-the-dead/

See also previous counts such as OHCHR, "At least 75 Palestinians have died in Israeli detention since 7 October 2023", 17 September 2025, https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ohchr-press-release-17sep25/

In addition, PHRI documented 94 Palestinian deaths in Israeli custody between 7 October 2023 and August 2025 and noted in November 2025 four additional deaths after the completion of their thematic report. PHRI, *Death Sentence for Palestinians in Custody*, November 2025, https://www.phr.org.il/en/palestinian-deaths-behind-bars-eng/

[489] Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center (JLAC), *The Warmth of Our Sons: Necropolitics, Memory and the Palestinian Quest for Closure, https://www.jlac.ps/en/Article/888/The-Warmth-of-our-Sons*

Israeli authorities have continued to implement this practice even after all Israeli hostages – alive or dead – have been released by Palestinian armed groups.

See also OHCHR, "At least 75 Palestinians have died in Israeli detention since 7 October 2023" (previously cited); PHRI, *Death Sentence for Palestinians in Custody* (previously cited).

[490] Interview by voice call with Samir Zaqout, Deputy Director of the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, 4 March 2026.

[491] HaMoked reported that it handled 5,400 tracing requests, of which 1,848 were met with official responses of "no indication" of detention; in 114 cases supported by sworn affidavits indicating the individuals had been seen in Israeli custody, habeas corpus petitions were filed, of which 38 remain unresolved and the fate and whereabouts of those individuals are still unknown. HaMoked, *Enforced Disappearances of Gaza Residents in Detention: Patterns, Legal Implications, and Oversight Gaps Since October 2023*, May 2026, https://hamoked.org/files/2026/1667080_eng.pdf

See also Al Mezan, "On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Al Mezan Publishes New Testimonies of Torture and Holds Israel Responsible for the Ill-Treatment of Palestinian Detainees", 30 August 2025, https://www.mezan.org/en/post/46729; Interview by voice call with Samir Zaqout, Deputy Director of the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, 4 March 2026; Amnesty International, *Missing persons: Submission to inform the report of the Secretary-General on missing persons*, IOR 40/0761/2026, March 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/IOR4007612026ENGLISH.pdf

[492] Interview by voice call with "Haneen" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 28 April 2026.

Naqab detention facility. She described how her daughter was recently injured by shrapnel and the pain of being between a daughter fighting for her life and a missing husband.[493]

The impact of detention and enforced disappearance on families extended beyond uncertainty regarding spouses. International human rights bodies and courts have consistently recognized that enforced disappearances may constitute torture or other ill-treatment not only for the disappeared person but also for their relatives due to the anguish and uncertainty caused by the disappearance.[494]

Women who were themselves detained and held incommunicado for months frequently described not knowing whether their children or other family members were alive for months. Several women had witnessed relatives killed, threatened or also detained at the time of their arrest.

"Areej" (name changed at the request of the interviewee) described how Israeli forces raided her home and detained her in front of her three children, aged 5-15: "They took me outside and I saw a scene that broke my heart. I saw my three children surrounded by many soldiers who were pointing their guns at them. They were handcuffed to the back with metal handcuffs and put next to a wall. One soldier asked me to tell them who I wanted them to kill first." "Areej" added that "some soldiers spoke good Arabic and others spoke broken Arabic."[495]

"Areej" said the soldier did not carry out his threat, but when she was taken into detention, her children were left alone without an adult caregiver. International standards provide that women should be given the opportunity to make arrangements for the care of their children prior to detention.[496] She continued:

"After three months of detention, in June 2024, I believed there was a 90% likelihood they had been killed on the day we were abducted because of the intensity of the air strikes around the house. I only learnt they were alive when a lawyer told one of the detainees from the West Bank that they were able to locate my children, and that they were alive."[497]

"Manal" (name changed at the request of the interviewee) said when she was detained, soldiers placed what appeared to be an explosive belt on her 10-year-old son and threatened to detonate it unless she cooperated during questioning. While she was in detention, interrogators repeatedly threatened that she would never see her children again.[498]

Amnesty International has previously reported on a case in which a woman in detention was subjected to a mock execution of her husband when they were both in detention.[499]

One woman told Amnesty International she had been breastfeeding her child when she was detained and separated from her. She described being held incommunicado for over a year in detention with no contact with the outside world and told researchers how:

"As a mother, I kept thinking about my children; I couldn't get them off my mind. I was left with their image when we were separated. My little daughter, whom I was breastfeeding. At the beginning, I suffered extreme pain because of the sudden, forced weaning. My breasts, my body, everything hurt."[500]

10.3 STRIP-SEARCHES AND OTHER SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND DEGRADING TREATMENT

UN bodies and Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations have reported sexual violence against Palestinians in detention in Israel, including cases of rape of male detainees.[501] In May 2026, the UN

[493] Interview by voice call with Aya (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 30 April 2026.
[494] Human Rights Committee, Quinteros *Almeida v. Uruguay*, Communication 107/1981, 21 July 1983, UN Doc. CCPR/C/OP/2, paras 14-16, https://juris.ohchr.org/Search/Details/107; European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), *Kurt v. Turkey*, Application 24276/94, Judgment, 25 May 1998, paras 130-134; Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR), *Blake v. Guatemala*, Merits, Judgment, 24 January 1998, paras 114-116.
[495] Interview by voice call with "Areej" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 11 March 2026.
[496] UN General Assembly (UNGA), UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), UN Doc. A/RES/65/229 (2010), Rule 2(1).
[497] Interview by voice call with "Areej" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 11 March 2026.
[498] Interview by voice call with "Manal" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 2 March 2026.
[499] Amnesty International, "Israel must end mass incommunicado detention and torture of Palestinians from Gaza" (previously cited).
[500] Interview by voice call with "Rabab" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 27 August 2026.
[501] See UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), paras 119-120; B'Tselem, *Living Hell: Sexual violence, starvation and systematic abuse* (previously cited); PCHR, *Torture and Genocide: The Shattered Futures of Former Palestinian Detainees in Gaza* (previously cited), pp. 55-64.

Secretary-General reported that the UN had verified multiple incidents of conflict-related sexual violence against Palestinian male detainees, including rape, gang rape, and violence to the genitals, sometimes used as a form of torture.[502] The Secretary General noted that "men and boys were targeted with rape, attempted rape and violence to the genitals, resulting in five male victims suffering severe rectal bleeding or swelling for multiple days or weeks and, in some cases, without receiving medical treatment."[503]

Amnesty International documented one case of gang rape of a Palestinian male detainee from Gaza, held under the Unlawful Combatants Law, in the Sde Teiman detention camp, based on his account and a review of medical reports, which showed injuries that appear to be consistent with rape, and video evidence.[504] Amnesty International also spoke to three released male detainees who described being sexually assaulted and two released male detainees who said they had witnessed sexual assault in two different detention facilities.[505]

Sexual violence is often under-reported for multiple reasons, including stigma that survivors of sexual violence risk by disclosing. Still, most of the 12 women Amnesty International interviewed who had been detained in Israel or the occupied West Bank described acts that amounted to sexual violence committed by the Israeli security forces either at the point of detention, or while being detained.

Ten women that Amnesty International interviewed after being released from detention by the Israeli authorities reported being subjected to strip-searches at the site of their detention in Gaza, or one or more of three different detention facilities (Anatot military facility, Damon prison, and the Russian Compound, known in Arabic as Al-Maskobiya).

Women reported to Amnesty International that Israeli security personnel subjected them to strip searches shortly after being detained in Gaza, during arrival and transfers between detention facilities in Israel and the occupied West Bank, prior to being taken to interrogation or solitary confinement, and during violent raids on cells. They consistently stated that there was no effort to speak to them to explain the purpose of the search, and that the search was unnecessary and instead was designed to humiliate, degrade or punish them.

Women said the strip searches were conducted by women soldiers or guards, but some also said male soldiers or guards were present, nearby or able to observe them, or that they were in an open location such as a prison corridor or a yard. In some cases, women were blindfolded while strip searched so they couldn't see who was present. Some of the women described having weapons pointed at them immediately before being told to remove all of their clothes during strip searches in Gaza, or that they were handcuffed.

"Ohood" (name changed at the request of the interviewee) was one of several women who said she was strip searched more than ten times. She described the first time, after Israeli forces detained her in December 2024 in a football field she had been displaced to:

"[It was] in a small room of the football field, and it was by female soldiers, but there were ten or so male soldiers around the door. At the time, there were snipers pointing towards my head and heart. They told me to take my clothes off. I refused. They forced me to take all of them off, including my abaya, including my underwear. The doors and windows in the room were all open. They could all see. They asked me to turn around slowly. Everyone could see me. Only after that was I allowed to put my clothes back on."

Despite this invasive and comprehensive search, the Israeli soldiers subjected her to a second strip search just a few hours later:

Before getting [to Anatot military facility], they did [another] strip search… In the room, there was a laptop and cameras… the cameras were directed towards me… Before my handcuffs were taken off, they cut my underwear and bra with scissors."[506]

One former detainee similarly described having her clothes cut from her body while she remained handcuffed.[507]

Another woman told Amnesty International how during her detention in early 2024, Israeli soldiers took the women detainees to an open yard:

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[502] UN, *Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the Secretary-General*, 21 April 2026, UN Doc. S/2026/321.
[503] UN, *Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the Secretary-General* (previously cited), para. 35.
[504] Further information on file with Amnesty International.
[505] Interview by voice call with a released detainee (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 8 July 2025; Interview by voice call with a released detainee (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 4 March 2026; Interview by voice call with a released detainee (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 29 October 2025.
[506] Interview by voice call with "Ohood" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 30 March 2026.
[507] Amnesty International, "Israel must end mass incommunicado detention and torture of Palestinians from Gaza" (previously cited).

We went through a biometric check, and we were ordered to stand very close to [location withheld], in an open yard. We were ordered to take off our clothes: me, my sister and my old mother. We were ordered to take off everything, even our underwear. It was very difficult, it was very difficult to be stripped, to be searched, you don't even do it before a mother, how about when you are forced. It was incredibly humiliating, it was accompanied by sexist insults, by a female soldier… It lasted between 10 and 15 minutes.[508]

Three women reported being threatened with rape (at the point of detention, in Anatot military facility, Ashkelon or Damon prisons), and an additional woman said she was threatened with public forced nudity.

"Areej", mentioned above, described how, when she was detained during a raid on her home, "They put me ahead of them, as a human shield while they were searching the garden. One soldier asked the captain whether he should take off my clothes. My heart dropped when I heard that. The captain said no."[509]

"Ohood" (name changed at the request of the interviewee) said that, while she was in detention:

"I was threatened all the time with rape, as were other detainees. They said, 'Here are the soldiers and dogs in front of you, they will do it'".

She said the first time she was threatened was in Anatot, and then subsequently in detention in Damon.[510]

Other women described witnessing repeated sexualized insults, threats and other ill-treatment during interrogation and transfer.

