

Distr.: General  
18 June 2026

Original: English

**Human Rights Council**  
**Sixty-second session**

**“The essence of childhood has been destroyed”: Israel’s deliberate targeting of Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 7 October 2023**

**Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel**

*Summary*

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel examines violations and crimes against and affecting Palestinian children, including serious physical and psychological harm by the Israeli security forces since 7 October 2023 resulting in the death of at least 20,179 and injury of 44,143 children.

The paper describes the deliberate targeting and killing of Palestinian children, including post-ceasefire since the October 2025 Gaza peace plan. The Commission also examines a sharp increase in violence perpetrated by members of Israeli settlers against Palestinian children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The Commission examines the use of torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, including sexual and gender-based violence, against Palestinian children, particularly during mass arrests and in detention. It analyses pattern of Israel’s targeting of critical infrastructure essential to children, such as healthcare facilities and its short- to long-term consequences, as well as the impact of reproductive violence on newborns, resulting in poor neonatal health and birthing outcomes; attacks on orphanages and schools, impacting the loss of care for orphans and unaccompanied children, and inducing academic harm and learning disruptions for children, respectively.

The Commission examines the impact of the conditions of life imposed by Israel in Gaza resulting in preventable mortality of children, exacerbating morbidity, and serious mental trauma from the relentless and widespread attacks by Israel over two years – collectively revealing severe, multi-layered harm to Palestinian children’s survival, health, and development. Further, the Commission examines how Israeli soldiers mock and weaponize symbols of childhood in Gaza, raising ethical, disciplinary and legal questions about the conduct of the Israeli security forces during the ground invasion of Gaza.

Lastly, the Commission provides recommendations to diverse stakeholders for the cessation of attacks, reparations, accountability and international enforcement of sanctions – aimed at advancing child-responsive justice.

## Contents

I.	Introduction .....	3
II.	Methodology .....	3
III.	Applicable legal framework .....	4
IV.	Physical harm against Palestinian children by Israel.....	8
A.	Child casualties due to Israel’s use of explosive weapons in populated areas .....	8
B.	Deliberate targeting of children by the Israeli security forces in the Gaza Strip.....	13
C.	Killing and maiming of children by the Israeli security forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem ...	21
D.	Killing and other forms of violence against children by Israeli settlers and other Israeli civilians .....	24
E.	Mistreatment of children during arrest and in detention .....	25
F.	Sexual and gender-based violence Palestinian children .....	29
G.	Attacks on healthcare and its impact on children and newborns.....	32
H.	Attacks on and military occupation of educational facilities and its impact on children .....	38
I.	Attacks and damage to facilities caring for children (orphanages) in Gaza and their impact .....	46
J.	Impact of displacement and siege on children’s conditions of life in Gaza .....	48
V.	Mental harm against Palestinian children against by Israel.....	55
A.	Children’s mental health and conditions in Gaza.....	55
B.	Children’s mental health and conditions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.....	57
VI.	Dehumanization of Palestinian childhood.....	59
VII.	Analysis and legal findings .....	60
A.	Extermination and wilful killing .....	61
B.	Persecution and enforced disappearance.....	63
C.	Torture and other inhumane acts.....	64
D.	Sexual and gender-based violence against children .....	65
E.	Violations related to attacks on facilities caring for children (orphanages) .....	65
F.	Violations related to attacks on educational facilities .....	66
G.	Violations related to attacks on healthcare facilities .....	67
H.	Reproductive violence and its direct impact on newborn health and neonatal deaths.....	68
I.	Conditions of life affecting children in Gaza due to measures imposed by Israel .....	70
J.	Destruction of children’s belongings .....	71
K.	Violations committed by Israeli soldiers and settlers in the West Bank and Israel.....	71
L.	Violations of international humanitarian law .....	74
M.	Summary of International Criminal Law findings .....	76
VIII.	Conclusions .....	80
IX.	Recommendations .....	84
A.	To the Government of the State of Israel: .....	84
B.	To all the Member States and those involved in ceasefire negotiations:.....	85
C.	To the UN Security Council:.....	86
D.	To the UN General Assembly: .....	86
E.	To the UN Secretary General: .....	86
F.	To the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court:.....	87
X.	Annex	
Chronology/timeline.....		88
Key events in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 7 October 2023 .....		88
Timeline .....		89

## I. Introduction

1. This Conference Room Paper (CRP) of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel (the Commission) examines Israeli violations and crimes against Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as their short- to long-term impact on children, between 7 October 2023 and 31 March 2026. The Commission has published four mandated reports and four conference room papers since 7 October 2023.<sup>1</sup>
2. This report presents the Commission's new and expanded findings on the intentional targeting, arrests and ill-treatment, sexual and gender-based violence, attacks on educational facilities and healthcare, and the conditions imposed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory which directly affect children. For the purpose of this report, a 'child' means "every human being below the age of 18 years", consistent with article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
3. Since 7 October 2023, the Commission has sent 13 requests for information and/or access to the Government of Israel, four requests for information to the State of Palestine and one request for information to the Ministry of Health in the Gaza Strip. The State of Palestine and the Ministry of Health in the Gaza Strip provided information to the Commission. No responses were received from the Government of Israel.
4. The Commission's comprehensive findings on violations and abuses against Israeli children committed by the military wing of Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on and since 7 October 2023 were presented in its reports to the Human Rights Council in June 2024 and to the General Assembly in October 2024, as well as in a separate conference room paper published in June 2024.<sup>2</sup>
5. In these reports, the Commission found that Israeli children were subjected to physical and emotional mistreatment on 7 October 2023. In addition to the 40 children who were killed and hundreds injured, many children lost one or both parents. Many children witnessed the killings of their parents and siblings and were also filmed for propaganda purposes by Palestinian armed groups who published videos depicting Israeli children in vulnerable positions while they were under the control of the armed elements. The Commission finds it particularly egregious that children were targeted for abduction, several of them taken alone. The Commission concluded that Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, including against Israeli children and child hostages.<sup>3</sup>

## II. Methodology

6. The report brings together the Commission's findings on violations and crimes against and affecting Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory from 7 October 2023 until 31 March 2026, with a particular focus on the Gaza Strip (Gaza).

<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/56/26; A/79/232; A/HRC/59/26; A/80/337; Detailed findings on attacks carried out on and after 7 October 2023 in Israel" (A/HRC/56.CRP.3), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessionsregular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-3.pdf>; "Detailed findings on the military operations and attacks carried out in the Occupied Palestinian Territory from 7 October to 31 December 2023" (A/HRC/56/CRP.4), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessionsregular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-4.pdf>; "More than a human can bear": Israel's systematic use of sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender-based violence since 7 October 2023" (A/HRC/58.CRP.6), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessionsregular/session58/a-hrc-58-crp-6.pdf>; "Legal analysis of the conduct of Israel in Gaza pursuant to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" (A/HRC/60/CRP.3), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session60/advance-version/a-hrc-60-crp-3.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See A/HRC/56/26, A/79/232, and A/HRC/56/CRP.3.

<sup>3</sup> A/HRC/56/26, paras 9, 90, 93; A/79/232, para 112.

7. The Commission applied an integrated child rights analysis in preparing this report to examine holistically all aspects of Palestinian children's lives and development, including the harm caused by Israeli attacks on their physical, emotional, social and cognitive well-being.

8. The Commission applied the same methodology and standard of proof previously adopted for all its investigations.<sup>4</sup> Multiple sources of information were consulted; thousands of open-source items were collected and verified; and remote and in-person interviews and group discussions with victims and witnesses were conducted. The Commission attempted, to the extent possible, to incorporate children's own perspectives through carrying out interviews and group discussions with them. The Commission's interactions with children were conducted in alignment with the principles of 'best interests of the child' and 'do no harm' and the right of the child to participate and to be heard in matters affecting them. Informed consent was obtained in accordance with the established protocols. Prior to engaging with a child, the Commission received informed consent from a parent, caregiver or other appropriate adult (such as a guardian or other adult associated with organizations with a duty of care towards the child), after which the Commission obtained verbal and informed consent and assent of the child (depending on the age), indicating their willingness to participate.

