New study debunks Gaza genocide claims, finds flaws in UN, int'l reporting on war

September 3, 2025

By Jacob Laznik

The Jerusalem Post

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-866183>

Narratives of Israeli genocide, war crimes, and deliberate mass starvation in the ongoing war in Gaza have been challenged, and in some cases debunked, in a new comprehensive study published on Wednesday titled [‘Debunking the Genocide Allegations: A Reexamination of the Israel-Hamas War (2023-2025).’](https://besacenter.org/debunking-the-genocide-allegationsa-reexamination-of-the-israel-hamas-war-2023-2025/)

The study, published by the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, critically challenges the narrative of Israeli genocide during the conflict by analyzing humanitarian reporting and casualty data.

The study, spanning 311 pages, also employed quantitative analysis and forensic documentation to analyze and challenge widely reported claims from international organizations and courts. The authors, led by Professor Danny Orbach, stated that their objective was to provide a factual analysis rather than a legal or moral exoneration.

The publication of the study comes at a crucial time, as the IDF is poised to begin an[invasion of Gaza City](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-866168) as part of the newest operation - ‘Gideon's Chariots II.’

Additionally, the International Association of Genocide Scholars adopted a resolution on Monday, stating that Israel’s military actions in the Gaza Strip [meet the legal definition of genocide.](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-865937)

The study is structured into eight chapters, each addressing specific allegations and themes related to the conflict and its reporting. The overarching themes that emerged from the research were a critique of humanitarian reporting, a re-evaluation of casualty data, and a call for a new methodological framework for analyzing conflicts.

**Challenging the Starvation Narrative**

Perhaps the study's most controversial finding concerns food supply to Gaza. The researchers argued that more food entered Gaza during the war than before October 7, 2023, a claim that starkly contradicts widespread reports of imminent famine and deliberate starvation.

According to the study, the frequently cited requirement of 500 aid trucks daily [entering Gaza](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-866085) stems from what the authors call ‘a misrepresentation by UN bodies.’ They point to pre-war UN records showing an average of only 73 food trucks per day in 2022.

The 500 figure has been regularly cited throughout the war by the UN, as well as international media outlets such as CNN, The*Guardian,* and The *Washington Post.*

During the fighting until January 17, 2025, COGAT (the Israeli military body coordinating activities in the territories) recorded an average of 101 food trucks daily, while retroactively corrected but incomplete UNRWA data indicated 83 food trucks per day. Another example is their claim that food which entered Gaza during the ceasefire ‘should have sufficed until late July 2025 according to WFP projections.’ They attribute the gap between projected sufficiency and reported shortages to ‘extensive looting by Hamas.’

The study also disputed claims about Gaza's agricultural self-sufficiency. Contrary to claims that 44% of Gaza's food comes from local agriculture, the researchers assert this figure was ‘baseless.’ They calculated that Gazan agriculture likely accounted for no more than 12% of caloric consumption in 2005 and that even if all of Gaza's 2011 crops were replaced, the number of trucks entering Gaza per capita throughout the war would still be 58% higher than in 2011.

The authors also made a point to ‘strongly criticize the decision to stop aid to Gaza between March and May 2025,’ acknowledging humanitarian concerns even while disputing the genocide narrative.

**Questioning Casualty Reporting**

The study then took direct aim at casualty figures reported by the Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry, alleging systematic data manipulation. According to the researchers, the Health Ministry, ‘per Hamas directives, categorizes all deaths as civilian,’ which they argue has ‘significantly skewed international reporting.’ The report found indications that the Ministry's lists include ‘age-related natural deaths, particularly of women,’ while excluding ‘combat-aged men.’

This selective reporting, they argued, artificially inflates civilian casualty figures and obscures the actual combatant-to-civilian death ratio. The study's analysis of GMOH reports revealed a fluctuating and often implausible distribution of casualties.

As of March 2025, the GMOH had reported 50,021 combat-related casualties. The study also noted that the number of reported widows, at 13,900, almost matched the official excess male mortality figure of 13,964 for ages 18-59, which they found to be ‘striking.’

The researchers also presented data suggesting that evacuation zones designated by the IDF were ‘significantly safer’ than other areas. According to their partial data analysis, less than 4% of deaths occurred in Mawasi and the central camps, areas marked as evacuation zones. They attribute higher casualties elsewhere to ‘the failure of the UN to cooperate with the establishment of such zones.’