For example, "Rasha" (name changed at the request of the interviewee) told Amnesty International how she witnessed abuse of Palestinian girls from the West Bank: "There was a cell for "underage" young women who were around 16-17-year-olds. Male soldiers were taking off their clothes and peeing on them. Damon is a cemetery for living detainees."[511]

Other human rights bodies documented similar patterns of strip-searches and rape threats.[512]

Women consistently reported that when they arrived in Anatot military detention facility, Israeli forces confiscated all of their clothes, including underwear. Several said when they were issued prison uniforms they were not provided with replacement bras or underpants, and this continued for days or weeks until they were transferred to Damon prison where women detained from the West Bank would give them spare underwear. Women told Amnesty International that personal items confiscated from them, including money, jewellery, phones and personal identification documents, were never returned after their release.

Women also consistently described severe restrictions on access to menstrual hygiene products in detention. Several women stated that detainees who needed them were provided only one or two sanitary towels a day. Some said they were sometimes forced to use torn cloth, socks, or other items instead of sanitary towels because supplies were restricted. Several women described being forced to line up to request sanitary towels directly from guards, including male guards, in Anatot military facility. The impact of the lack of menstrual hygiene products was exacerbated by the confiscation of women's underwear.

"Dima" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), the 15-year-old girl Amnesty International interviewed, described women waiting in long lines to request sanitary towels individually while male soldiers mocked them and laughed at blood-stained clothing.[513]

The conduct described – particularly repeated, invasive strip searches involving forced nudity, and sometimes blindfolds, handcuffs, and exposure to male guards or cameras, as well as threats of rape – amounts to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and sexual violence under international law. Several women Amnesty International interviewed also described being forced to kiss flags or sing humiliating songs.

While strip searches may be lawful if strictly necessary and proportionate, where they are used to humiliate or punish detainees, they violate the absolute prohibition of ill-treatment under human rights law and the requirement of humane treatment under international humanitarian law.[514]

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[508] Interview by voice call with "Rabab" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 27 August 2026.
[509] Interview by voice call with "Areej" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 11 March 2026.
[510] Interview by voice call with "Ohood" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 30 March 2026.
[511] Interview by voice call with "Rasha" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 2 March 2026.
[512] See, for example, UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited); UN, *Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the Secretary-General* (previously cited).
[513] Interview by voice call with "Dima" (name changed at the request of the interviewee), 16 April 2026.
[514] See, for example, ECtHR, *Valašinas v Lithuania*, judgment, 24 July 2001, para. 117; ECtHR, *Aghdgomelashvili and Japaridze v Georgia*, judgment, 8 October 2020, paras 48-49; UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (The Nelson Mandela Rules), revised in 2015, Rule 52; Istanbul Protocol, 2004, para. 455; The Hague Principles on Sexual Violence (2019), https://thehagueprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/The-Hague-Principles-on-Sexual-Violence-1.pdf, Part 4, pp. 46-47.

11. THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF ISRAEL'S UNLAWFUL CONDUCT ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

The harms Palestinian women were subjected to by Israel as part of its military offensive in Gaza cannot be understood in isolation. Women have not experienced attacks on healthcare separately from starvation, nor displacement, for example. They were also already disproportionately and distinctly affected by prolonged conflict, Israel's unlawful occupation and illegal blockade, with these impacts compounded by existing gender discrimination. Women and girls have experienced these harms simultaneously and repeatedly, resulting in devastating levels of physical, mental and reproductive harm.

Taken together, these trends demonstrate a pattern of wide-scale reproductive harm extending beyond individual cases to affect the whole group. They are consistent with the wider body of evidence documented throughout this report, including the destruction and degradation of hospitals and reproductive healthcare services, pregnancy loss and deteriorating maternal and neonatal outcomes, the denial of fertility treatment, and women delaying or abandoning wanted pregnancies in response to conditions created by Israel's military operations and policies in Gaza. These shifts indicate not only immediate harm, but emerging long-term consequences affecting children from birth and potentially across generations. The physical, psychological and reproductive harm that women and girls have been subjected to for a prolonged period of time has fundamentally altered women's health, family lives and reproductive futures.

11.1 CUMULATIVE AND COMPOUNDED HARMS: THE STORY OF WALAA

The experience of Walaa, 36, is one of multiple stories documented by Amnesty International that illustrate how many of the harms committed by Israel against women accumulated and compounded over time. Walaa, like many other women interviewed by Amnesty International, suffered multiple, cumulative harms over time. Women like Walaa described losing family members, including their children, and, in instances where adequate medical care was not available, navigating the constant fear of further attacks, surviving repeated displacement and enduring inhumane and unsanitary conditions in displacement settings, learning their homes were destroyed, enduring hunger and malnutrition, giving birth in unsafe conditions, and being unable to exercise meaningful reproductive autonomy. These experiences compounded one another and sometimes added to harms women had been carrying from years of sporadic military operations, and a long-standing illegal blockade along with the ensuing economic and social hardships.

Walaa told Amnesty International that she was forcibly displaced under fire from her home in Jabalia in November 2023 and subsequently displaced multiple times while pregnant, in conditions marked by severe hardship and lack of adequate food.

"My pregnancy was normal, but when I was displaced, I started to feel unwell. I left my house one month after the war started. That night, we spent a night of terror with no sleep. They destroyed all the houses around us. We fled because our house was hit with shells… We passed through a military checkpoint [at Al-Kuwaiti Roundabout, southeast of Gaza City]. Then we walked for a long distance."[515]

After a terrifying experience at the military checkpoint and struggling to find a place to shelter, Walaa and her family eventually went to stay with relatives in an overcrowded basement at Al Aqsa University in Khan Younis.

In late January 2024, Walaa gave birth to twins, a girl and a boy, following an emergency caesarean section at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis, while the hospital was coming under attack.[516] At the time, healthcare facilities across Gaza were operating under extreme strain following months of Israeli attacks on hospitals and healthcare infrastructure, severe restrictions on the entry of fuel and other essential supplies, and the progressive collapse of the healthcare system – before even reaching Nasser, Walaa was turned away from one hospital and unable to access an ambulance. Nasser hospital itself was becoming increasingly isolated by military operations surrounding Khan Younis and would soon come under siege.

Her twin daughter died shortly after birth. At the time, there were failures in the hospital's oxygen system – which Walaa and her husband attributed to fuel shortages – as well as severe staff shortages as healthcare professionals fled or were unable to reach the hospital. Walaa's husband, a nurse, said that because of the lack of specialists and X-ray technicians, it was impossible to diagnose their daughter's condition or determine the cause of her death. However, both Walaa and her husband described a situation in which the lack of healthcare professionals and interruptions to oxygen supplies meant that their baby's care was disrupted.[517]

As Walaa was trying to recover from her caesarean section, pain relief was rationed and, for the most part, unavailable to her. "They gave me a painkiller after the surgery only one time. They said they are being careful about how to use the little painkillers remaining and I had to be strong and bear the pain", she told Amnesty International.

On 15 February, the hospital was raided by Israeli forces while she was there with her surviving newborn and her four other children without being given a chance to safely evacuate. They saw people killed around them. Her husband, a nurse in the hospital's neonatal unit, was detained. She described the final few days of the siege on the hospital with her surviving newborn twin son who had jaundice, and her other young children:

"The window of the room we were sleeping in was only covered with a blanket as the glass had blown from an earlier air strike. I was too scared of snipers, especially when the wind moved the blanket up and down. I took the kids and slept in a waiting area between the rooms. An explosion happened and windows shattered above our heads, so we went back to the room with no window glass…. I cried day and night. I was in pain and psychologically destroyed, worrying about my husband, trying to keep my baby alive and taking care of my other kids."[518]

After the siege was lifted, six days later, she and her children were again displaced further south, without any information about her husband's fate.

For approximately 50 days, her 11-year-old son, Omar, helped Walaa secure food and water and look after his younger siblings amid desperate hunger and repeated displacement while Walaa struggled with post-partum infections and was unable to access adequate medical care. Her husband was released and reunited with the rest of the family who were living in a tent in Deir Al-Balah. One night during a winter storm, the tent collapsed; Walaa and her husband held it up again together. In late 2024, however, Omar was killed in an air strike while he was out buying a slushy with a friend. He sustained shrapnel injuries to his head and was taken to Al-Aqsa hospital, where he later died. Walaa recalled that essential medical

[515] Interview by voice call with Walaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 7 June 2026.
[516] Interview by voice call with Walaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 7 June 2026.
[517] According to their accounts, when the oxygen system failed, the single doctor managing multiple emergencies had to provide manual oxygen support, a level of care that was not sustainable in the circumstances.
[518] Interview by voice call with Walaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 7 June 2026.

equipment, including a CT scanner, was unavailable at the hospital, again illustrating the severely diminished healthcare capacity available at the time.

Walaa told Amnesty International how, "I waited outside [the emergency room] for a while, then I saw people carrying a dead person on a stretcher covered with a piece of cloth. The wind moved it, and I saw his body and recognized him. For a second I froze and denied it was him, then I threw myself on the stretcher."

She also told Amnesty International how, "if Omar was destined to leave us, I just wish he had left us before experiencing the famine and displacement".[519]

In June 2026, while talking to Amnesty International, Walaa was seven months pregnant. She told researchers she had not planned to become pregnant while her family were living in displacement in ongoing inhumane conditions, including a lack of sufficient water, and was worried about the life they'd be able to give their child.

Women described being in poor health; suffering from malnutrition, infections, exhaustion, depression, anxiety and trauma. Some told Amnesty International how prolonged stress and overwhelming conditions affected their relationships with their children, including struggling to control their tempers and, in some cases, being violent with their children when they didn't want to be; several women also said they struggled with memory issues or had episodic breakdowns.

11.2 POPULATION-LEVEL DATA UNDERSCORING THE SCALE OF THE CRISIS

A November 2024 study on the psychological toll of the war in Gaza found very high rates of psychiatric disorders among displaced people in Gaza, especially women. The authors found that 63.1% of those surveyed suffered significant symptoms of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (that is, all three comorbidities). The study found that women were more likely to suffer from anxiety than men, and being subjected to multiple displacements was significantly associated with having one, two, or three disorders compared to having none.[520]

According to UNFPA in April 2026, 96% of children in Gaza reported feeling that death is imminent. Among adolescents, 61% show symptoms consistent with PTSD, 38% with depression, and 41% with anxiety, while one in five adults report experiencing daily suicidal thoughts.[521]

These figures reflect a population living under sustained and cumulative trauma, with no meaningful opportunity for recovery. As a Palestinian psychiatrist from Gaza explained to Amnesty International: "We are seeing extreme stress, constant fear, and a sense that everything is collapsing and cannot be stopped."[522] The broader conditions of conflict – repeated displacement, hunger, insecurity and loss – further undermine people's ability to access or benefit from care. The minimum conditions required for therapeutic recovery – safety, stability and continuity – remain absent. Psychiatric healthcare systems themselves have also been devastated.[523]

The cumulative harm is also evident in reproductive health indicators, which reflect the combined and interacting effects of attacks on healthcare facilities, restrictions on humanitarian aid, displacement, malnutrition, chronic stress, insecurity and the destruction of the systems necessary to support pregnancy, childbirth and infant care.