9. In conducting interviews for this report, the Commission recognised and attempted to minimize the risk of re-traumatising children and their families, especially when they had lost a child. Where it assessed that the risk of re-traumatization was high, the Commission did not contact the family directly but relied on information already collected by independent national and international organizations as well as open-source published photographs and videos assessed as 'credible' and used for the purposes of analysis and corroboration.

10. The Commission received information from healthcare workers, members of academia, journalists and lawyers who had been in contact with victims and their families. The Commission received evidence, such as medical reports including x-radiation (x-rays), photographs, videos and audio statements of patients who had given consent to share this information with the Commission. The Commission consulted two independent forensic pathologists who provided forensic analysis of the evidence, including computed tomography (CT)-scans, medical reports, photographs and videos, of the children who were shot and either killed or maimed. Open-source material was forensically collected in accordance with international standards on the preservation of web-based content and rules of admissibility of digital evidence. Where needed, open-source material was verified through comprehensive cross-referencing with a broad, varied collection of reputable sources and complemented by advanced forensic examination, including visual media authentication, geolocation and chrono-location analysis, metadata extraction and face recognition. A full list of sources used for the present report is on file with the Commission.

11. The Commission has sought to include a broad range of topics and themes in the report and is aware that in addition there are other issues that fall within the scope of violations against children in armed conflict. This includes reports of the use of children by the parties to the conflict.<sup>5</sup> These have not yet been investigated by the Commission.

### III Applicable legal framework

12. Under international law, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, remains subject to belligerent occupation by Israel, to which international humanitarian law applies concurrently with international

---

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/TORs-UN-Independent\\_ICI\\_Occupied\\_Palestinian\\_Territories.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/TORs-UN-Independent_ICI_Occupied_Palestinian_Territories.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/247>, para. 99; <https://docs.un.org/en/A/78/842>, para. 99.

human rights law.<sup>6</sup> The Commission finds that Gaza continues to be under Israeli occupation because of, *inter alia*, Israel's control over the enclave's airspace, territorial waters and land border crossings, as well as the re-establishment of an Israeli military presence and control on the ground in Gaza since October 2023.<sup>7</sup> This has been affirmed by the International Court of Justice in July 2024.<sup>8</sup> Israel therefore is bound by the obligations incumbent upon an occupying power under international humanitarian law, as set forth in the Fourth Geneva Convention<sup>9</sup> and customary international law, including the Regulations annexed to the 1907 Hague Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land ("1907 Hague Regulations").

13. The Commission affirms that children are rights holders whose rights are enshrined in human rights instruments. Children are entitled to all the rights of human beings, as well as rights held by them alone as children, including under article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR),<sup>10</sup> which entitles them to special care, assistance and social protection, and under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This heightened protection applies to all Palestinian children under the occupation of Israel, as an occupying power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This special status of children is stipulated under international human rights law, international humanitarian law, international criminal law and customary international law, which together recognise that persons under 18 have distinct needs and vulnerabilities that require additional safeguards in situations of armed conflict, occupation and law enforcement.

14. Israel has signed and ratified the CRC and two of its optional protocols, and therefore is legally bound by their provisions.<sup>11</sup> The CRC obliges Israel to respect and ensure all rights in the Convention to every child within its jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, including on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, disability, gender, religion or other status, thereby covering Palestinian children across the occupied territory where Israel exercises effective control. The CRC requires Israel, *inter alia*, to ensure for Palestinian children: (i) enjoyment of all rights without discrimination; (ii) their best interests as a primary consideration in all decisions affecting them; (iii) protection of their right to life, survival and development; and (iv) respect for their right to be heard and to have their views taken into account in all matters affecting them. The CRC protects children from unlawful or arbitrary detention, allows lawful detention only as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate time, and requires humane treatment, access to assistance, family contact, and the ability to challenge detention for those who are detained. Other human rights treaties binding on Israel reinforce and deepen these special protections for Palestinian children.<sup>12</sup>

15. During its review by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UN Committee) in September 2024, Israel maintained its longstanding position that it does not have legal

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. A/77/328, para. 7; A/HRC/50/21, paras. 16 and 20; International Court Justice, *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004, p. 136, at p. 178, para. 106; International Court Justice, *Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, Advisory Opinion, 19 July 2024.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 93.

<sup>8</sup> International Court Justice, *Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, Advisory Opinion, 19 July 2024, paras. 93-94. The International Court of Justice stated that for the purpose of determining whether a territory is occupied under international law, "the decisive criterion is not whether the occupying Power retains its physical military presence in the territory at all times but rather whether its authority 'has been established and can be exercised'" citing article 42 of the Hague Regulations, para. 9.

<sup>9</sup> GCIV, arts. 27-34, 47-78.

<sup>10</sup> UDHR, art. 25.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-176905/>.

<sup>12</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), arts. 24, 6, 7, 10, 14, 16, 23; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), arts. 10(1) and (3), 12, 13 and 14, 9; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), arts. 1, 2, 5, 7; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), arts. 2, 5, 9, 10, 12, 16; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), arts. 7, 3, 23, 24, 10, 18, 4.3; Convention against Torture (CAT), arts. 1, 2, 3, 4, 16.

responsibility under the CRC for Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Gaza.<sup>13</sup> The UN Committee, in its Concluding Observations adopted on 13 September 2024, again regretted this position of Israel, characterizing it as a repeated denial of Israel's obligations towards Palestinian children.<sup>14</sup> The Commission, aligning its position with that of the UN Committee, reaffirms that Israel, as a State party to the CRC, is obligated to ensure the protection of children's rights beyond its sovereign territory where it exercises effective control, including Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

16. Customary international law recognises that children in armed conflict are entitled to special protection, including priority access to relief, safeguards in evacuation and family reunification, and prohibits their recruitment or use in hostilities.<sup>15</sup> Together with treaty law, it requires Israel to treat Palestinian children as a particularly protected group whose specific needs must guide all security, administrative and military decisions.

17. International humanitarian law applies in Gaza, which is considered to be under belligerent occupation. Based on the Fourth Geneva Convention, its Additional Protocol I<sup>16</sup> and the 1907 Hague Regulations, the Commission notes that Palestinian children are "protected persons" and benefit from broad protections. Israel must avoid attacks expected to cause excessive incidental civilian harm, including to children, relative to anticipated legitimate military advantage. It must take all feasible precautions to minimise harm – such as choosing appropriate means/methods, suspending disproportionate attacks and issuing effective warnings where possible – and specially protect densely populated areas, schools, hospitals and facilities essential to children's survival. The obligation to minimise harm includes the provision of medical care and evacuation to civilians, including children, injured as a result of military operations.

18. As an occupying power, Israel has extensive duties towards the protected civilian population, especially children: it must, to the fullest extent of the means available, ensure the provision of adequate food and medical supplies, maintain medical and hospital services, and facilitate the work of relief organisations to meet children's needs. It is prohibited from imposing collective penalties or other measures that result in widespread deprivation among children.

19. Internment or administrative detention of protected civilians should be an exceptional measure of last resort, permissible only when the security of the detaining power makes it "absolutely necessary".<sup>17</sup> This standard is even more restrictive when applied to children.<sup>18</sup> In light of their dependency and developmental needs, the internment of children must be considered a highly exceptional measure, justified only by demonstrable, individualised, imperative security reasons and never used as a tool of general deterrence, population control, retaliation or collective punishment. General security assertions, broad categories of suspected behaviour or assumptions based on association, family ties or place of residence cannot satisfy the strict necessity test for the internment of a child, and any doubt must be resolved in favour of non-detention of a child, in line with their best interest and do no harm.

