

# Amnesty International investigation concludes Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza

## ‘You Feel Like You Are Subhuman’: Israel’s Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza

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Amnesty International’s research has found sufficient basis to conclude that Israel has committed and is continuing to commit genocide against Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip, the organization said in a landmark new report published today.

The report, [‘You Feel Like You Are Subhuman’: Israel’s Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza](#), documents how, during its military offensive launched in the wake of the deadly Hamas-led attacks in southern Israel on October 7, 2023, Israel has unleashed hell and destruction on Palestinians in Gaza brazenly, continuously and with total impunity.

“Amnesty International’s report demonstrates that Israel has carried out acts prohibited under the Genocide Convention, with the specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza. These acts include killings, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and deliberately inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction. Month after month, Israel has treated Palestinians in Gaza as a subhuman group unworthy of human rights and dignity, demonstrating its intent to physically destroy them,” said Agnès Callamard, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

“Our damning findings must serve as a wake-up call to the international community: this is genocide. It must stop now.

“States that continue to transfer arms to Israel at this time must know they are violating their obligation to prevent genocide and are at risk of becoming complicit in genocide. All states with influence over Israel, particularly key arms suppliers like the USA and Germany, but also other EU member states, the UK and others, must act now to bring Israel’s atrocities against Palestinians in Gaza to an immediate end.”

## Relentless bombardment in Gaza genocide

Over the past two months, the crisis has grown particularly acute in the North Gaza governorate, where a besieged population is facing starvation, displacement and annihilation amid relentless bombardment and suffocating restrictions on life-saving humanitarian aid.

“Our research reveals that, for months, Israel has persisted in committing genocidal acts, fully aware of the irreparable harm it was inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza. It continued to do so in defiance of countless warnings about the catastrophic humanitarian situation and of legally binding decisions from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordering Israel to take immediate measures to enable the provision of humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza,” said Agnès Callamard.

“Israel has repeatedly argued that its actions in Gaza are lawful and can be justified by its military goal to eradicate Hamas. But genocidal intent can co-exist alongside military goals and does not need to be Israel’s sole intent.”

Amnesty International examined Israel’s acts in Gaza closely and in their totality, taking into account their recurrence and simultaneous occurrence, and both their immediate impact and their cumulative and mutually reinforcing consequences.

The organization considered the scale and severity of the casualties and destruction over time. It also analyzed public statements by officials, finding that prohibited acts were often announced or called for in the first place by high-level officials in charge of the war efforts.

“Taking into account the pre-existing context of dispossession, apartheid and unlawful military occupation in which these acts have been committed, we could find only one reasonable conclusion: Israel’s intent is the physical destruction of Palestinians in Gaza, whether in parallel with or as a means to achieve, its military goal of destroying Hamas,” said Agnès Callamard.

***“The atrocity crimes committed on October 7, 2023, by Hamas and other armed groups against Israelis and victims of other nationalities, including deliberate mass killings and hostage-taking, can never justify Israel’s genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.”***

### **Agnès Callamard**

Secretary General of Amnesty International

International jurisprudence recognizes that the perpetrator does not need to succeed in their attempts to destroy the protected group, either in whole or in part, for genocide to have been committed. The commission of prohibited acts with the intent to destroy the group, as such, is sufficient.

Amnesty International’s report examines in detail Israel’s violations in Gaza over nine months between October 7, 2023, and early July 2024. The organization interviewed 212 people, including Palestinian

victims and witnesses, local authorities in Gaza, and healthcare workers, conducted fieldwork and analyzed an extensive range of visual and digital evidence, including satellite imagery.

Amnesty also analyzed statements by the senior Israeli government, military officials, and official Israeli bodies. On multiple occasions, the organization shared its findings with the Israeli authorities but received no substantive response at the time of publication.

## Unprecedented scale and magnitude

Israel's actions following Hamas's deadly attacks on October 7, 2023, have brought Gaza's population to the brink of collapse. Its brutal military offensive had killed more than 42,000 Palestinians, including over 13,300 children, and injured over 97,000 more by October 7, 2024, many of them in direct or deliberately indiscriminate attacks, often wiping out entire multigenerational families.

It has caused unprecedented destruction, which experts say occurred at a level and speed not seen in any other conflict in the 21st century, levelling entire cities and destroying critical infrastructure, agricultural land and cultural and religious sites. It thereby rendered large swathes of Gaza uninhabitable.

Mohammed, who fled with his family from Gaza City to Rafah in March 2024 and was displaced again in May 2024, described their struggle to survive in horrifying conditions:

***“Here in Deir al-Balah, it's like an apocalypse... You have to protect your children from insects from the heat, and there is no clean water and no toilets, all while the bombing never stops. You feel like you are subhuman here.”***

### **Mohammed**

Displaced Former Resident of Gaza City

## A deadly mixture of malnutrition, hunger and diseases

Israel imposed conditions of life in Gaza that created a deadly mixture of malnutrition, hunger and diseases and exposed Palestinians to a slow, calculated death. Israel also subjected hundreds of Palestinians from Gaza to incommunicado detention, torture and other ill-treatment.