Available evidence indicates an increase in miscarriages and stillbirths among Palestinians in Gaza since October 2023, and a reduction in live births.

In July 2026, UN OCHA reported that the miscarriage rate in Gaza reached 208.5 per 1,000 live births between the first six months of 2026 and peaked at 377.3 per 1,000 live births in April 2026.[524] UN OCHA

[519] Interview by voice call with Walaa (surname withheld at the request of the interviewee), 7 June 2026.
[520] Based on a survey of 952 people in November 2024. Belal Aldabbour and others, "The Psychological Toll of War and Forced Displacement in Gaza: A Study on Anxiety, PTSD, and Depression", 2025, Chronic Stress, Volume 9:1-11, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/24705470251334943
[521] UNFPA, *Crisis in Palestine: Situation Report (January–March 2026)*, 17 April 2026, https://www.unfpa.org/resources/situation-report-crisis-palestine-january-march-2026
[522] Interview by voice call with a psychiatrist in Gaza (name withheld at the request of the interviewee), 23 April 2026.
[523] Gisha and Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP), *Mental Health Under Fire: "A Safe Space for the Soul"*, 30 March 2026, https://gisha.org/en/mental-health-under-fire/
[524] UN OCHA, "Humanitarian situation report, 23 July 2026", 23 July 2026, https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/opt-humanitarian-situation-report-23-july-2026

indicated that these figures were drawn from *Bayan*, the reproductive health information platform manged by the Ministry of Health in Gaza, which consolidates data from reproductive health service providers across Gaza. By comparison, the Ministry of Health in Gaza reported that the miscarriage rate was 137 per 1,000 live births in 2022.[525] Amnesty International has not been able to determine whether the same methodologies were used in each instance. Multiple health professionals also told Amnesty International they had seen an increase in miscarriages among their patients after 7 October 2023.

A study published in 2026 in the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* found that the stillbirth rate among a cohort of pregnant women in Gaza pregnant on 7 October 2023 increased from 6.0 per 1,000 births before the conflict to 10.3 per 1,000 births during the conflict, while Gaza Ministry of Health data reported in 2026 indicated a 140% increase in stillbirths between 2022 and 2025.[526]

According to Ministry of Health in Gaza data reported in *The Lancet*, the number of live births recorded during the first six months of 2025 was approximately 41% lower than during the same period in 2022.[527] UN OCHA subsequently reported a modest decline in deliveries during the first half of 2026 compared to the first half of 2025, with steeper monthly decreases recorded from April to June.[528]

UN OCHA also reported in July 2026 that 57.1% of pregnant women were anaemic, and a severe maternal morbidity rate of 82 cases per 1,000 deliveries. They also reported that caesarean sections accounted for 49.2% of all deliveries, largely driven by emergency procedures among women arriving in critical condition. Haemorrhages, hypertension, and infections accounted for 92% of severe maternal complications, underscoring the increasing severity of maternal health risks.[529]

Indicators also demonstrate significant deterioration in neonatal health and life expectancy. In December 2025, UNICEF reported significantly increased rates of premature and underweight births, with around one in five newborns requiring intensive neonatal care, driven by maternal malnutrition, chronic stress and lack of access to antenatal care. With medical support often unavailable, complications that would previously have been treatable frequently became life-threatening. They also reported that the number of babies who died on their first day of life increased 75% – from an average of 27 babies per month in 2022 to 47 babies per month between July and September 2025.[530] The wider impact on children born into these conditions is also reflected in estimates of life expectancy. According to a study published in *The Lancet* in January 2025, a child born in Gaza during the first year of the conflict would, based on prevailing mortality rates, have a statistical life expectancy at birth of approximately 40.5 years, compared with 75.5 years before October 2023.[531]

The UN had previously reported that by late 2024, women in Gaza were reported to be three times more likely to die in childbirth and three times more likely to miscarry compared with pre-war levels. See UN, "Gaza's maternal and newborn health system 'decimated', UN warns", 11 December 2025, https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/12/1166569

Reliable data on miscarriages throughout 2024 could not be collected by the Ministry of Health in Gaza due to access restrictions, which persisted in 2025, resulting in significant under-reporting.

[525] Ministry of Health in Gaza statistics, on file with Amnesty International.

[526] Jamaluddine and others, "Maternal and neonatal outcomes in a cohort of pregnant women during conflict, Gaza Strip", Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 2026, https://doi.org/10.2471/blt.25.293829; Ibrahim al-Khalili, "Gaza's unseen casualties: A surge in stillbirths and birth defects", Al Jazeera, 22 April 2026, https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2026/4/22/gazas-unseen-casualties-a-surge-in-stillbirths-and-birth-defects

[527] Bilal Irfan and others, "Is Gaza still a place for newborn life?", The Lancet, Volume 406, Issue 10505, 23 August 2025, https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(25)01627-7/fulltext

See also UNFPA Arab States Regional Office, "UNFPA warns of catastrophic birth outcomes in Gaza amid starvation, psychological trauma and collapsing healthcare", 23 July 2025, https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/news/unfpa-warns-catastrophic-birth-outcomes-gaza-amid-starvation-psychological-trauma-and

[528] UN OCHA, "Humanitarian situation report, 23 July 2026" (previously cited).

[529] UN OCHA, "Humanitarian situation report, 23 July 2026" (previously cited).

[530] UNICEF, "Born vulnerable: the toll of maternal malnutrition and stress in Gaza", 11 December 2025, https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/born-vulnerable-toll-maternal-malnutrition-and-stress-gaza

[531] Michel Guillot, Mohammed Draidi, Valeria Cetorelli and others, "Life expectancy losses in the Gaza Strip during the period October, 2023, to September, 2024", The Lancet, Volume 405, 2025, https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02810-1/abstract

12. GENOCIDE

The conduct giving rise to these harms not only amounts to violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as set out above, but also amounts to genocide.

In December 2024, Amnesty International concluded that Israel had committed and was continuing to commit genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. That assessment focused on three prohibited acts under Article II of the Genocide Convention: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm; and deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the group's physical destruction in whole or in part. The organization found that Israel had committed the aforementioned prohibited acts with the specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza, a substantial part of a protected group under the Genocide Convention, as such.[532]

The findings of this report reinforce and deepen that assessment by examining acts that have particularly affected Palestinian women and girls. Moreover, they show the genocide did not end with the so-called October 2025 ceasefire, which, while reducing the scale and intensity of attacks, has not led to a cessation of deadly Israeli air strikes, destruction or blockade. In fact, Israel has continued to commit genocide into October 2026, the end of the review period for this report, three years after the Hamas-led 7 October 2023 attack, with the strongest evidence establishing the ongoing genocidal acts of causing serious bodily and mental harm and continuing to deliberately inflict conditions of life calculated to physically destroy Palestinians.

Furthermore, the evidence also demonstrates that Israel has imposed measures that have had, and continue to have, the effect of preventing births among Palestinians in Gaza, a genocidal act under Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention if committed with the requisite intent. While Amnesty International is not in a position to categorically conclude that these measures were imposed with the intent to prevent births required under Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention, the pattern of conduct and the broader context in which the acts were committed raise serious concerns that the outcome was indeed intended. Amnesty International is therefore calling for Israel to also be investigated for the additional genocidal act of imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.

12.1 DELIBERATELY INFLICTING CONDITIONS OF LIFE CALCULATED TO BRING ABOUT PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION

In December 2024, Amnesty International concluded that between October 2023 and June 2024, Israel deliberately inflicted conditions of life calculated to physically destroy Palestinians in Gaza through damage to and destruction of objects indispensable for the survival of the civilian population, mass forced displacement in inhumane conditions, and the denial and obstruction of essential services and life-saving supplies.[533]

The evidence documented throughout this report further demonstrates Israel's systematic and ongoing infliction of conditions of life calculated to physically destroy Palestinians in Gaza, through Israeli attacks on and affecting reproductive and neonatal health care, the dismantlement of the reproductive healthcare

[532] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), pp. 202-282.
[533] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), pp. 123-201.

system, and the impact of Israel's mass "evacuation" orders, house destructions, and severe restrictions on the entry of aid and essential services on women and girls.

Israel's conduct deprived pregnant women of maternal and obstetric care and access to food and created conditions in which women struggled to feed their children. Newborns were denied life-saving treatment, and women caring for family members were forced to do so without access to basic necessities.[534] Israeli conduct also led, foreseeably, to increased gender-based violence and caused women heading households in particular to face heightened risks of exploitation. At the same time, Israel's repeated "evacuation" orders and attacks dismantled existing systems of protection for women from gender-based violence and other discrimination.[535] Cumulative conditions imposed and maintained by Israel also caused preventable deaths of women, newborns and people with chronic illnesses, through the destruction of healthcare infrastructure and severe restrictions on the entry and delivery of humanitarian aid and essential supplies.

The conditions deliberately inflicted by Israel not only created "circumstances that would lead to a slow death,"[536] but also dismantled the healthcare, social and family structures upon which women and their communities depended. They also had a distinct reproductive dimension, undermining women's ability to decide freely whether and when to have children, and to experience pregnancy, childbirth and family life in safety and dignity.

In November 2025, Amnesty International found that Israel continued to deliberately inflict conditions of life calculated to destroy Palestinians in Gaza, despite the so-called ceasefire.[537] The evidence documented in this report demonstrates that, through October 2026, the review period of this report, Israel continued to inflict such conditions, particularly through the ongoing deprivation of goods and essential services through its unlawful blockade, the almost blanket denial of Palestinians entering or exiting Gaza, and the violent expansion and maintenance of access restricted or effective no-go zones across 65% of Gaza, forcing Palestinians into an ever-shrinking, overcrowded area and exacerbating already inhumane living conditions.

12.2 KILLING AND CAUSING SERIOUS BODILY AND MENTAL HARM

Amnesty International previously concluded that, between October 2023 and June 2024, Israel carried out unlawful attacks that deliberately killed and seriously injured many civilians in Gaza. Based on its investigations and those by other human rights organizations, Amnesty International identified a pattern of repeated direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects or deliberately indiscriminate attacks by the Israeli military in Gaza during the period under review.[538]

The evidence documented demonstrates the extensive killing of Palestinian women and girls through Israel's air strikes on residential areas and other military operations, many of which Amnesty International and other organizations have found violated international humanitarian law. Women were killed in their homes, displacement shelters, healthcare facilities, while seeking food or other humanitarian assistance, and in the vicinity of the "Yellow Line" imposed by Israeli forces. Many died alongside children and other family members.