20. Where children are deprived of liberty, lawfully or unlawfully, international humanitarian law requires that they be treated at all times with humanity and protected from all acts of violence, intimidation, insults and public curiosity. Children must be held in conditions that fully take account of their age and needs: they should be accommodated separately from unrelated adults (unless it is demonstrably in their best interests not to be),

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CRC\\_C\\_ISR\\_CO\\_5-6\\_59808\\_E-1.pdf](https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CRC_C_ISR_CO_5-6_59808_E-1.pdf), para 3.

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CRC\\_C\\_ISR\\_CO\\_5-6\\_59808\\_E-1.pdf](https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CRC_C_ISR_CO_5-6_59808_E-1.pdf), para 3.

<sup>15</sup> ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules, rule 135, p. 479; IAC: GCIV, arts. 23-24, 38, 50, 76 and 89.

<sup>16</sup> API, art. 77, APII, art. 4, para. 3; Rule 135 of customary international humanitarian law, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule135>.

<sup>17</sup> GCIV, art. 42(1).

<sup>18</sup> GCIV, arts. 24, 38, 50(3), 82, 89, Customary IHL Rule 120, AP I art. 77.

in facilities that safeguard their physical and mental health and provide adequate space, light, ventilation, sanitation and nutrition, as well as access to education, recreation and age-appropriate health care. Regular contact with their families must be facilitated as a matter of priority through visits, correspondence and other means of communication, recognising the centrality of family life to a child's well-being.<sup>19</sup> Prolonged or indefinite internment, internment without effective periodic review or based on secret evidence, or harsh and punitive regimes aimed at breaking children's will or extracting information conflict in all circumstances with the combined requirements of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and other juvenile justice instruments.<sup>20</sup>

21. Under international humanitarian law, the dead, including children, must be respected and their remains treated with dignity.<sup>21</sup> Parties to the conflict must facilitate recovery, identification and, wherever possible, return their remains to families to enable burial in accordance with religious and cultural traditions and to permit relatives to mourn.<sup>22</sup>

22. The Commission reiterates that Israel's existing obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law are mutually reinforcing in providing protection for Palestinian children against all violations.

23. International criminal law, as codified in the Rome Statute and customary international law, defines genocide,<sup>23</sup> crimes against humanity,<sup>24</sup> and war crimes<sup>25</sup> and recognises that these offences may be committed against children and produce child-specific harms. Crimes under the Rome Statute can have age-specific elements in their intent, commission or consequences, including when the conduct is directed at children as a distinct group or when children undergo particular forms of suffering.

24. Children enjoy special protection due to their inherent vulnerability and subordinate status, compounded by discrimination that heightens their risk of harm and impedes enjoyment of their human rights. It is also essential to recognise that abuse of power, central to such inequities and discrimination, exposes children to specific vulnerabilities, including sexual violence and exploitation, particularly in captivity or conflict settings.

25. The Commission recognises children as independent rights holders under international law and reiterates that crimes against and affecting children are a priority for the Commission's investigative and accountability work, as stated in the Commission's first report to the Human Rights Council in May 2022 (A/HRC/50/21, para.13). Furthermore, the Commission refers to its previous recommendation in September 2023 (A/78/198, para. 83) that the UN Secretary-General list Israel in the annexes of the next annual report [2024] on children and armed conflict,<sup>26</sup> following which the Israeli security forces were listed in the annexes of the 2024 Secretary General's Annual Report in connection with grave violations, particularly for killing and maiming of Palestinian children and attacks on schools and hospitals, signalling sustained concern about patterns of serious harm to children and reinforcing the need for independent and effective investigations to bring those responsible to justice where appropriate.

<sup>19</sup> GCIV arts. 27, 24, 50, 76, 82; API Arts. 75.5, 77.4; APII Art. 5.2.a; and Rules 119 and 120 of the 2005 ICRC customary IHL study.

<sup>20</sup> UN Standard Minimum Rules for Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules); UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (The Riyadh Guidelines); UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (The Havana Rules); and Nelson Mandela Rules (UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners).

<sup>21</sup> GCI art. 17, API art. 34(1); API art. 34(2).

<sup>22</sup> ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law database, rule 114.

<sup>23</sup> Rome Statute, art. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Rome Statute, art. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Rome Statute, art. 8.

<sup>26</sup> UN Resolution 1612 (2005) established the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) to systematically gather, verify, and report timely information on six grave violations against children in armed conflict and identifies actors for listing in annexes and triggering accountability, dialogue, and action plans to end grave violations against children, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/document/resolution-1612-2005/>.

## IV. Physical harm against Palestinian children by Israel

“You will die, your children will die, your grandchildren will die – there won’t be a Palestinian state, there won’t be.”

- Hanoch Milwidsky, Member of the Knesset (Likud) on 21 February 2024.<sup>27</sup>

### A. Child casualties due to Israel’s use of explosive weapons in populated areas

26. Until 7 October 2023, roughly half of the population of the Gaza Strip was under the age of 18.<sup>28</sup> These children had already lived their entire lives under the Israeli blockade and occupation, experiencing multiple rounds of hostilities and trauma. Between 7 October 2023 and 7 October 2025, at least 20,179 children were killed and 44,143 children were injured as a direct result of the hostilities in Gaza, constituting 30 percent of those killed and 26 percent of those injured during this period.<sup>29</sup> The Commission notes the increase in the proportion of children killed in comparison to previous escalations of hostilities wherein children made up approximately 24 percent of the conflict-related fatalities in the escalations of hostilities of 2008-2009 and 2014.<sup>30</sup>

27. Children killed in Gaza represent around two percent of Gaza’s 1.2 million child population by October 2025.<sup>31</sup> At least 5,031 children under five years were killed during this period, of whom 1,029 children were under the age of one, and some 420 were newborns.<sup>32</sup> The Commission notes that the number of children killed and injured from the hostilities in Gaza is certainly higher than the one reported.<sup>33</sup> Some 5,160 children are estimated by Save the Children to be buried under the rubble.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>27</sup> <https://x.com/AGvaryahu/status/1760319661189574922>.

<sup>28</sup> Child - Section 1.2.2., page 5, *Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2024*, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (OPTEJI-C-00004675); <https://palestine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2024-11/Gaza%20report%202024%20final%20version.pdf>; ; <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4732> ; [https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/pcbs\\_2012/Publications.aspx](https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/pcbs_2012/Publications.aspx) (2702. The Status of the Rights of Palestinian Children, 2024, page ‘Introduction’).

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-329-gaza-strip>; <https://t.me/MOHMediaGaza/7054> – Two Years of Genocidal War and Gaza Still Bleeds; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-329-gaza-strip>. At the time of writing this report, between 7 October 2023 and 3 February 2026, as reported by UNICEF, 21,289 Palestinian children were killed out of 71,803 total Palestinians killed; and 44,500 children injured among 171,230 in the Gaza Strip. <https://www.unicef.org/sop/media/6131/file/Humanitarian%20Situation%20Update%20-%205%20February%202026.pdf>; <https://www.unicef.org/sop/reports/unicef-state-palestine-humanitarian-situation-update>.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/eight-years-after-2008-2009-cast-lead-hostilities-gaza-lack-accountability-persists>; [https://www.ochaopt.org/content/key-figures-2014-hostilities#:~:text=2%2C251%20Palestinians%2C%20including%201%2C462%20civilians,1%2C500%20Palestinian%20children%20were%20orphaned](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/key-figures-2014-hostilities#:~:text=2%2C251%20Palestinians%2C%20including%201%2C462%20civilians,1%2C500%20Palestinian%20children%20were%20orphaned;); A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 53. See also for comparative data A/HRC/12/48 and A/HRC/29/52.; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-206486/>.

<sup>31</sup> <https://t.me/MOHMediaGaza/7054> – Two Years of Genocidal War and Gaza Still Bleeds; <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/news/media-centre/press-releases/2025/gaza-20000-children-killed-23-months-war-more-one-child>.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-329-gaza-strip>; <https://t.me/MOHMediaGaza/7054> – Two Years of Genocidal War and Gaza Still Bleeds.