Viewed in isolation, some acts investigated by Amnesty International constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law or international human rights law. But in looking at the broader picture of Israel's military campaign and the cumulative impact of its policies and acts, genocidal intent is the only reasonable conclusion.

## Israel's intent to destroy

To establish Israel's specific intent to physically destroy Palestinians in Gaza, as such, Amnesty International analyzed the overall pattern of Israel's conduct in Gaza.

Amnesty reviewed dehumanizing and genocidal statements by Israeli government and military officials, particularly those at the highest levels, and considered the context of Israel's system of apartheid, its inhumane blockade of Gaza and the unlawful 57-year-old military occupation of the Palestinian territory.

Before reaching its conclusion, Amnesty International examined Israel's claims that its military lawfully targeted Hamas and other armed groups throughout Gaza, and that the resulting unprecedented destruction and denial of aid were the outcome of unlawful conduct by Hamas and other armed groups, such as locating fighters among the civilian population or the diversion of aid.

## Israel committed multiple crimes under international law

The organization concluded these claims are not credible. The presence of Hamas fighters near or within a densely populated area does not absolve Israel from its obligations to take all feasible precautions to spare civilians and avoid indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks. Its research found Israel repeatedly failed to do so, committing multiple crimes under international law for which there can be no justification based on Hamas's actions.

Amnesty International also found no evidence that the diversion of aid could explain Israel's extreme and deliberate restrictions on life-saving humanitarian aid.

In its analysis, the organization also considered alternative arguments, such as ones that Israel was acting recklessly or that it simply wanted to destroy Hamas and did not care if it needed to destroy Palestinians in the process, demonstrating a callous disregard for their lives rather than genocidal intent.

However, regardless of whether Israel sees the destruction of Palestinians as instrumental to destroying Hamas or as an acceptable by-product of this goal, this view of Palestinians as disposable and not worthy of consideration is in itself evidence of genocidal intent.

## Direct evidence of genocidal intent

Many of the unlawful acts documented by Amnesty International were preceded by officials urging their implementation. The organization reviewed 102 statements issued by the Israeli government, military officials and others between October 7, 2023, and June 30, 2024. Many dehumanized Palestinians and called for or justified genocidal acts or other crimes against them.

Of these, Amnesty International identified 22 statements made by senior officials in charge of managing the offensive that appeared to call for or justify genocidal acts, providing direct evidence of genocidal intent. This language was frequently replicated, including by Israeli soldiers on the ground, as evidenced by audiovisual content verified by Amnesty International. This evidence shows soldiers making calls to “erase” Gaza or to make it uninhabitable and celebrating the destruction of Palestinian homes, mosques, schools and universities.

## **Gaza crisis urgent appeal - Emergency donations needed**

**Our human rights work, research and campaigning for Gaza depends on people like you.**

Your support is empowering and helps us continue pursuing accountability and justice. Without your donations, without your faith in the quality of our research, we could not continue our work.

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## **Killing and causing serious bodily or mental harm**

Amnesty International documented the genocidal acts of killing and causing serious mental and bodily harm to Palestinians in Gaza by reviewing the results of investigations it conducted into 15 airstrikes between October 7, 2023, and April 20, 2024, that killed at least 334 civilians, including 141 children, and wounded hundreds of others.

Amnesty International found no evidence that any of these strikes were directed at a military objective.

In one illustrative case, on April 20, 2024, an Israeli air strike destroyed the Abdelal family house in the Al-Jneinah neighbourhood in eastern Rafah, killing three generations of Palestinians, including 16 children. They were asleep at the time.

While these represent just a fraction of Israel’s aerial attacks, they are indicative of a broader pattern of repeated direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects or deliberately indiscriminate attacks. The attacks were also conducted in ways designed to cause a very high number of fatalities and injuries among the civilian population.

## Inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction

The report documents how Israel deliberately inflicted conditions of life on Palestinians in Gaza intended to lead, over time, to their destruction. These conditions were imposed through three simultaneous patterns that repeatedly compounded the effect of each other's devastating impacts:

1. **Damage to Infrastructure:** Damage to and destruction of life-sustaining infrastructure and other objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.
2. **Evacuation Orders:** The repeated use of sweeping, arbitrary and confusing mass "evacuation" orders to forcibly displace almost all of Gaza's population.
3. **Denial of essential services:** The denial and obstruction of the delivery of essential services, humanitarian assistance and other life-saving supplies into and within Gaza.

After October 7, 2023, Israel imposed a total siege on Gaza, cutting off electricity, water and fuel. In the nine months reviewed for this report, Israel maintained a suffocating, unlawful blockade, tightly controlled access to energy sources, failed to facilitate meaningful humanitarian access within Gaza, and obstructed the import and delivery of life-saving goods and humanitarian aid, particularly to areas north of Wadi Gaza.

Israel thereby exacerbated an already existing humanitarian crisis. This, combined with the extensive damage to Gaza's homes, hospitals, water and sanitation facilities, agricultural land, and mass forced displacement, caused catastrophic levels of hunger and led to the spread of diseases at alarming rates. The impact was especially harsh on young children and pregnant or breastfeeding women, with anticipated long-term consequences for their health.