Israel's repeated attacks on residential buildings and the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in densely populated urban areas contributed to both the high number of civilian casualties and the significant proportion of women among those killed.[539]

Beyond those directly killed in military attacks, women and newborn babies also died as a result of Israel's destruction of healthcare infrastructure, repeated forced displacement in inhumane conditions, severe restrictions on humanitarian aid and essential supplies, and the resulting malnutrition, disease and collapse

[534] See sections 7.3, 8.1 and 8.2.
[535] See sections 7.5 and 8.3.
[536] See ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Stakić*, Case IT-97-24-T, Trial Chamber judgment, 31 July 2003, para. 517; ICJ, Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (*Croatia v. Serbia*), judgment, 3 February 2015, para. 161; ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, Case ICTR-96-4-T, Trial Chamber judgment, 2 September 1998, para. 506; ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu*, Case ICTR-96-4-T, Trial Chamber judgment, 2 September 1998, paras 507-508; ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana*, Case ICTR-95-1-T, Trial Chamber judgment, 21 May 1999, paras 115 and 116; ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Musema*, Case ICTR-96-13-A, Trial Chamber judgment, 27 January 2000, para. 157; ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Brdjanin*, Case IT-99-36-T, Trial Chamber judgment, 1 September 2004, para. 691; ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Tolimir*, Case IT-05-88/2-T, Trial Chamber judgment, 12 December 2012, para. 740.
[537] Amnesty International, "Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza continues unabated despite ceasefire" (previously cited).
[538] See section 4.
[539] See sections 4.1.2, 4.2, 5.2 and 8.4. See also, Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), section 6.1.

of medical services, particularly as a result of the cumulative harm imposed.[540] Neonatal deaths also occurred during the siege of Al-Shifa hospital by Israeli forces, imposed with inadequate precautions to minimize harm to civilians or evacuation plans for babies receiving life-saving care.[541]

The evidence in this report likewise demonstrates serious bodily and mental harm on a massive scale. Women and girls have suffered severe and life-changing physical injuries, malnutrition, pregnancy complications, and reproductive harms, including documented miscarriage and pregnancy loss, unsafe childbirth, post-partum complications, and reproductive trauma.[542] These harms have caused grave and long-term disadvantage to women in Gaza and their ability to lead "a normal and constructive life".[543] As noted by UN Women, cited above, between 7 October 2023 and 31 December 2025, nearly 11,000 women and girls sustained injuries resulting in lifelong disabilities. These include amputations, spinal injuries, burns, and shrapnel wounds.[544]

The mental-harm consequences have also been severe. Women described the psychological trauma of witnessing the deaths of loved ones and surviving relentless attacks, sometimes not knowing if their loved ones might still be alive or being able to bury them,[545] and living under constant threat while caring for family members for months or years.[546] Many spoke of the destruction of their homes and the conditions of forced displacement as a devastating interference with their rights to privacy, dignity and security of persons, and the hopeless feeling of not knowing if they will ever be able to return, especially to areas beyond the "Yellow Line".[547] Many also described the devastation they felt after being forced to indefinitely suspend or abandon long-held plans to have children because of the destruction of Gaza's fertility sector where they had started treatment and deeply invested, or because they felt unable after the trauma, pain and indignity of previous pregnancies. Many described enduring unwanted pregnancies amid starvation and forced displacement, where they were struggling to survive or care for other family members, or desperately suffering the uncertainty associated with enforced disappearances or the unknown fate of family members and the economic precarity that resulted for them afterwards.[548] Women often described being subjected to multiple of these harms, with cumulative effects, for years. Population-level data indicates exceptionally high levels of anxiety, depression and PTSD among women in Gaza, and of suicidal ideation among adults.[549]

As set out in this report, many of these serious bodily and mental harms resulted from conduct that Amnesty International and other organizations have found to be unlawful, including attacks that violated the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack, Israel's unlawful blockade and the imposition of sieges across large parts of Gaza, and the mass forced displacement of Palestinians into uninhabitable or unsafe areas.

In addition to the serious bodily and mental harm set out above, women who had been detained reported being subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including acts of sexual violence. Several women reported witnessing family members killed or threatened with death while they were being detained, and enduring detention without knowing their loved ones' fate. Women Amnesty International interviewed reported consistently being unable to receive any information on their family for months after their home was violently raided or the area had been struck with so-called "fire belts" of multiple successive air strikes in a concentrated area, leading several to fear their children were dead.[550]

These harms did not end with the so-called ceasefire. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, over 5,300 Palestinians were injured in the almost-year following the ceasefire agreement until the end of the review period of this report, including 1,473 women and girls.[551] Through to October 2026, women and girls continued to suffer severe physical and psychological harm from unlawful Israeli conduct, including suffering caused by the deprivation of medical supplies and other essential goods, the near-blanket prohibitions on exit and entry to Gaza, including for many patients with urgent medical needs, and the pain and uncertainty of ongoing and protracted and indefinite forced displacement in uninhabitable conditions. For many women,

[540] See sections 5, 6, 7.3, 8.1, 8.2.
[541] See section 5.5.
[542] See sections 4.3, 5, 6, 8, 11.1.
[543] ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Krstić*, Case IT-98-33, Trial Chamber judgment, 2 August 2001, para. 513. See also ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Blagojević and Jokić*, Case IT-02-60-T, Trial Chamber judgment, 17 January 2005, para. 645; ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Gatete*, Case ICTR-2000-61-T, Trial Chamber judgment, 31 March 2011; para. 584; ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Tolimir*, Case IT-05-88/2-T, Trial Chamber judgment, 12 December 2012, para. 738.
[544] See section 4.3.
[545] See section 4.5.
[546] See section 7.
[547] See section 7.
[548] See sections 9.3, 9.4, and 10.2.
[549] See section 11.2.
[550] See section 10.2.
[551] See section 4.1.3.

these harms accumulated over time, compounding the long-term consequences of injuries, trauma and deprivation already endured.

12.3 MEASURES INTENDED TO PREVENT BIRTHS

In addition to reinforcing evidence relating to Israel's commission of acts enumerated in Articles II(a) to (c) of the Genocide Convention, the findings of this report provide a substantial basis to conclude that Israeli authorities' measures have impaired the ability of Palestinians in Gaza to conceive, sustain pregnancies and give birth to living children, thus preventing births within the group.

While Amnesty International could not reach a definitive conclusion on the requisite intent, it is clear that the prevention of births among Palestinians in Gaza was not an incidental consequence of Israel's overall pattern of conduct. Instead, it was the foreseeable outcome of policies and practices maintained and repeated by Israel over a three-year period, despite extensive notice of their effects. This conduct must therefore be investigated as genocide by imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, prohibited under Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention.

Unlike the genocidal acts enumerated in Articles II(a) to (c) of the Genocide Convention, the act of "imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group" has been the subject of limited interpretation by international courts and tribunals. To date, genocide by "imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group" has never been charged or prosecuted in an international court.[552]

Nonetheless, the jurisprudence of international criminal tribunals has identified the following as "measures" capable of constituting the *actus reus* of Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention: sexual mutilation, enforced sterilization, forced birth control, separation of the sexes, the prohibition of marriages, rape and other sexual violence.[553]

In their joint intervention in *The Gambia v. Myanmar* case before the ICJ, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom argued that "Clearly, measures will 'prevent births' within the group if they create physical barriers to reproduction. International criminal tribunals have found that Article II(d) encompasses measures intended to diminish a group's capacity to 'reproduce normally' which must capture measures that undermine physical reproductive capacity."[554]

Measures intended to prevent births may operate at different stages of the reproductive process, including preventing conception, disrupting gestation and preventing childbirth. Measures that intentionally seek to prevent any of these stages may therefore constitute measures within the meaning of Article II(d).

Reproductive capacity and "normal reproduction" depend on access to healthcare, adequate nutrition, physical security, freedom from displacement, and the conditions necessary to sustain pregnancy. The systematic destruction of these conditions may therefore be relevant when assessing whether measures intended to prevent births have been imposed.

In *Akayesu*, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda clarified that the "measures intended to prevent births" are not confined to direct interference with reproductive capacity, but may also include situations "where members of a group can be led, through threats or trauma, not to procreate".[555] In other words, international jurisprudence has accepted that these measures may include both physical and mental measures that affect the capacity of members of the group to procreate.

The International Court of Justice has also recognized that rape and other acts of sexual violence may constitute "measures intended to prevent births within the group" provided that "the circumstances of the

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[552] Rosemary Grey, "A Legal Analysis of Genocide by 'Imposing Measures Intended to Prevent Births': Myanmar and Beyond", Journal of Genocide Research, Volume 26, 2024.

[553] See ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Akayesu,* Case ICTR-96-4-T, Trial Judgment, 2 September 1998, para. 507; ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Kayishema & Ruzindana,* Case ICTR-95-1-T, Trial Judgment, 21 May 1999, para. 117; ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Rutaganda*, Case ICTR-96-3-T, Trial Judgment, 6 December 1999, para. 53; ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Musema*, Case ICTR-96-13-T, Trial Judgment,27 January 2000, para. 158; ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Popović and others*, Case IT-05-88-T, Trial Judgment, 10 June 2010, para. 818; ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Tolimir*, Case IT-05-88/2-T, Trial Judgment, 12 December 2012, para. 743.

[554] Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, Joint Declaration of Intervention Pursuant to Article 63 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice in the Case of Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (*The Gambia v. Myanmar*), 15 November 2023, para. 35.

[555] ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Akayesu,* Trial Chamber judgment (previously cited), para. 508.
"Furthermore, the Chamber notes that measures intended to prevent births within the group may be physical, but can also be mental. For instance, rape can be a measure intended to prevent births when the person raped refuses subsequently to procreate, in the same way that members of a group can be led, through threats or trauma, not to procreate."
See, also, for example, ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Kayishema and Ruzindana*, Trial Chamber judgment (previously cited), para. 117; ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Rutaganda*, ICTR-96-3-T, Trial Chamber judgment, 6 December 1999, para. 53.

commission of those acts, and their consequences, are such that the capacity of members of the group to procreate is affected."[556] When determining whether such acts may prevent births within a group, the systematic nature of the acts must also be considered.

The act of "imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group" may overlap with other prohibited acts enumerated in Article II of the Genocide Convention,[557] including deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of a group in whole or in part. As one legal commentator has explained, for the former to be established, "it would have to be shown that the conditions of life imposed on members of the group were intended to destroy the group through the prevention of births within the group."[558]

12.3.1 MEASURES THAT PREVENTED BIRTHS

Measures imposed by Israel have prevented births and had a severe impact on the reproductive capacity of Palestinians in Gaza.