<sup>33</sup> <https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d341/d3418605>; <https://www.savethechildren.net/gaza-missing-children>.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.savethechildren.net/gaza-missing-children> (accessed 1st May 2026).

28. Additionally, unknown numbers of children are buried in unmarked graves without their deaths being recorded or are simply missing.<sup>35</sup> Over the two-year period, child casualties in Gaza have varied significantly across different phases of the hostilities, reflecting shifts in the intensity, geographic spread, and the Israeli military tactics and operations – timeline of key events is noted in Annex I at the end of this report.

29. The Commission has previously noted that the increase in child casualties absolutely and proportionally in comparison with previous escalations of hostilities is due to Israeli security forces' use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects (see paras. 30-33) and an expansion of its targeting criteria, without taking adequate precautions, resulting in high child casualties among family members, neighbours and displaced communities at large.<sup>36</sup>

30. On 25 December 2023, Israeli security forces issued a statement about its targeting approach in Gaza: "Whereas in past operations or wars, Israel has been more selective or "accurate" with regards to the exact types of Hamas targets struck, given that Israel's overall objective was limited to diminishing Hamas's capabilities, Israel is now focused on dismantling Hamas's capabilities altogether, i.e. causing "maximum damage" to Hamas' military capabilities in their entirety."<sup>37</sup> The Commission found that statements by the Israeli security forces, in conjunction with its practice on the ground, indicate a *de facto* blanket permission to target civilian locations widely in Gaza.<sup>38</sup>

31. Israeli military operations in Gaza have been marked by the extensive use of explosive weapons and heavy munitions with a wide-area destructive capacity in residential areas, resulting in complete destruction of residential neighbourhoods.<sup>39</sup> The extensive use of such weapons in Gaza has had a significant impact on child casualties. Research indicates that children are seven times more likely to die than adults from the impact of explosive weapons due to their physiological vulnerability, that is, proportionally larger body surface area, pliable bones, smaller limbs and thinner skin. Due to their smaller size and lighter weight, children are also at a greater risk of being thrown from the impact of blasts. Blast injuries are more likely to kill younger children than older children, as evident in the age breakdown of the child fatalities in Gaza (see para. 27).

32. Israeli air strikes in Gaza have wiped out entire families.<sup>40</sup> On 23 May 2025, in Khan Younis, two Israeli airstrikes targeted a residential home killing nine of 10 children, and the father. Both parents were doctors. The only surviving child, an 11-year-old boy, was critically injured and, along with his mother, was evacuated for medical treatment. Israeli security forces reportedly said that it was investigating the incident; however, the Commission is not aware of any outcome of such investigation.

33. The killing and injuring of children continued through temporary pauses in fighting, revealing that each pause in fighting has repeatedly failed to protect the most vulnerable. In one example, on 18 March 2025, the pause was ended by Israel by launching waves of airstrikes across Gaza without prior warning, killing at least 170 children by mid-day.<sup>41</sup> Between 18 and 31 March 2025, airstrikes, bombardments and ground operations by the Israeli security forces killed at least 322 children and injured 609 children, amounting to killing or injuring at least 100 Palestinian children per day in a span of two weeks alone.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=5965>;  
<https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d341/d3418605>; <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/gazas-missing-children-over-20000-children-estimated-be-lost-disappeared-detained-buried-under>;  
<https://www.savethechildren.net/gaza-missing-children>.

<sup>36</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para. 51. See also <https://gaza-patterns-harm.airwars.org/>.

<sup>37</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para. 156; <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/hamas-israel-war-24/war-on-hamas-2023-resources/idfpress-release-clarification/>.

<sup>38</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para. 156.

<sup>39</sup> <https://environment.ps/en/gazza/>.

<sup>40</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para. 54.

<sup>41</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, paras. 32, 181.

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/least-322-children-reportedly-killed-gaza-strip-following-breakdown-ceasefire>; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/03/1161651>;

34. In January 2025, the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) warned that between 5 and 10 percent of Israeli ammunition used in Gaza has failed to detonate, leaving behind very significant quantities of unexploded ordnance<sup>43</sup> among at least 61 million tons of rubble and debris.<sup>44</sup> Unexploded ordnance is particularly deadly for children as they are more naively curious than adults and are often unable to recognize the hazard.<sup>45</sup> In one instance, the Commission documented an incident on 24 October 2025 where seven-year-old twins, a girl and a boy, were severely injured from an unexploded ordnance after mistaking it for a toy near their house in Gaza City. The twins were admitted to the Al-Shifa Hospital where the boy's right hand had to be amputated, while the girl sustained a fracture in her leg risking losing it. A doctor described their injuries as "life-threatening".

35. The overwhelming scale and rate of children killed and injured in Gaza have been unparalleled across modern conflicts globally. Israel's conduct in Gaza since 7 October 2023 and its harmful consequences on children have led UNICEF to rank the Gaza Strip as "the most dangerous place in the world to be a child".<sup>46</sup>

## 1. Continued killing and maiming of children since the October 2025 ceasefire agreement

"It is difficult for Palestinians to know where the yellow line is, as it is just some random yellow blocks placed at random distance and there is nothing clearly marking it (e.g. fences), so it is impossible for people, particularly children, to know or locate the line. This yellow line also keeps moving and it is not an internationally recognized line; it's an arbitrary line by Israeli security forces."

- A doctor told the Commission.

36. A ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas came into effect on 10 October 2025, the third pause since the hostilities began (the first was 24 to 30 November 2023 and the second 19 January to 18 March 2025).<sup>47</sup> Hostilities did not cease but rather they were reduced. The killing and injuring of Palestinians, including children, did not stop.

[https://x.com/UNRWA/status/1908189232666927361?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweteembed%7Ctwterm%5E1908189232666927361%7Ctwgr%5Ec2c3c3d06e9ca1905f578285d53ef47e94661bb9%7Ctwcon%5Es1\\_&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.aljazeera.com%2Fnews%2F2025%2F4%2F5%2Ffun-says-100-children-killed-or-injured-in-gaza-every-day-since-war-resumed](https://x.com/UNRWA/status/1908189232666927361?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweteembed%7Ctwterm%5E1908189232666927361%7Ctwgr%5Ec2c3c3d06e9ca1905f578285d53ef47e94661bb9%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.aljazeera.com%2Fnews%2F2025%2F4%2F5%2Ffun-says-100-children-killed-or-injured-in-gaza-every-day-since-war-resumed);  
<https://www.unicef.ch/en/current/news/2025-04-01/gaza-322-children-killed-end-ceasefire>;  
<https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-166-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>.

<sup>43</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/01/1159571#:~:text>

=Despite%20the%20increasing%20humanitarian%20response,rifle%20grenades%2C%E2%80%9D%20he%20explained.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/environmental-damage-gaza-strip-harming-human-health-threatening#:~:text=Much%20of%20Gaza's%20vegetation%20has,not%20effectively%20segregated%20early%20on>.

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.inew.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Blast-Injuries.pdf>;  
<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/childhood-rubble-humanitarian-consequences-urban-warfare-children>; <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2024/08/22/beyond-the-rubble-eight-overlooked-ways-that-urban-warfare-is-affecting-children/#:~:text=The%20same%20explosive%20weapons%20that,%2C%20exist%20for%20healthcare%20workers>.

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-geneva-palais-briefing-note-gaza-worlds-most-dangerous-place-be-child>; <https://www.france24.com/en/video/20240405-unicef-aiding-children-in-gaza-the-most-dangerous-place-in-the-world-to-be-a-child>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUB-G6t6JMc>.