## Multiple waves of forced displacement

Time and again, Israel had the chance to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Yet, for over a year, it has repeatedly refused to take steps blatantly within its power to do so — such as opening sufficient access points to Gaza, lifting tight restrictions on what could enter the Strip, or obstructing aid deliveries within Gaza. At the same time, the situation has grown progressively worse.

Through its repeated "evacuation" orders, Israel displaced nearly 1.9 million Palestinians — 90% of Gaza's population — into ever-shrinking, unsafe pockets of land under inhumane conditions. Some have been displaced up to 10 times.

These multiple waves of forced displacement left many jobless and deeply traumatized — especially since some 70% of Gaza's residents are refugees or descendants of refugees whose towns and villages were ethnically cleansed by Israel [during the 1948 Nakba](#).

Despite conditions quickly becoming unfit for human life, Israeli authorities refused to consider measures that would have protected displaced civilians and ensured their basic needs were met, showing that their actions were deliberate.

They refused to allow those displaced to return to their homes in northern Gaza or relocate temporarily to other parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory or Israel, continuing to deny many Palestinians their right to return under international law to areas they were displaced from in 1948. They did so knowing that there was nowhere safe for Palestinians in Gaza to flee to.

## Accountability for genocide

“The international community’s seismic, shameful failure for over a year to press Israel to end its atrocities in Gaza, by first delaying calls for a ceasefire and then continuing arms transfers, is and will remain a stain on our collective conscience,” said Agnès Callamard.

***Canada has both a moral and legal obligation to do everything in its power to prevent genocide. We must not sit quietly on the sidelines while the rest of the world cries for justice.***

### Ketty Nivyabandi

Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada (English Speaking)

“Governments must stop pretending they are powerless to end this genocide, which was enabled by decades of impunity for Israel’s violations of international law. States need to move beyond mere expressions of regret or dismay and take strong and sustained international action, however uncomfortable a finding of genocide may be for some of Israel’s allies.

“The International Criminal Court’s (ICC) [arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity](#) issued last month offer real hope of long-overdue justice for victims. States must demonstrate their respect for the court’s decision and for universal international law principles by arresting and handing over those wanted by the ICC.

“We are calling on the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to urgently consider adding genocide to the list of crimes it is investigating and for all states to use every legal avenue to bring perpetrators to justice. No one should be allowed to commit genocide and remain unpunished.”

## Amnesty Calls for the unconditional release of all civilian hostages

Amnesty International is also calling for all civilian hostages to be released unconditionally and for Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups responsible for the crimes committed on October 7 to be held to account.

The organization is also calling for the UN Security Council to impose targeted sanctions against Israeli and Hamas officials most implicated in crimes under international law.

[Visit the Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory page »](#)

## Background

On October 7, 2023, Hamas and other armed groups indiscriminately fired rockets into southern Israel and carried out deliberate mass killings and hostage-taking there, killing 1,200 people, including over 800 civilians, and [abducted 223 civilians and captured 27 soldiers](#).

The crimes perpetrated by Hamas and other armed groups during this attack will be the focus of a forthcoming Amnesty International report.

Since October 2023, Amnesty International has conducted in-depth investigations into the multiple violations and crimes under international law committed by Israeli forces, including direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects and deliberately indiscriminate attacks killing hundreds of civilians, as well as other unlawful attacks on and collective punishment of the civilian population.

The organization has called on the Office of the ICC Prosecutor to expedite its investigation into the situation in the State of Palestine and is campaigning for an immediate ceasefire.

## Urge Canada to stop fueling Israel's genocide in Gaza

### Act now to end Gaza genocide

Send a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mélanie Joly, and call on Canada to stop fueling Israel's genocide in Gaza.

[Take Action »](#)



## Canada's role in the Gaza genocide

Canada's has made some positive diplomatic statements, including:

- **supporting the call for a ceasefire by all parties;**
- **supporting UNRWA, including the restoration of funding;**
- **committing to uphold decisions by international courts;**
- **calling on Israel to respond substantively to the International Court of Justice advisory opinion on the unlawfulness of the occupation;**
- **and opposing the forcible displacement of Palestinians from Gaza, the re-occupation of Gaza, any reduction in territory, and any use of siege or blockade.**

While Canada has taken some measures to limit the export of military goods to Israel, both direct and indirect transfers continue.

## Canada's arms sales to Israel

Authorization of new export permits for transfers of military goods to Israel was reportedly paused as of January 8, 2024, though no official "notice to exporters" was issued. In September 2024, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced that "around 30" of the existing permits were suspended, however it is believed that at least 180 export permits are still active.

Arms sales to Israel have increased in recent years, with 2023 (the latest year for which information is publicly available) marking the highest sales to date. Between October 7, 2023 and December 6, 2023 alone, \$28.5 million of new military exports were approved – more than all the permits issued in 2022.

Canadian parts, components and other military materials are also exported to the USA, which in turn are integrated into US military equipment such as F-35 aircraft supplied to the Israel Defense Force.