The evidence documented in this report points to multiple measures imposed by Israel which individually or cumulatively impaired or prevented births amongst Palestinians in Gaza. In particular, between 7 October 2023 and 1 October 2026, Israel imposed the following measures:[559]

MEASURES PREVENTING CONCEPTION

Destruction of fertility clinics:
Attacks, most of which were carried out by Israel, combined with the impact of Israel's restrictions and blockade on the entry of essential items into Gaza, led to the closure of all of the at least nine fertility clinics that provided IVF services in Gaza before 7 October 2023. The attacks resulted in the destruction of several thousand embryos or other reproductive material. Amnesty International documented the devastating impact of these losses on women or couples affected.[560]

Denial of essential medical supplies to restore IVF services:
Three doctors told Amnesty International that Israel's restrictions had prevented and continue to prevent the import of necessary items to re-establish IVF services in Gaza. Two of these doctors explained how they were unable to replace medical items or machinery destroyed in attacks or import new laboratory equipment, culture media and other essential IVF supplies, meaning they could not re-establish IVF treatment in Gaza.[561]

Near-blanket closure policy:
Israel's near-blanket prohibition of people leaving Gaza has prevented Palestinians from accessing assisted reproductive technologies such as IVF and thus interfered with conception. Palestinians now denied options to receive IVF in Gaza are unable to leave to access IVF outside Gaza. Amnesty International spoke to seven Palestinians who had been seeking IVF treatment in Gaza before 7 October 2023 and whose efforts were devastated by the destruction of fertility clinics and restrictions on the entry of essential items, none of whom were able to leave Gaza to obtain treatment outside even at their own expense. All said that as a result of the destruction of the IVF facilities in Gaza and the Israeli blockade, they feared they had lost their only realistic chance of carrying a pregnancy.[562]

MEASURES IMPAIRING GESTATION

Denial of essential supplies critical for maternal health:
Amnesty International documented how the Israeli blockade and deliberate denial of adequate medicines, medical items and fuel to Palestinians in Gaza have had severe consequences on maternal and newborn health, leading to adverse pregnancy outcomes, including the heightened risk of miscarriages. As one

[556] ICJ, *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia)*, Judgment, 3 February 2015, para. 166.
[557] ICJ, *Croatia v. Serbia* (previously cited), para. 166. See also Guénaël Mettraux, *International Crimes: Law and Practice*, Volume I: Genocide, 2019, pp. 281-282.
[558] Guénaël Mettraux, *International Crimes: Law and Practice*, Volume I: Genocide (previously cited), pp.281-282.
[559] It is not a requirement under Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention that the measures in question result in the actual prevention of births within the targeted group, only that they were intended to and capable of doing so. See, for example, Guénaël Mettraux, *International Crimes: Law and Practice,* Volume I: Genocide, 2019, pp. 281-282; William Schabas, *Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes*, 2nd edition, 2009, p. 198.
[560] See section 9.1.
[561] See sections 9.1 and 9.2.
[562] See section 9.2.

example, Amnesty International documented the absence of Anti-D immunoglobulin for months at a time in Gaza as a result of Israel's restrictions. The absence of Anti-D immunoglobulin increased the risk of Rh sensitization among Rh-negative pregnant women, potentially leading to miscarriage, stillbirth and other serious complications in subsequent pregnancies.[563] Amnesty International has likewise documented how the impact of the Israeli blockade led to severe and prolonged food deprivation and malnutrition among Palestinians in Gaza, including pregnant women, which can materially increase the risk of fetal loss and other adverse pregnancy outcomes.[564]

"Evacuation" orders imposed with no exceptions for high-risk groups such as pregnant women:
Israeli "evacuation" orders were often unclear, contradictory, impossible to comply with safely, and directed civilians to areas that were themselves unsafe or later attacked. They contributed to mass displacement under coercive conditions into areas that were often uninhabitable. Women with late-stage and high-risk pregnancies were among those forced to travel – sometimes against medical advice – in inhumane conditions to live in such environments, without adequate shelter, water or sanitation.[565] These "evacuation" orders led to interruptions in maternal healthcare for some pregnant women and caused maternal healthcare facilities in displacement areas to become overwhelmed.

MEASURES IMPAIRING CHILDBIRTH

Destruction of maternal healthcare infrastructure:
Israeli attacks devastated a significant proportion of the maternal healthcare infrastructure in Gaza. At various points, attacks on hospitals and other healthcare facilities severely restricted access to maternal healthcare in large parts of Gaza, and women reported being turned away from hospitals while suffering obstetric emergencies or facing overwhelmed wards. In some of the cases Amnesty International documented, the attacks were against the hospital as a whole, but in other instances, such as, for example, in Kamal Adwan hospital on 11 December 2023, maternity departments came under specific attack. Several hospitals that were attacked or besieged were the main maternity providers for the governorate or were maternity hospitals or functioning primarily as such at the time.[566] In addition, during sieges by Israeli forces, women delivered in unsafe conditions – including caesarean sections without adequate anaesthesia, being forced to flee or forcibly evacuated at late stage of pregnancy. The attacks on maternal healthcare occurred in a context where more women were already suffering high-risk pregnancies caused in part by severe food deprivation as a result of Israel's restrictions and/or where they had minimal access to antenatal or postnatal care, against the backdrop of a highly volatile security situation and displacement.[567] These actions served to put some women's pregnancies and the fetus they were carrying at high risk.

MENTAL MEASURES

Conditions imposed by Israel also contributed to a broader pattern in which some women abandoned plans for future pregnancies, including cases in which trauma led women to avoid becoming pregnant. Thirteen women told Amnesty International that, as a result of their experiences in a devastated healthcare system during a previous pregnancy, or because of the inhumane conditions of displacement in which they were living, they had been led to decide not to have another child or did not feel able to do so. Testimonies provided to Amnesty International by a psychiatrist, paediatrician and two case managers for a woman's NGO indicated these 13 instances reflected a broader trend.[568] These accounts reflect the type of mental harm recognized by international jurisprudence as capable of preventing births within a group.

CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF MEASURES IMPOSED BY ISRAEL

Some of these Israeli measures directly prevented or impaired conception, gestation and childbirth, while others operated together, compounding each other's harmful effects to prevent births (for example, the effects of malnutrition on women and their pregnancies were exacerbated by dismantlement of the health system through attacks and denial of essential supplies). The cumulative impact of the measures has been devastating for the reproductive capacity of Palestinians in Gaza. The impacts documented in this report extended beyond individual incidents of harm or barriers to healthcare and affected every stage of the reproductive cycle, with consequences for the reproductive capacity of Palestinians in Gaza as a group. Available data from 2025 and early 2026 indicates a marked increase in miscarriages, stillbirths, maternal

[563] See section 6.2.
[564] See section 8.2.
[565] See section 7.5.
[566] See section 5.1.
[567] See sections 5, 6, 7.3 and 8.2.
[568] See section 9.3.

mortality and other adverse pregnancy outcomes, alongside a marked decrease in birth rates among Palestinians in Gaza since 7 October 2023.[569]

12.3.2 INTENT TO PREVENT BIRTHS AMONG PALESTINIANS IN GAZA

Amnesty International's findings raise serious concerns that Israel intended to prevent births among Palestinians in Gaza through the imposition of the above-mentioned measures.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has explained that, "[t]o amount to a genocidal act, the evidence must establish that the acts were carried out with intent to prevent births within the group and ultimately to destroy the group as such, in whole or in part."[570]

While Amnesty International did not identify any policy, order or statement by Israeli authorities expressly stating such an intention, international jurisprudence has consistently held that intent may be inferred from a pattern of conduct and the broader context in which the acts were committed.[571]

The measures resulting in the prevention of births have been imposed while Israel concurrently inflicts conditions of life calculated to physically destroy Palestinians in Gaza. It is therefore difficult to infer from these circumstances whether there was a separate and distinct intent on the part of Israeli authorities to prevent births among Palestinians in Gaza through these measures.

Nonetheless, the evidence set out in this report – when considered in its totality – indicates a widespread and systematic dismantling of the conditions necessary for Palestinians in Gaza to make and realize decisions about whether and when to have children, conceive, carry pregnancies safely to term, and give birth safely. These impacts were not merely incidental to Israel's conduct. They were among the ordinary and expected consequences of many of the measures deliberately imposed by Israel. The measures were also continued, and in some respects intensified, even after Israeli authorities were repeatedly put on notice of their effects on Palestinian reproductive health and pregnancy outcomes, raising serious concerns about the underlying intent, particularly as time went on.

These concerns are underscored by the fact that Israel imposed the measures described above while also consistently and deliberately failing to uphold its obligations under international humanitarian law, including as the occupying power, to ensure the food and medical supplies of the civilian population and to afford special protection to pregnant women, maternity cases and newborn children during armed conflict.[572] Indeed, the measures above were imposed in the context of conduct that Amnesty International has found amounted to genocide through other prohibited acts under the Genocide Convention.

The International Court of Justice required Israel, in its three provisional measures orders in 2024, to take all measures within its power to prevent acts falling within Article II of the Genocide Convention, including "imposing measures intended to prevent births."[573]

Likewise, UN agencies and humanitarian organizations have issued repeated warnings regarding the impact of Israeli practices on reproductive health in Gaza. By 3 November 2023, for example, WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNRWA were warning that some 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza were unable to access

[569] See section 11.2.
[570] ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Popović and others*, Case IT-05-88-T, Trial Judgment, 10 June 2010, para. 818.
[571] The possibility of genocidal intent being established indirectly by inference based on conduct and/or other contextual evidence has been accepted by international tribunals and courts in the context of both individual criminal responsibility as well as state responsibility. See Amnesty International, "'You Feel Like You are Subhuman': Israel's Genocide against Palestinians in Gaza" (previously cited) pp. 98-102. See also, ICJ, Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide *(Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro)*, judgment, 26 February 2007, para. 373; ICJ, Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide *(Croatia v. Serbia)*, judgment, 26 February 2007, paras 145 and 148; ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, Trial Chamber judgment (previously cited), paras 523-524; ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Jelisić*, IT-95-10-A, Appeals Chamber judgment, 5 July 2001, para. 47; ICJ, Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide *(Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro)*, judgment, 26 February 2007, para. 373; ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Tolimir*, Trial Chamber judgment (previously cited), para. 745.
[572] Fourth Geneva Convention, Articles 16, 23, 27, 38, 50, 54, 56, 89 and 91; Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), Articles 61, 70(1) and 76. Although Israel is not a party to Additional Protocol I, it is bound by those rules which form part of customary international law. See, for example, ICRC, *Customary International Humanitarian Law Study*, Rule 134, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1
[573] For example, in its Order of 26 January 2024, the ICJ required Israel to "take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip." See ICJ, *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures, order, 26 January 2024, https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf, paras 74-86; ICJ, *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, 78; Order, 28 March 2024, para. 45; Order, 24 May 2024, https://www.icj-cij.org/case/192, para. 57.

emergency obstetric services that thousands would need to give birth safely.[574] Since then, UN agencies including UNFPA and WHO have repeatedly raised the alarm about the impact of Israeli measures on pregnancy outcomes.[575] UN agencies have also raised concerns regarding declining birth rates in Gaza and worsening birth outcomes. In July 2025, for example, UNFPA – citing Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza data – reported that births recorded in the first half of 2025 had fallen by more than 41% compared with the corresponding period in 2022.[576] The impact of Israeli measures on maternal health and pregnancy outcomes was not only documented by UN agencies and humanitarian organizations but was also the subject of repeated reporting in major international media outlets.[577]

The UN CoI also raised concerns regarding the impact of Israeli attacks, "evacuation" orders and restrictions on healthcare on pregnant women and newborns in June 2024,[578] found Israel had committed the prohibited act of imposing measures intended to prevent births in March 2025,[579] and concluded in June 2025 that Israel had committed genocide, including through measures intended to prevent births among Palestinians in Gaza.[580]

International, Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations have documented the impact of Israeli measures on reproductive health, pregnancy outcomes and maternal healthcare in Gaza, and raised concerns regarding reproductive violence and the destruction of conditions necessary for women and girls to safely conceive, carry pregnancies to term and give birth.[581]

None of these warnings changed the conduct of the Israeli authorities; there is no evidence to indicate any significant change in Israel's policies or conduct in response. On the contrary, relevant conduct clearly intensified despite these warnings, as evidenced, for example, through the total siege imposed on Gaza between March and May 2025, which exacerbated the denial of food to pregnant women and the desperate shortages of medicines, medical items and other essential supplies for maternal and reproductive healthcare.