<sup>47</sup> <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/560/Rev.1>;  
<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/opt/20241106-Gaza-Update-Report-OPT.pdf>; <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/acaps-briefing-note-palestine-gaza-ceasefire-priority-needs-and-risks-17-january-2025>; [https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MB\\_March\\_16032025\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MB_March_16032025_FINAL.pdf); <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/ceasefire-breakdown-intensified-hostilities-gaza-strip>.

According to UNICEF, as of 13 January 2026, more than 100 children (at least 60 boys and 40 girls) had been killed since early October 2025,<sup>48</sup> while hundreds more had been wounded.<sup>49</sup> On 10 December 2025, a 16-year-old boy from the Jabalia camp was shot and killed by Israeli soldiers after which an Israeli tank ran over him, mutilating his body.

37. Following the signing of the October 2025 ceasefire agreement, the Israeli military redeployed its forces to a newly established demarcation line, dubbed as the ‘yellow line’, inside Gaza. Israeli forces controlled the territory on one side of the line and Hamas controlled the territory on the other side. The zone under Israeli control was declared prohibited to residents and, due to the lack of clarity regarding the precise location of this boundary, civilians including children have been shot after unintentionally crossing it while attempting to return to their homes or fetching firewood in the aftermath of hostilities. According to Israeli security forces, concrete barriers were installed at intervals of 200 meters along the ‘yellow line’.<sup>50</sup> In certain areas, the markers were reportedly positioned deep within Hamas-controlled territory, effectively enlarging the zone under Israeli control.<sup>51</sup>

38. On 29 November 2025, two brothers, aged 10 and nine, were killed in an Israeli drone strike near Bani Suheila, east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza. The boys were gathering firewood for their wheelchair-bound father when the strike occurred. Israeli security forces stated that soldiers spotted two “suspects” crossing the ‘yellow line’, acting suspiciously and approaching their forces, so a drone eliminated the “immediate threat”. At the outset, the Commission notes that the boys were located more than 300 meters from the Israeli soldiers’ rifles, meaning that they could not have posed any immediate threat from such a distance. The soldiers should not have classified the boys as “suspects” in the first place since they were clearly involved only in collecting firewood. The soldiers failed to adequately assess the ages of boys, their intentions and capabilities as a ‘threat’. The Commission finds that Israeli security forces’ Kfir Brigade were operating in the area.

39. The Commission is not aware of any formal investigation initiated by the Israeli security forces against those responsible, similar to other attacks which have not been investigated to date, underscoring a systemic impunity relating to the killing of Palestinians including children. By maintaining that the children killed were “suspects”, the Israeli security forces have deflected responsibility to Palestinian children, portraying them as “terrorists” rather than casualties. Such tactics by the Israeli security forces serve to distort the factual narrative and further marginalize affected children and their families.

40. The Commission is particularly concerned with increasing incidents of targeting and killing Palestinians including children, near the ‘yellow line’, and emphasises that demarcation lines should be clearly defined and communicated to avoid harm to civilians. The Commission considers the ‘yellow line’ to be particularly problematic since it is essentially enforced without transparent warning systems or safe passage channels. Subsequently, Palestinians are targeted without any investigation or due process. The targeting of civilians including children along the ‘yellow line’ serves as the latest evidence of the low value of Palestinian lives, including children, in Gaza. It reflects a grave policy failure – one that undermines the credibility of the ceasefire itself and perpetuates the conditions for recurring violence, which explains the continuous incidents of children getting killed post-ceasefire.

## 2. Impact of explosive weapons: serious injuries and life-long disabilities of children

“Without any warning, around four or five explosions hit the front of the school. I ran outside to find my three-year-old nephew whose parents were killed in a

<sup>48</sup> <https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d352/d3524067>;  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/DTcpgDzDNOr/>.

<sup>49</sup> <https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d352/d3524067>;  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/DTcpgDzDNOr/>.

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-israel-at-war/october-25-pr/idf-troops-mark-the-yellow-line-in-the-gaza-strip/>.

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/inside/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/State-of-the-occupation-Year-58.pdf>.

previous airstrike, covered in blood with his legs cut off, signalling with both his hands for me to pick him up and save him.”

- Uncle of a three-year-old orphaned boy who was severely injured in three different attacks.

41. Injured children have suffered from what is medically known as ‘polytrauma’<sup>52</sup> or multiple traumas impacting multiple body parts at once, such as bone fractures, significant soft tissue damage, brain and spine injuries, nerve and organ damage and perforating wounds.

42. In one example investigated by the Commission, between 20 and 21 December 2023, in Sheikh Radwan, Israeli soldiers threw four hand grenades inside a house with 30 family members without any warning, severely injuring a five-year-old boy who suffered from multiple injuries including abdominal evisceration. The Israeli security forces then forcibly entered the house, shot and killed eight family members, including the parents, and ordered the survivors to evacuate to a nearby school. The Israeli security forces did not provide any medical assistance to the injured or assist with their evacuation. The boy was carried from the house to the school with severe injuries. He lost consciousness at the school, while he was treated by a doctor who reinserted his exposed intestines by using diapers and taped his stomach. He was taken to the Al-Shifa Hospital where he underwent surgery alone. Later, the boy was medically evacuated out of Gaza and underwent eight surgeries, while three more were still needed, as of December 2025. The boy has been left with a permanent disability in one of his legs and has to use a wheelchair. The boy and his surviving six-year-old brother suffer from severe mental harm and behavioural change as a result of this incident, in particular since they witnessed the brutal shooting of their parents by the Israeli security forces, including their pregnant mother shot in the abdomen and breasts and father in the head (see para. 244 in the Section (V). Mental harm against Palestinian children by Israel). The Commission finds that Israeli soldiers of the 162nd Division, specifically the 401st Brigade and Shayetet 13, were operating in the area at the time of this incident.

43. A number of healthcare workers have told the Commission that children have suffered internal damage, including organ rupture, contusions and internal bleeding, but without any external sign on the bodies, which made it harder for medical personnel to recognise the cause of injury or death and the true extent of the harm. They also noted seeing injuries of unusual severity which are exceptionally complex to treat in Gaza and will result in lifelong consequences. This includes traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries, fractures and extensive burns. Injuries to children have also caused severe vision and hearing loss. Children have been suffering from traumatic eye injuries, including retinal detachment, leading to documented cases of partial or complete blindness and severe vision impairment. A study by Children Not Numbers (CNN) found 48 percent of vision impairment cases were caused by traumatic injuries that were undiagnosed, untreated and irreversible. Similarly, children have been experiencing sensorineural hearing loss due to constant exposure to “ear-shattering sounds” from explosions and shelling as well as direct injuries.<sup>53</sup> As of June 2025, an estimated 10,000 children in Gaza have hearing loss, with 5,000 experiencing severe hearing loss, primarily due to injuries,<sup>54</sup> making them unable to hear evacuation orders or warnings about attacks.

44. Traumatic injuries have also resulted in complex limb wounds requiring amputation. Within the first three months of the Israeli attacks (October-December 2023), UNICEF reported that over 1,000 children had one or more of their limbs amputated.<sup>55</sup> In December 2024, the UN Secretary General declared that Gaza had the “the highest number of children amputees per capita anywhere in the world — many losing limbs and

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/Rehab-injury-estimate-Gaza.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/meeting-summaries/2025/08/percentage-persons-disabilities-gaza-has-increased-because-excessive-use>.

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/sop/stories/unicef-delivers-critical-hearing-aids-gaza-children>;  
<https://www.unicef.org/media/172691/file/State-of-Palestine-Humanitarian-SitRep-No-40,-30-June-2025.pdf.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1144927>.

undergoing surgeries without even anaesthesia.”<sup>56</sup> In one example, on 19 December 2023, a Palestinian doctor amputated the leg of his 17-year-old niece who was injured from an airstrike, using household implements and without anaesthetic. Since the neighbourhood was encircled by Israeli military tanks and vehicles, the family could not take the girl to a hospital, and she had to be operated at home. In interviews to the media, the girl said, “they placed a bucket under me, turned on flashlights to see the arteries, and then he cut my leg off without anaesthetic.”