**Systematic Critique of International Reporting**

A substantial portion of the study focused on what the authors described as ‘systematic failures in UN and NGO reporting.’ They identify patterns of ‘circular citation, opaque assessments, and unannounced retroactive corrections’ that they argue have distorted the international understanding of the conflict. One example they highlight involves UNRWA's truck count discrepancies.

While UNRWA initially reported a 70% drop in aid after May 2024 and the Rafah operation, the agency ‘later retroactively corrected these reports.’ Crucially, the authors noted, ‘this correction was effectively unannounced and hence the supposed aid drop continues to be cited broadly.’

The researchers drew parallels to past conflicts, noting a precedent in flawed reporting from the 2009 Gaza War. They cite former UN jurist Richard Goldstone, who led the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict and later expressed regret over some of his report's conclusions.

In a 2011 *Washington Post* op-ed, Goldstone wrote: ‘If I had known then what I know now, the Goldstone Report would have been a different document.’

The study extended its analysis beyond Gaza, examining similar patterns in Iraq during the 1990s sanctions regime. The authors noted that claims of hundreds of thousands of child deaths due to sanctions, based on Iraqi government data, were ‘later revealed to be fabricated by Iraqi authorities.’

**Introducing ‘Humanitarian Bias’**

The study also introduced a new theoretical concept, called ‘humanitarian bias,’ to explain what the authors perceive as systematic errors in conflict reporting. They defined this as ‘a tendency among aid organizations to accept alarming claims from stakeholders in order to mobilize urgent action.’

According to the researchers, this bias creates a feedback loop where ‘factual corrections are often met with hostility or ignored altogether, undermining accuracy in humanitarian reporting.’

They argued that even when myths are definitively disproven, ‘corrections are rarely incorporated into public or academic understanding.’

A famous example of this new theoretical concept can be seen from May, 2025, when UN aid chief Tom Fletcher falsely stated that some 14,000 Gazan babies could die within the next 48 hours unless aid reaches them.

‘They have not reached the communities they need to reach. This is baby food, baby nutrition. There are 14,000 babies that will die in the next 48 hours unless we can reach them,’ Fletcher told The BBC.

When pressed on how he came to this figure, he assured the interviewer that the UN had strong teams on the ground formulating these assessments.

Two days later, the UN ultimately [retracted the statement,](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-854868) with officials downplaying the time frame of the dire requirements

The study also mentioned that humanitarian bias can be particularly damaging when it prevents a realistic assessment of the root causes of conflict and humanitarian crises, such as the actions of non-state actors.

**Military Conduct Assessment**

While challenging genocide allegations, the study did not provide blanket exoneration of Israeli military conduct. The authors acknowledged that ‘isolated incidents may point to negligence or localized misconduct and suspicion of individual war crimes,’ though they maintain ‘no evidence was found of overarching directives aimed at harming civilians.’

The researchers credit the IDF with implementing what they called ‘unprecedented steps such as early warnings, precision targeting, and mission aborts to avoid civilian harm,’ actions they note were ‘costly to the IDF’ but ‘reduced non-combatant casualties.’ The study also provided a comparison of the IDF's non-combatant-to-combatant casualty ratio to those of other Western armies fighting urban insurgencies, suggesting the IDF's ratio was relatively low.

**Implications and Warnings**

The study's findings stand in stark contrast to various international assessments. The International Court of Justice has adopted provisional measures requiring Israel to prevent genocide, though it did not order an immediate cessation of military operations as South Africa had requested. The provisional measures are legally binding on Israel, and there is no right of appeal, though enforcement mechanisms remain limited.

Various UN bodies and humanitarian organizations have made, and continue to make, serious allegations about Israel's conduct. Reports have described Israel as using starvation as a weapon of war, with the Gaza Government Media Office claiming Israel blocked 3,800 aid trucks from entering the territory. UNRWA officials have stated that Israel is ‘deliberately and unashamedly imposing inhumane conditions on civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.’

Professor Danny Orbach, the study's lead author, warned of broader implications for international humanitarian law, stating, ‘If every severe urban war were defined as genocide, it would ultimately dilute the legal and moral power of the term.’

The study concluded with a ‘methodological revolution’ in analyzing violent conflicts, proposing a framework that prioritizes cross-referencing multiple sources, systematic scrutiny, transparency, and resistance to political and media-driven narratives.

While acknowledging that ‘the suffering of civilians in Gaza is both tragic and undeniable,’ the researchers argue that humanitarian discourse must remain ‘anchored in verifiable facts’ to avoid the risk of future atrocities being overlooked.