The persistence and intensification of measures affecting reproduction after repeated notice of their consequences is relevant, alongside the broader pattern of conduct and other evidence, to the inference as to intent.

Amnesty International considers there are multiple actions Israeli authorities could have taken and deliberately chose not to do to protect the reproductive health of Palestinian women in Gaza, or to mitigate the impact of its military operations on the conditions to conceive, carry out a pregnancy, and give birth. The many actions it could have taken include allowing adequate food, medical items and other essential aid to enter Gaza – the restrictions on aid were the result of a political decision, and the Israeli authorities could have eased the blockade at any point to all or specific items, even if distribution remained an issue; a lift of the near-blanket prohibition on Palestinians from leaving Gaza to enable women or couples seeking fertility treatment no longer available in Gaza, or pregnant women in need of critical care to leave; and taking the necessary precautions in conducting its military operations in order to minimize harm to reproductive healthcare facilities. It did none of these things.

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[574] WHO, UNICEF, UNRWA, "Women and newborns bearing the brunt of the conflict in Gaza, UN agencies warn", 3 November 2023, https://www.who.int/news/item/03-11-2023-women-and-newborns-bearing-the-brunt-of-the-conflict-in-Gaza-un-agencies-warn
They also said that maternal deaths were likely to increase, and that the "psychological toll of the hostilities also has direct… consequences on reproductive health, including a rise in stress induced miscarriages, stillbirths and premature births."
[575] UNFPA, "UNFPA Situation report #10 - September 2024", 6 September 2024, https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/publications/sitrep10; UNFPA, "Women in Gaza cut off from accessing maternal health supplies as aid blockade enters fourth week", 25 March 2025, https://www.unfpa.org/press/women-gaza-cut-accessing-maternal-health-supplies-aid-blockade-enters-fourth-week; UNFPA, "UNFPA warns of catastrophic birth outcomes in Gaza amid starvation, psychological trauma and collapsing healthcare" (previously cited).
[576] UNFPA, "UNFPA warns of catastrophic birth outcomes in Gaza amid starvation, psychological trauma and collapsing healthcare" (previously cited).
[577] Miriam Berger and Hajar Harb, "The heavy burdens of war for Gaza's women and girls", The Washington Post, 15 November 2023, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/15/gaza-women-pregnancy-israel-war/; Louisa Loveluck, Heba Farouk Mahfouz and Hajar Harb, "War in Gaza is making childbirth a nightmare", The Washington Post, 21 January 2024, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/01/21/gaza-childbirth/; Reuters, "Struck by malnutrition, pregnant Gaza woman can only pray for a healthy baby", 11 July 2025, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/struck-down-by-malnutrition-pregnant-gazan-woman-can-only-pray-healthy-baby-2025-07-11/
[578] UN CoI, *Detailed findings on the military operations and attacks carried out in the Occupied Palestinian Territory from 7 October to 31 December 2023*, 10 June 2024, UN Doc. A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para. 146.
[579] UN CoI, *"More than a Human Can Bear"* (previously cited), paras 175 and 218.
[580] UN CoI, Legal analysis of the conduct of Israel in Gaza pursuant to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (previously cited), paras 150-155.
[581] PHR, *Assault on Survival: The Impact of the War in Gaza on Reproductive Health Care* (2024), https://phr.org/our-work/resources/assault-on-survival-the-impact-of-the-war-in-gaza-on-reproductive-health-care/; PHRI, *A Question of Intent: Reproductive Violence in Gaza*, 2025, https://www.phr.org.il/en/a-question-of-intent-reproductive-violence-in-gaza/; HRW, "*Five Babies in One Incubator"* (previously cited); PHR and Global Human Rights Clinic, University of Chicago Law School, *Destroying Hope for the Future* (previously cited); OHCHR, *A Compendium on Medicide: A Sub-text to Reproductive Genocide: A Public Health Crisis*, 30 July 2026, https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/compendium-medicide-sub-text-reproductive-genocide-public-health

Finally, Amnesty International notes that the measures affecting Palestinian reproduction occurred within a broader political context in which a number of scholars have argued that Israel's policies relating to reproduction and population have been shaped, in part, by concerns articulated by Israeli officials about demographic balance and the preservation of a Jewish majority across Israel.[582] Amnesty International has also previously found that demographic considerations have long informed Israeli legislation and policymaking in Israel and the OPT, as part of a broader policy of maintaining Jewish demographic hegemony while restricting the rights of Palestinians.[583]

12.4 SPECIFIC INTENT TO DESTROY PALESTINIANS IN GAZA

Genocide is distinguished from other international crimes by its additional specific intent requirement (dolus specialis): the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.[584] Amnesty International has previously set out why it considers that Palestinians constitute a distinct national, ethnical and racial group within the meaning of Article II of the Genocide Convention and why Palestinians in Gaza constitute a "substantial part" of that group.[585]

Amnesty International's December 2024 genocide report assessed Israel's intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza on the basis of conduct, statements and other contextual evidence.[586] The findings of the present report build on that earlier analysis and provide additional evidence relevant to the assessment of Israel's intent, including demonstrating continuing intent throughout the period under this report's examination (7 October 2023 until 1 October 2026).

In relation to conduct, Amnesty International's previous report found that during the nine-month period under review, from October 2023 to early July 2024, Israel's military operations in Gaza were characterized by a pattern of unlawful attacks, intentional destruction of cultural and religious sites with no apparent imperative military necessity, the deliberate imposition of conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Palestinians in Gaza, and other unlawful acts against Palestinians in Gaza. It also found that the scale of the attacks, the repetition of destructive acts, and the perpetration of other culpable acts systematically targeted at the same group are all factors that indicate genocidal intent when considered holistically with others.[587] Amnesty International concluded that the only reasonable inference from Israel's pattern of conduct in Gaza, coupled with statements by senior Israeli officials and soldiers made in a context of an unlawful military occupation, illegal blockade and system of apartheid predicated on the dehumanization and oppression of Palestinians, is that Israel intended to destroy Palestinians in Gaza, as such.

The findings of this report should be read alongside and further reinforce this analysis. In relation to Israel's conduct, it documents harms that were not isolated incidents but repeated consequences of a prolonged and deliberate course of conduct that have together devastated the lives of Palestinians in Gaza. This continued until 1 October 2026, the period covered by this report, and included the widespread and systematic undermining of the reproductive health system in Gaza.

Amnesty International previously concluded that the devastating consequences of Israeli actions in Gaza were well documented, widely known and repeatedly brought to the attention of Israeli authorities, yet Israeli

[582] See, for example, Rebecca Steinfeld, "Wars of the Wombs: Struggles Over Abortion Policies in Israel", Israel Studies, Volume 20, 2 (2015), https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/israelstudies.20.2.1; Rebecca Steinfeld, War of the Wombs: The History and Politics of Fertility Policies in Israel, 1948-2010, Phd thesis, University of Oxford, 2011, https://www.academia.edu/42250949/PhD_Thesis_War_of_the_Wombs_The_History_and_Politics_of_Fertility_Policies_in_Israel_1948_2010; Barbara S. Okun, "Israel as a Pronatalist Society", Contemporary Jewry, Volume 33 (2013), https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12397-013-9116-7 , pp. 151-170.
See also Benjamin Netanyahu's 2007 remarks defending cuts to child allowances on the basis that they had a "demographic effect on the non-Jewish public, where there was a dramatic drop in the birth rate". Ynet, "Netanyahu: Pensions cut – Arabs' birth rate declined", 3 January 2007, https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3347683,00.html
See also Bezalel Smotrich's June 2020 statement describing the Bedouin birth rate as "a type of bomb" that must be "defused", advocating measures intended to reduce it in order to preserve a Jewish majority in the Negev. Times of Israel, "Smotrich says Bedouin birthrate a 'bomb' that must be defused", 11 June 2020, https://www.timesofisrael.com/smotrich-says-bedouin-birthrate-a-bomb-that-must-be-defused/
[583] Amnesty International, *Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians* (previously cited), page 14.
[584] UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention), Article II.
[585] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), section 5.4.
[586] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), Chapter 7.
[587] Amnesty International, *'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman'* (previously cited), section 5.5.

policies and practices did not undergo any significant change in course. A case in point is Israel's deliberate disregard of the ICJ's preliminary measures orders despite their mandatory nature.

Amnesty International's current findings reinforce and further substantiate this conclusion. Many aspects of the pattern of conduct previously documented by Amnesty International have continued to characterize Israel's military operations in Gaza during the period under review in the present report. This includes the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to destroy Palestinians in Gaza as well as the commission of other culpable acts against Palestinians, including incommunicado detention, torture and other ill-treatment. As discussed above, Israeli authorities were repeatedly informed by UN bodies, humanitarian organizations, medical professionals and international fact-finding mechanisms of the devastating impact of their conduct on Palestinians in Gaza, including its impact on reproductive health, starvation, displacement, healthcare and survival. Yet Israel's unlawful conduct continued throughout the reporting period. This forms part of the broader pattern of conduct relevant to the assessment of intent. [588]

Amnesty International also previously found, between 7 October 2023 and early July 2024, numerous statements by senior Israeli officials which dehumanized Palestinians, treated the population of Gaza as collectively responsible, or advocated measures incompatible with the continued survival or presence of Palestinians in Gaza as a group.[589] As recognized by international tribunals, the use of "derogatory language" towards members of the targeted group can be considered as evidence of genocidal intent.[590] Moreover, Amnesty International also found senior Israeli officials who were responsible for designing and implementing military policies and actions in Gaza, and representing different branches of the Israeli state, made numerous public statements that appeared to call for, or justify, the destruction of Palestinians in Gaza. The organization concluded that these statements appear to have influenced at least some of the soldiers on the ground, who carried out destructive acts without apparent military necessity, while echoing Israeli officials' words. Amnesty International has previously argued that these statements, considered together, provide evidence of Israel's genocidal intent.[591]

During the reporting period of this report, senior Israeli officials, including the prime minister and other cabinet ministers, continued to make statements announcing or calling for the commission of prohibited acts under the Genocide Convention or other crimes under international law against Palestinians in Gaza. This included the concentration of Gaza's population into limited, heavily surveilled pockets of land,[592] the restriction or suspension of humanitarian aid,[593] the large-scale destruction of the territory, maintaining and expanding the no-go zone – the "Yellow Line" – and pushing for the forcible transfer of the population.[594] As one example, according to reporting by The Times of Israel, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich stated at a conference on 6 May 2025 that "Gaza will be totally destroyed", that Gaza's population would be "concentrated" in a narrow strip of land, and that Palestinians would become "totally despairing" and "be looking for relocation to begin a new life in other places".[595] As another, on 16 August 2026, Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir stated that Israeli forces should "kill 30 or 40" people in Gaza every night, including not only those posing an immediate threat.[596]

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[588] The continuation of such conduct is relevant when assessing intent. International tribunals have repeatedly recognized that genocidal intent may be inferred from a pattern of conduct where the destructive consequences of that conduct are known, foreseeable and persistently pursued. See, for example, ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, Trial Chamber judgment (previously cited), paras 523-524; ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Krstić*, Trial Chamber judgment (previously cited), para. 34; ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Krstić*, Case IT-98-33-A, Appeals Chamber judgment, 19 April 2004, paras 34–37.