45. As of 5 April 2025, the Ministry of Health in Gaza recorded approximately 846 cases of children with amputation, accounting for almost 18 percent of the 4,700 cases of amputation than recorded.<sup>57</sup> The Commission investigated several cases of amputation, including a case of a three-year-old boy who lost both legs because of an attack on an UNRWA school in November 2023. Doctors told the Commission that the boy will need to use a wheelchair or prosthetics, if he can get them, for the rest of his life. His parents and his younger brother had been killed in October 2023. Doctors told the Commission that child amputees need on average eight to 12 surgeries before reaching adulthood to allow for the limbs’ proper growth; however, this level of paediatric surgical care is not available in Gaza due to Israel’s destruction of healthcare facilities, including access to prosthetic devices, acute rehabilitation services and regular follow ups.<sup>58</sup>

46. Prior to October 2023, there were 90,000 children living with a disability in Gaza.<sup>59</sup> The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) estimated that, between 7 October 2023 and 3 September 2025, at least 21,000 children were made newly disabled in Gaza and approximately 40,500 children suffered “war-related injuries”.<sup>60</sup>

47. Children with disabilities have been more vulnerable as a result of Israel’s attacks, suffering also from the breakdown of essential services including healthcare.<sup>61</sup> Many children with disabilities have not had access to assistive devices, including wheelchairs, hearing aids, batteries and other tools, due to Israel’s blockade, affecting their ability to evacuate safely and to cope with extreme living conditions.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, according to several reports, the hostilities have exacerbated pre-existing disabilities and medical conditions of children, resulting in functional decline and increased dependence, while the blockade of supplies and resulting limited services have increased vulnerability and hindered access to adequate care and support.<sup>63</sup>

## B. Deliberate targeting of children by the Israeli security forces in the Gaza Strip

“Based on the clustering of injuries and the targeted body parts, I assess that the Israeli soldiers have been deliberately shooting teenage boys in a game of target practice – a different body part being targeted on different days... There is a very clear pattern that suggest this is a deliberate aiming of different body parts [of children].”

- A doctor who visited Gaza on medical mission.

<sup>56</sup> <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sgsm22483.doc.htm>.

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=5965>.

<sup>58</sup> [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/emergencies/rehab-injury-estimate-gaza---final.pdf?sfvrsn=bd9b3a7b\\_1&download=true](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/emergencies/rehab-injury-estimate-gaza---final.pdf?sfvrsn=bd9b3a7b_1&download=true).

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/07/11/submission-on-the-situation-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-gaza-and-the-west-bank>.

<sup>60</sup> [tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2FC%2F33%2F2&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2FC%2F33%2F2&Lang=en).

<sup>61</sup> <https://globaldisabilityfund.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/sitan-palestine-full-report.pdf>.

<sup>62</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/08/1165661>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/meeting-summaries/2025/08/percentage-persons-disabilities-gaza-has-increased-because-excessive-use>; <https://globaldisabilityfund.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/sitan-palestine-full-report.pdf>.

<sup>63</sup> <https://globaldisabilityfund.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/sitan-palestine-full-report.pdf>.

48. The Commission has investigated and documented cases demonstrating a consistent pattern of children being deliberately targeted by the Israeli security forces in Gaza. These include cases of children being shot while trying to evacuate with their families and in places of refuge such as displacement camps, food distribution sites or other locations across Gaza.<sup>64</sup> The Commission has collected, analysed and preserved videos, photographs and medical reports, including CT scans, and reviewed investigative reports by several independent entities. The Commission has also interviewed many witnesses, including medical professionals, and consulted two independent forensic pathologists in its analysis of the following incidents.

#### **Killing of a family of seven, including Hind Rajab and four other children in Tel al-Hawa**

49. On 29 January 2024, a Palestinian family of seven and two paramedics in a Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) ambulance attempting to assist them were attacked by the Israeli security forces in Tal-al-Hawa in Gaza City and killed.<sup>65</sup> The Commission's investigation confirmed the following details. At approximately 08:00 on 29 January 2024, a man along with his wife, their four children and 5.5-year-old niece, named Hind Rajab, were trying to evacuate from Tal al-Hawa. At 12:00, the family's eldest daughter, 15-year-old Layan, spoke with Hind's mother and confirmed that she and Hind were injured, while the rest of the family were dead. At around 14:45, Layan spoke with a Palestine Red Crescent Society call-line operator and said that there was a tank next to the car. The operator heard the sound of gunshots in the call and Layan screaming. At this point, Layan was likely killed. Hind answered the subsequent calls from PRCS with sounds of gunfire in the background. In one of the calls, Hind told her mother that she had been shot in her upper arm, back and foot.

50. At approximately 17:40, a PRCS ambulance, with two paramedics, was dispatched from Al Ahli Baptist Hospital in Gaza City after receiving clearance from Israel's Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) and the Ministry of Health in Gaza. The ambulance was about 200 meters from the car in which Hind was trapped when a red laser light pointed at the ambulance. The sound of heavy gunfire and tank shelling was heard over a call between the ambulance crew and PRCS. The connection between the PRCS and the ambulance crew was lost at 18:00. The call between Hind and her mother continued until around 19:00 when Hind stopped talking. Hind likely died around this time.

51. Hind's body, the bodies of six of her family members and the charred remains of the two PRCS paramedics in the ambulance were recovered 12 days later. PRCS could not access the location before then because of the presence of the Israeli security forces in the area. Hind's car appeared to have been damaged and forcibly moved, likely by an Israeli armoured bulldozer, and pushed against a concrete curb in front of the gas station, making it difficult to retrieve the bodies. The PRCS ambulance was found some 40 to 50 meters away from the car, burnt beyond recognition. The Commission viewed videos of the sites showing the crushed and charred remains of the ambulance with a human spine and hip bones visible inside the vehicle's remains. An exit hole of approximately 23x26 centimeters (cm) in the left rear door of the ambulance was found, consistent with the impact of an 120mm M830A1 High Explosive Anti-Tank Multi-Purpose-Tracer (HEAT-MP-T) round. The spent round was also found on-site near the vehicle.<sup>66</sup>

52. An audio ballistic analysis of the shots heard in the call to Layan found that the car was shot at by a Fabrique Nationale (FN) machine gun (MAG) of 7.62x51mm mounted on an armoured Israeli Merkava tank likely from a distance of 13 to 23 metres.<sup>67</sup> The

<sup>64</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3.

<sup>65</sup> <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-killing-of-hind-rajab>;  
<https://earshot.ngo/investigations/the-killing-of-layan-hamada-and-hind-rajab>.

<sup>66</sup> <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-killing-of-hind-rajab>.

<sup>67</sup> <https://earshot.ngo/investigations/the-killing-of-layan-hamada-and-hind-rajab>.

Commission assessed that, from that distance, the Israeli soldiers inside the tank would have had a clear view of the children inside the car.<sup>68</sup>

53. On 24 February 2024, the Israeli security forces reportedly told media<sup>69</sup> that a preliminary investigation indicated its forces were not present near the vehicle. The Israeli security forces also noted that, given the absence of its forces in the area, there was no need for individual coordination of the movement of the PRCS ambulance. The Israeli security forces reportedly added that the incident has been handed over to the General Staff Fact-Finding Assessment Mechanism, an Israeli military body responsible for investigating exceptional incidents during military operations.<sup>70</sup> More than two years later, the Commission is not aware of any investigation having been conducted.

54. The Commission found the claim of the Israeli security forces that “its troops were not present near the vehicle or within firing range of the described vehicle in which the girl was found” to be false. The Commission reviewed satellite images, statements and evacuation orders from the Israeli security forces, based on which the Commission has reasonable grounds to conclude that vehicles of the Israeli security forces were present in the vicinity of the Fares gas station, adjacent to the site of the incident. In one of the satellite images, the distance between the closest Israeli military tank and the Fares gas station where the car was stationed is estimated to be about 275 meters.