[589] Amnesty International, 'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman' (previously cited), section 7.3.

[590] Amnesty International, 'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman' (previously cited), section 7.2.

[591] Amnesty International, 'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman' (previously cited), section 7.3.

[592] Haaretz, שר הביטחון: אנו מתכננים לרכז את כל אוכלוסיית הרצועה ב"עיר הומניטרית שתוקם על חורבות רפיח ["Minister of Defense: We plan to concentrate the entire population of the Gaza Strip in a 'humanitarian city' to be established on the ruins of Rafah"], 7 July 2025, https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-07-07/ty-article/.premium/00000197-e548-d1ad-ab97-e5cd97200000

[593] Israeli Prime Minister Office, לאור סירובו של החמאס למתווה ויטקוף, החלטנו למנוע כל כניסה של סחורות ואספקה לעזה ["In light of Hamas's rejection of the Witkoff proposal, we have decided to prevent the entry of any goods and supplies into Gaza"], 2 March 2025, https://www.gov.il/he/pages/spoke-start020325

[594] Times of Israel, "Defense minister: Aid will enter Gaza only once civilian mechanism built to bypass Hamas", 16 April 2025, https://www.timesofisrael.com/defense-minister-aid-will-enter-gaza-only-once-civilian-mechanism-built-to-bypass-hamas/; National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, X post: חבל שלא לומדים מטעויות. כל עוד החטופים שלנו נמקים במנהרות, אין שום סיבה שלעזה ייכנס גרם אחד של מזון או סיוע כלשהו ["It's a shame we don't learn from our mistakes. As long as our hostages are languishing in the tunnels, there is no reason for a single gram of food or any aid whatsoever to enter Gaza"], 16 April 2025, https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1912414605436952706?s=20; Times of Israel, "Smotrich: Government establishing 'migration administration' for Gaza exodus", 9 March 2025, https://www.timesofisrael.com/smotrich-government-establishing-migration-administration-for-gaza-exodus/ BBC News, "Netanyahu says he has directed IDF to increase control of Gaza to 70%", 24 August 2026, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ceqpelq5reqo
See also section 3.3 in relation to statements about expanding control of Israel's "Yellow Line" area to directly control and establish a no-go area over the vast majority of Gaza.

[595] Times of Israel, "Smotrich says Gaza to be 'totally destroyed,' population 'concentrated' in small area", 6 May 2025, https://www.timesofisrael.com/smotrich-says-gaza-to-be-totally-destroyed-population-concentrated-in-small-area/

[596] "Open Bill" Podcast, "The first episode with Otzma Yehudit chairman Minister Ben Gvir", 15 August 2026, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dePf_12OZgs, minute 10:35.

Taken together, and read alongside Amnesty International's previous findings, the evidence documented in this report reinforces Amnesty International's conclusion that Israeli authorities continued to act with the intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza, as such, during the reporting period under review.

Original words in Hebrew available at Al Jazeera, "Israeli minister calls for killing '30 to 40' Palestinians in Gaza nightly", 16 August 2026, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/8/16/israeli-minister-calls-for-killing-30-to-40-palestinians-in-gaza-nightly

13. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> **"You reach a level where you just reach for broken glass. It's a fight to survive. If you ask any woman in Gaza about the future, they'll ask, what future? We used to discuss life, our children, university, where they would live, how we could save money. Now everything is gone, the money we saved, the homes we had, many of the people we loved."**
>
> Amal Siyyam, Director of the Women's Affairs Centre in Gaza, March 2026.[597]

Israel's conduct in Gaza since 7 October 2023 has been devastating for the lives of Palestinian women and girls. Israeli forces have killed thousands of women and girls, many through attacks that violated international humanitarian law. Women and girls have been forced into a daily struggle for survival marred by grief, trauma, violence, repeated displacement, extreme deprivation, fear and profound loss. They have been deprived of access to essential healthcare, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, and put at increased risk of gender-based violence. Israel's actions have also severely undermined Palestinians' ability to make decisions about if and when to have children, to conceive, carry pregnancies to term, and give birth safely.

Women and girls in Gaza have experienced these harms cumulatively and repeatedly. Women's specific reproductive health needs, gendered caregiving responsibilities and pre-existing inequalities have intensified the harm they have endured. These violations have been an integral part of Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

Amnesty International previously concluded in December 2024 that Israel had committed prohibited acts under the Genocide Convention Article II(a), (b) and (c) with the specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza as such. The evidence collected by Amnesty International for this report reinforces the 2024 findings and calls for Israel to also be investigated for the additional genocidal act of imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention.

Moreover, the evidence demonstrates that Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza has continued despite the so-called ceasefire of October 2025, at a minimum through the ongoing deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction and through causing serious bodily and mental harm to members of the group, and without any change in the required specific intent.

[597] Interview by video call with Amal Siyyam, Director of the Women's Affairs Centre in Gaza, 23 March 2026.

Urgent action is required to end Israel's crimes in Gaza, facilitate an environment to enable recovery, and ensure accountability.

13.1 TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL

Immediately end all violations against Palestinians in Gaza and from Gaza

- Immediately stop the commission of any of the prohibited acts under the Genocide Convention against Palestinians in Gaza, particularly killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and deliberately inflicting on them conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction, as well as acts that may constitute the imposition of measures intended to prevent births among Palestinians in Gaza under Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention.
- Investigate whether Israeli officials are responsible for the commission of genocide, including after the October 2025 ceasefire agreement, and including the crimes set out in Articles II(a) to (d) of the Genocide Convention: killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction, and measures intended to prevent births within the group.
- Suspend and, if sufficient admissible evidence exists, prosecute any governmental or other state officials suspected of responsibility for genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide, attempt to commit genocide, or complicity in genocide.
- Comply fully with all legally binding provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice since 26 January 2024, including by granting immediate and unimpeded access to Gaza to independent international investigative bodies and taking effective measures to ensure that all evidence related to genocide and other crimes under international law is preserved.
- Engage and cooperate fully with any international investigations into genocide.
- Agree to and uphold an immediate, sustained ceasefire to save and protect civilian life, and to allow for safe, consistent and predictable routes to bring aid into and across Gaza for those who need it.
- End unlawful attacks on civilians and civilian objects and ensure full compliance with international humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack.
- End the use of starvation and restrictions of essential items needed by the civilian population; remove all restrictions that prevent the unhindered entry and distribution of humanitarian assistance, including food, water, fuel, shelter materials, medicines and medical equipment, including all items needed for women's reproductive health and autonomy. In line with Israel's obligations as the occupying power, take urgent and effective steps to drastically improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza and reverse, as a matter of priority, all policies and actions that have resulted in the rapid deterioration of conditions of life in Gaza, including hunger and disease.
- Lift the blockade as a key tool of enforcing the apartheid system and remove all arbitrary restrictions on the movement of people and goods in and out of Gaza.
- Ensure that the basic needs of people living in Gaza are met, including by ensuring there are sufficient, safe, acceptable, accessible and affordable supplies of water, food, dignified temporary housing – until reconstruction is completed – and other essentials available to all those living in Gaza, and by enabling access to essential services, through the sufficient and continuous supply of electricity and fuel to power healthcare, food production, and water and sanitation infrastructure.
- Cease all policies and practices aimed at permanently altering the demographic composition, territorial integrity or population distribution of Gaza. Immediately cease policies and practices resulting in the forcible transfer, deportation or prolonged displacement of Palestinians in Gaza. Ensure that all Palestinians displaced from their homes are able to return voluntarily, safely and in dignity to all areas of Gaza and facilitate the reconstruction of homes where they have been damaged or destroyed.
- In line with the ICJ's Advisory Opinion of 2024, end the occupation of the Palestinian territory – Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem – which the ICJ found unlawful, halt any attempt to fragment Gaza or alter its borders, particularly around the "Yellow Line" and other access restricted

zones and immediately withdraw forces and dismantle any military bases in Gaza and the rest of the OPT.

- Provide full and effective reparations to victims, including individuals and communities, of serious human rights violations, serious international humanitarian law violations, and crimes under international law, including war crimes and crimes against humanity. Reparations should include restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, reconstruction, satisfaction and guarantees of non-recurrence.
- Ensure reparations recognize gendered and reproductive harms, including harms associated with loss of fertility treatment, pregnancy complications, loss of newborns, family separation, female-headed-household status, and increased exposure to gender-based violence.
- Establish mechanisms that ensure women and girls, including those who have suffered reproductive harm, disability, detention, family separation and psychological trauma, can fully access reparations without discrimination.

In line with the special protections established under IHL, protect and restore reproductive healthcare and rights

- Respect and protect hospitals, maternity units, ambulances, healthcare personnel and patients in accordance with international humanitarian law.
- Immediately release medical staff from Gaza who have been arbitrarily detained.
- End arbitrary restrictions on humanitarian NGOs, including those supporting reproductive and other healthcare in Gaza, facilitate their access and operations.
- Immediately facilitate the entry of all essential medicines, equipment, spare parts, fuel, and required technical assistance for the functioning of Gaza's healthcare system, including assisted reproductive technologies.
- Facilitate the restoration and reconstruction of healthcare facilities, including maternity hospitals, neonatal intensive care units and fertility clinics.
- Ensure unrestricted access to maternal, neonatal, sexual and reproductive healthcare, including by removing all travel and access restrictions imposed in Gaza and facilitating the reconstruction of roads, entry of ambulances and spare parts for ambulances.
- Ensure timely medical evacuation for all patients requiring treatment unavailable in Gaza, including pregnant women, newborns and children with complex medical conditions. Facilitate prompt, safe and dignified exit for individuals requiring fertility treatment that is unavailable in Gaza.
- Remove all restrictions preventing family reunification between parents and children separated during medical evacuations.
- Ensure the continuous availability and accessibility of a full range of quality contraceptive methods and ensure that all women and girls can access comprehensive reproductive healthcare.