55. The Commission concludes that the Israeli security forces’ 401st Brigade, under the 162nd Division, had been operating in the area during the relevant period and deliberately targeted the family in the car, including shooting Hind, Layan, and other children, from close distance despite knowing children were inside, and obstructed the medical rescue of Hind by shelling the PRCS ambulance.

#### **Killing of a 15-year-old boy holding white flag and his brother in Khan Younis**

56. On 24 January 2024, at around 08:30, a family was preparing to evacuate from their ground-floor apartment in a seven-storey building at al-Amal, west of Khan Younis, following receipt of an evacuation order by the Israeli security forces. The father noticed quadcopters hovering over the area and presence of the Israeli security forces about 100 meters east of their house, instructing people to head west to Al-Mawasi in Khan Younis. His 15-year-old son stepped out of the house holding a white cloth, when the father, who was inside the house, heard a gunshot from the eastern side where Israeli soldiers were located. The boy was hit in the left foot, and he fell on his face. As he attempted to stand, two more gunshots were fired within seconds from the same direction. One shot hit the boy on his back and another on the left side of his neck. Seeing this, the boy’s 20-year-old brother ran towards him and was also shot on the left side of his chest. He collapsed on top of his younger brother.

57. The victims’ mother waved her hands at the south side window to signal for an ambulance when the Israeli security forces fired bullets which hit her too, slightly injuring her in her left hand. The father tried several times to pull away the bodies of both his sons but, every time he tried to advance towards them, the Israeli security forces fired in his direction. He then left the neighbourhood with the rest of his family. In early March 2024, he learned that two days after the incident, an ambulance arrived to retrieve his sons’ bodies. To date, the family is unaware where the bodies are buried.

58. The Commission assesses that the 15-year-old boy holding the white flag was shot by Israeli soldiers using a DAN.338 calibre bolt-action sniper rifle, commonly used by Israeli snipers, from a position located around 200 metres away. Given that sniper rifles used by the Israeli security forces normally have a precision accuracy range of more than 1,200 metres, the Israeli shooter should have been able to see that the target was a child

<sup>68</sup> <https://earshot.ngo/investigations/the-killing-of-layan-hamada-and-hind-rajab>.

<sup>69</sup> [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/idf-no-troops-were-operating-in-area-where-6-year-old-gazan-girl-was-killed-earlier-this-month-initial-probe/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-no-troops-were-operating-in-area-where-6-year-old-gazan-girl-was-killed-earlier-this-month-initial-probe/).

<sup>70</sup> [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/idf-no-troops-were-operating-in-area-where-6-year-old-gazan-girl-was-killed-earlier-this-month-initial-probe/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/idf-no-troops-were-operating-in-area-where-6-year-old-gazan-girl-was-killed-earlier-this-month-initial-probe/); <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/military-advocate-generals-corps/the-idf-military-justice-system/>.

and that he was holding a white flag. The additional two shots fired after the boy was hit were likely meant to ensure that he was dead. The additional killing of the boy's brother points to a deliberate effort by the Israeli security forces to target the boy as well as any person that came to retrieve him. The Commission could not find any indication of a threat towards members of the Israeli security forces from the family's location. The Commission finds that the Israeli security forces' 98th Division were operating in the area at the time of the incident.

#### **Injuring of a 10-day-old baby by quadcopter inside the tent in Nuseirat camp**

59. On 12 April 2024 at 13:00, a 10 day-old-baby boy was shot by a quadcopter while being breastfed by his mother inside their tent in Nuseirat camp. The mother was alone in the tent, breastfeeding her baby, when a single bullet from a quadcopter hit the baby in the head and exited through the back of his head, hitting the pillow behind her. The baby survived but sustained brain injuries and now suffers from seizures.

60. The Commission viewed and analysed images of the bullet that hit the baby. The Commission concluded on reasonable grounds that the bullet was fired from a sniper rifle mounted on a quadcopter. Considering that the shooting occurred in broad daylight, the Commission concludes that the quadcopter controller would have been able to see inside the tent and assesses that the target was a mother and a baby.

#### **Injuring of a four-year-old girl in Khan Younis displacement camp**

61. On 24 August 2024, at around 08:00, a four-year-old girl was hit by a bullet to her head while she was eating with her family in her tent in Khan Younis, southern Gaza. No one else from the family was injured, only the girl. She was evacuated to Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis where she was intubated and later underwent a craniotomy. The girl survived the incident, but the left side of her body was paralysed, and she will likely suffer long-term damage.

62. The Commission viewed images of the bullet and determined that the bullet used was a 7.62x51mm munition. Since the girl was the only one in the family in the tent who was shot and testimonies of the doctor and the parents indicate that they saw the quadcopter that shot the girl, the Commission concludes on reasonable grounds that the girl was targeted by a quadcopter mounted with an assault rifle.

#### **Testimonies from medical professionals and visual evidence**

63. The Commission interviewed a total of 17 medical practitioners deployed to different hospitals in Gaza between 7 October 2023 and July 2025 who reported a consistent pattern of receiving children with single gunshot wounds either by quadcopters or snipers. The killing of a child from a single gunshot wound indicates a high degree of precision in the use of force, suggesting that the shot was carefully aimed rather than incidental or the result of indiscriminate fire. In such cases, this pattern is indicative of the deliberate targeting of the child victim, particularly where the circumstances do not point to crossfire or other conditions of hostilities (see paras. 71-75 for the Commission's military analysis on the Israeli security forces' use of weapons and see paras. 48-62 for the investigated cases).

64. The doctors described treating a significant number of children who sustained bullet injuries in the upper part of the body, with no shrapnel injuries, as a result of small-arms fire. A doctor who worked at the European Gaza Hospital made a distinction between two kinds of wounds – small bullets, with very small entry and exit wounds making it hard to locate them in children's bodies (see para. 67), with the victims commonly exhibiting collapsed lungs, severed vessels and nerves; and high-velocity rifle bullets which left small entry but large exit wounds. In one example provided by the doctor, a boy arrived at the hospital with a gunshot wound to his head. The bullet entered near the boy's ear and exited through the jaw, which was completely destroyed. The boy was with his father, who was not injured at all, indicating that the child was likely targeted by a sniper. Doctors told the Commission that they received children with injuries inflicted by quadcopters. One doctor estimated that, within two weeks of her deployment in a hospital, she saw around five

children shot by quadcopters. Quadcopters hover close to targets, enabling operators to see clearly – using high-resolution cameras with night vision capabilities – whom they are targeting before firing, which indicates deliberate targeting (see the next sub-section on ‘Weapons used to target Palestinian children’ for details).

65. Doctors provided the Commission photos, videos, CT scans and x-rays for 17 children who had been shot. They were eight boys, eight girls and one of undetermined gender, ranging in age from three to 16-years-old. The Commission carried out independent forensic analysis in 15 of the 17 cases (the cases of two boys were not examined – in one case there was insufficient evidence to permit analysis and, in the other case, video evidence was sufficiently clear so that forensic analysis was deemed unnecessary) which confirmed that, in 12 cases out of the 15, the wounds were consistent with a single gunshot.

66. In one example, two 16-years-old female cousins were brought to a hospital, each with a single shot fired to their heads. An accompanying family member told the treating doctor that the girls were shot by a quadcopter while they were attending a wedding ceremony in a tent in Khan Younis in August 2024. The girls died shortly after arriving at the hospital. The doctor stated that the girls had distinguished swelling of eyes due to bullet injuries on the brain, leading to orbital evisceration. Two independent forensic pathologists confirmed the cause of death.