End arbitrary detention and gender-based abuses

- End the indefinite incommunicado detention of Palestinians from the occupied Gaza Strip, without charge or trial under the Unlawful Combatants Law and repeal the law.
- Ensure that women are not detained in order to put pressure on their family members, for prolonged questioning about family members, or for any other discriminatory purpose.
- Release all Palestinians arbitrarily detained without charge or trial, unless they are prosecuted for a recognizable criminal offence in a human rights-compliant process that does not resort to the death penalty.
- Ensure all detainees are protected from torture and other ill-treatment, including sexual violence and gender-based abuses. Investigate and prosecute all allegations of torture or ill-treatment, including sexual and gender-based violence.
- End unnecessary, disproportionate, punitive or humiliating strip searches and other search practices amounting to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or sexual violence. If there is a legitimate need

for a strip search, this must be conducted in line with international legal standards. Ensure women have access to all necessary clothing items, and to menstrual hygiene items and specialized medical care that recognizes women's needs.

- Ensure all detainees have full access to lawyers.
- Grant the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and independent human rights organizations immediate, regular, and unhindered access to all places of detention.
- Ensure that all detainees are able to communicate regularly with their families, receive family visits, and that families are promptly informed of their relatives' whereabouts and legal status.

Ensure family reunification and identification of the missing

- Facilitate prompt reunification of families separated through hostilities, displacement, detention, medical evacuation or movement restrictions.
- Establish effective mechanisms to determine the fate and whereabouts of missing Palestinians and promptly provide information to families.
- Ensure the dignified return of remains and facilitate burial practices consistent with family wishes and religious traditions.
- Ensure that necessary supplies and experts enter Gaza in order to search for missing persons in sites affected by military operations.
- Grant immediate and unrestricted access to Gaza for independent human rights organizations, international investigators, forensic experts and journalists.

Ensure freedom of movement and facilitate the work of human rights and humanitarian organizations

- Ensure the free and dignified movement of Palestinians into and out of Gaza, and to the West Bank. Facilitate exit for medical cases, including individuals or families seeking fertility treatment, students, and individuals at risk of gender-based violence.
- End all restrictions and sanctions imposed on individuals or organizations for doing human rights or humanitarian work.
- End all reprisals, restrictions or sanctions against Palestinian women human rights defenders, humanitarian workers, journalists and healthcare workers.

13.2 TO THE DE FACTO AUTHORITIES IN GAZA:

- Take all feasible precautions to protect civilians and civilian objects under their control.
- End the use of civilian areas and protected sites in ways that place civilians at increased risk.
- Investigate and hold accountable members responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses, including any incidents of misuse of hospitals.
- Ensure protection of women and girls from gender-based violence and exploitation.
- Develop measures to prevent and respond to increases in child marriage and gender-based violence associated with displacement, poverty and humanitarian crisis.
- Remove any impediments to ensure women can access unimpeded and comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare.
- Ensure women and girls are meaningfully represented in future governance, reconstruction and recovery planning.

13.3 TO THE BOARD OF PEACE

- Place human rights and international law at the centre of all actions, particularly non-discrimination and a commitment to the rights of all Palestinians in Gaza, including women and girls.
- Refrain from making any decision or taking measures designed to undermine existing UN mechanisms, including UNRWA, or any steps that risk fragmenting Gaza or deepening its isolation from the rest of the OPT.

  Refrain from engaging in any action that may result in destroying evidence of crimes under international law, including genocide.

13.4 TO ALL THIRD STATES, INCLUDING THIRD STATES THAT HAVE PROVIDED MILITARY OR POLITICAL SUPPORT TO ISRAEL SUCH AS THE USA, GERMANY AND OTHER MEMBER STATES OF THE EU, AND THE UK.

- Use all political and diplomatic tools at your disposal to end Israel's genocide in Gaza and other international crimes and bring Israel into compliance with international law. Immediately suspend all direct and indirect supply, sale or transfers, including transit and trans-shipment to Israel, of all arms, munitions and military equipment to Israel in light of the substantial risk they will be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international law, including genocide. Failing to do so would incur the risk of complicity with Israel's international crimes.
- Ensure compliance with obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty and customary international law.
- Impose targeted sanctions, including asset freezes and travel bans, on Israeli officials reasonably suspected of responsibility for, or involvement in, genocide and other crimes under international law.
- Support all efforts aimed at ending ongoing violations and ensuring accountability, including through full cooperation with the International Criminal Court and the exercise of universal jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute persons suspected of genocide and other crimes under international law.
- Refuse to recognize Israel's ongoing blockade of Gaza as legal, as well as refuse to support Israel, directly or indirectly, in maintaining the blockade. Reject any attempt to permanently alter Gaza's borders, population composition or territorial integrity. Refrain from any action that assists, facilitates or contributes to internationally wrongful acts, including the unlawful transfer or deportation of Palestinians from Gaza.
- EU member states should review all agreements, research exchanges and trade relations with Israel, and suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement based on Israel's breach of its human rights clause (Article 2), in order to ensure that it does not directly or indirectly contribute to Israel's unlawful occupation and crimes under international law.
- Ensure that companies domiciled or operating within their jurisdiction do not contribute to genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity or other serious human rights violations through the provision of weapons, military technologies, surveillance systems, logistical support or related services.
- Support reconstruction efforts that prioritize the rights and needs of all Palestinians in Gaza, including women and girls.
- Increase funding and provide protection and support for local Palestinian women's organizations, women-led civil society organizations, healthcare providers and psycho-social support services. Support long-term programmes addressing the needs of women-headed households, survivors of violence, women with disabilities and women subjected to displacement and deprivation. Monitor the functioning of these programmes and intervene if infrastructure is destroyed, damaged, essential supplies are denied, or the implementation of these programmes is otherwise undermined.
- Recognize reproductive violence crimes in the Crimes Against Humanity Convention being negotiated (or prepared for negotiation) at the UN.

- The USA should immediately withdraw sanctions imposed on Palestinian human rights groups for cooperating with the International Criminal Court, and remedy the harms caused by these sanctions.

13.5 TO THE OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

- Continue investigations into the situation in the State of Palestine by all parties, including crimes committed in Gaza since October 2023, with a gender-competent and survivor-centred investigative approach.
- Mindful of the independent mandate of the Prosecutor, ensure that investigations adequately examine gender-based crimes and reproductive harms.
- Investigate conduct that may constitute genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including conduct that may constitute the prohibited act of imposing measures intended to prevent births within a protected group under Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention or otherwise affecting reproductive autonomy and maternal health.
- Ensure meaningful participation and protection of victims and witnesses, including women.

13.6 TO THE UN

13.6.1 TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

- Adopt a resolution calling for an immediate and enduring ceasefire, outlining steps to advance the withdrawal by Israel from the OPT, in line with the ICJ's advisory opinion of 19 July 2024 and building upon the UN General Assembly resolution of 18 September 2024 demanding Israel end its unlawful presence and policies in the OPT within 12 months.
- Impose a comprehensive arms embargo on Israel, Hamas, and Palestinian armed groups operating in Gaza. The embargo should cover the direct and indirect supply, sale or transfer, including transit and trans-shipment, of all weapons, munitions and other military and security equipment, including the provision of training and other military and security assistance.
- Impose targeted sanctions, including asset freezes, against officials (and former officials) most implicated in genocide and other crimes under international law.
- Support measures aimed at ensuring accountability for crimes under international law in Gaza, including conduct that has caused distinct and gender-specific harms to Palestinian women and girls, including reproductive, sexual and other gender-based violence, and violations of their right to health.
- Ensure the situation of Palestinian women and girls in Gaza is systematically addressed through the Women, Peace and Security agenda, including by recognizing and responding to gender-specific harms, attacks on reproductive healthcare, gender-based violence, and barriers to women's participation in humanitarian and recovery efforts. Ensure the meaningful participation of women in all political negotiations, peacebuilding decisions, and humanitarian relief efforts.
- Take action in line with Security Council Resolution 2286 by condemning attacks and threats against medical and humanitarian personnel, hospitals and medical facilities in Gaza, ensuring their protection, including facilities providing reproductive healthcare, and supporting accountability for all violations of international law.

13.6.2 TO RELEVANT UN AGENCIES AND HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

- Ensure that humanitarian responses are gender-responsive and informed by the experiences of Palestinian women and girls.

- Collect and publicly report gender-, age- and disability-disaggregated data concerning deaths, injuries, displacement, maternal health, reproductive health and detention.
- Support and fund women's groups in Gaza and ensure their meaningful role in all decision-making processes.
- Prioritize restoration of maternal, neonatal and sexual and comprehensive reproductive healthcare services.
- Expand psycho-social and mental health support for women and girls.
- Expand relief to women-headed households and other women at particular risk as a priority. Expand programmes providing dedicated food, shelter, water and sanitation, livelihood and social protection programmes for women-headed households, particularly those caring for orphaned children, injured relatives or family members with disabilities.
- Strengthen services addressing gender-based violence, including shelters, healthcare, case management and legal assistance.

13.7 TO DONORS AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

- Provide sustained and flexible funding for the recovery of Gaza's healthcare system, with particular attention to maternal, neonatal and reproductive healthcare.
- Support locally led women's rights organizations and community-based protection initiatives.
- Fund programmes addressing food insecurity, economic recovery, water and sanitation, housing and psycho-social support for women and girls, including programmes providing particular support to pregnant and post-natal women, and to women-headed households.
- Ensure that reconstruction and recovery efforts meaningfully involve Palestinian women and women's organizations in planning, decision-making and implementation. Advocate for reproductive justice, gender equality and the meaningful participation of women in all post-conflict planning and decision-making processes.

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NO CONDITIONS FOR LIFE

WOMEN, GIRLS AND THE GENDERED DIMENSIONS OF ISRAEL'S GENOCIDE AGAINST PALESTINIANS IN GAZA

Since the start of Israel's military offensive on the occupied Gaza Strip in October 2023, Israeli violations of unprecedented magnitude and duration have devastated the lives of Palestinian women and girls in Gaza.

Israeli forces have killed thousands of women and girls, many through attacks that violated international humanitarian law. Women and girls have been forced into a daily struggle for survival marred by grief, trauma, violence, repeated displacement, extreme deprivation, fear and loss. They have been deprived of access to essential healthcare, stripped of the conditions to support themselves and their families, and put at increased risk of gender-based violence. Israel's actions have also severely undermined Palestinians' ability to decide if and when to have children, carry pregnancies to term, and give birth safely.

Amnesty International found that these harms form part of Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. It concludes that Israel's genocide has continued despite the so-called October 2025 ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and that the cumulative harms inflicted on women and girls have been integral to Israel's pattern of conduct. States must pressure Israel to end its genocide, address gendered harms and urgently facilitate humanitarian action and reconstruction.

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