67. In a second example, a 14-year-old boy arrived dead at the Nasser Medical Complex in August 2024, with small pellets lodged in his chest and pelvis. According to the doctor, the small, cube-shaped pellets created a tunneling-like effect impacting multiple internal organs and causing a ‘cardiac tamponade’<sup>71</sup> and a ‘spraying out’ effect, which penetrated deep into the body and caused haemorrhage to the boy’s internal organs. Independent forensic pathologists confirmed that the boy sustained a minimum of ten lesions of approximately 0.5 cm diameter, with a square-shaped imprint or triangular entrance wound. This type of wound is atypical of non-rounded pellets with linear or sharp edges but consistent with entrance wounds from a small-calibre firearm projectile. They concluded that the boy likely died because of hypovolemic shock, haemorrhage, and pulmonary and vascular injuries owing to the pellets hitting major arteries in the body. The munition used appears to have been designed to cause severe internal damage and can result in superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering. The use of such ammunition is prohibited under customary international law and may amount to war crime.<sup>72</sup>

68. The Commission documented another case where an eight-year-old boy arrived at the Al-Aqsa Hospital with a single gunshot wound to his buttock. The boy’s family told the doctor that, on 10 December 2024, the boy was shot while playing outside their dwelling in the Bureij refugee camp. The bullet hit his right buttock, went through his abdominal cavity and remained in the front centre of the abdomen wall. The Commission was informed that during the surgery a 3cm bullet was removed from the boy’s abdomen. The Commission assesses that the boy was hit by a .338 Lapua Magnum cartridge fired from a Dan .338 calibre Israeli sniper rifle. The Commission finds that the Israeli security forces’ 99th Division was operating in the area at the time of the incident.

69. The Commission also received reports of an additional 168 children (98 boys, 53 girls and 17 unknown, age ranging from 10 weeks to 16 years) who suffered gunshot wounds between 9 November 2023 and 16 July 2025. Of the 168 children, at least 88 children were killed as a result of gunshots. At least 70 of the 168 children were shot by quadcopters and at least 20 were shot by snipers. Some of the children were shot by tank guns. At least 73 children of the 168 children were shot in the head and 22 in the chest, and the rest sustained gunshot wounds to other parts of the body.

<sup>71</sup> Cardiac tamponade results from an accumulation of pericardial fluid under pressure, leading to impaired cardiac filling and haemodynamic compromise, <https://www.escardio.org/Journals/E-Journal-of-Cardiology-Practice/Volume-15/Cardiac-tamponade-a-clinical-challenge>.

<sup>72</sup> ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules, rules 70 and 77; Rome Statute, art. 8(2)(b)(xix).

70. Several doctors also told the Commission that, after May 2025, they treated children with gunshot wounds by snipers and quadcopters who were *en route* to or at the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) aid sites. Israeli soldiers have admitted to shooting unarmed Palestinians, including children, at GHF sites. A GHF truck driver who spent seven weeks in Gaza recounted, “Around 1 AM, there were a couple of teenagers just sprinting away, two [Israeli] soldiers ran after them, took two shots and the two heads just snapped backwards and dropped.” Another soldier remarked, “obviously, fingers are light on the trigger.” The Commission documented extensive reports, including by international organizations such as Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), of children being shot at GHF sites.<sup>73</sup>

### Weapons used to target Palestinian children

71. On 22 July 2025, a news segment by Israeli Channel 14 broadcast interviews with Israeli army personnel, speaking about the capability of drones<sup>74</sup> used by the Israeli security forces’ secret drone unit. The segment showcased several variants of quadcopters, demonstrating their high-resolution surveillance and night vision capabilities including Electro-Optical and Infrared (EO/IR) sensor cameras, combining visible light and thermal imaging capabilities to provide continuous, 24/7 situational awareness in various conditions. During the segment, officials of the Israeli security forces confirmed the use of “a new generation of lethal weapons” [referring to quadcopters] in Gaza, adding that quadcopters have an advanced shooting system which allows precise strikes beyond visual range, at a level of accuracy that no human sniper, no matter how skilled, can achieve. Officials of the Israeli security forces emphasised that a quadcopter “does not hesitate, does not stop, and almost never make mistakes,” equating quadcopters to “watching a video game.”

72. According to several reports, the specific unit of the Israeli security forces which operates these quadcopters is known as the Multi-Dimensional Unit/Unit 888 or “Refaim” (Ghost) Unit. Other less advanced versions of quadcopters have been decentralized and distributed to Israeli soldiers at the lower unit levels. In the ITVX documentary, ‘Breaking Ranks: Inside Israel’s War’, one Israeli soldier described, “the drones, in my opinion, are what most dehumanises the other side. You see everything on a screen. You drop the bomb. It feels like a game. You can sit in some basement of a house, safe, with your helmet off, scratching your balls, half-dressed, and kill Palestinians.”

73. The Commission notes that quadcopters are controlled by human operators, with soldiers scanning and identifying a target and then remotely firing to hit the target. In 2025, the Ministry of Defence established an Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Autonomy Administration<sup>75</sup> within the Directorate of Defense Research and Development (MAFAT) to spearhead research and development efforts in AI and autonomous weapons systems across all branches of the Israeli security forces. Different attack drones have been developed and used in Gaza: attack drones developed by Elbit Systems named “Birds of Prey” and a sniper drone “Predator” [by General Atomics], and an attack drone [nameless] developed by the company Xtend.

74. The Commission assesses that such quadcopters have been configured to carry a variety of ammunitions, including small bombs, small arms fire and pellets. The Israeli security forces likely mounted shotguns or other assault rifles on quadcopters modified to use small pellets, which are traditionally made of lead, as well as steel and tungsten of different calibres [refer to the case in paras. 64 and 67]. Some of the munitions appear to

<sup>73</sup> [https://msf.org.au/sites/default/files/2025-08/msf\\_gazareport\\_thisisnotaid.pdf](https://msf.org.au/sites/default/files/2025-08/msf_gazareport_thisisnotaid.pdf); <https://www.icrc.org/en/statement/israel-and-occupied-territories-red-cross-field-hospital-unprecedented-influx-war-wounded-gaza>; <https://www.facebook.com/reel/3762059754096875>.

<sup>74</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F\\_HBKHFqlyM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_HBKHFqlyM). The term ‘drone’ is used in the Channel 14 documentary instead of ‘quadcopter’ – a drone is any unmanned vehicle that operates autonomously (or semi autonomously) or is remotely controlled, while a quadcopter is a specific type of drone that uses four rotors for propulsion. Therefore, all quadcopters are drones, but not all drones are quadcopters.

<sup>75</sup> Israel MOD Establishes AI and Autonomy Administration <https://mod.gov.il/en/press-releases/press-room/israel-mod-establishes-ai-and-autonomy-administration>.

have been designed to behave in a similar manner to ‘cluster munitions’ within a human body. Quadcopters – newly deployed by the Israeli security forces – fire small pellet munitions specifically designed for these weapons. Upon entering the body, the pellets fragment into submunitions, mimicking cluster munitions by damaging multiple organs.

75. In addition to quadcopters, the Commission has also found that the Israeli security forces used sniper rifles to target children in Gaza. The Commission found that the Israeli snipers primarily use the DAN .338 rifle, which is manufactured by the Israeli Weapons Industries (IWI) with a high precision range of up to 1200 metres (see cases in paras. 56-58, 59-60, 64, and 68).

### **Depiction of Palestinian children as ‘terrorist’ and admission by Israeli soldiers of targeting children**

76. The Commission found that Palestinian children in Gaza have been explicitly depicted as “terrorists” by Israeli officials in their speeches, statements and rhetoric in the Israeli Knesset, media and social media. On 9 October 2023, a member of Knesset and deputy speaker of the Knesset, Nissim Vaturi, posted on social media: “Erase Gaza. Nothing else will satisfy us. It is not acceptable that we maintain a terrorist authority next to Israel. Do not leave a child there expel all the remaining ones at the end, so that they will not have a resurrection.”<sup>76</sup> On 30 January 2025, he again said: “Gaza is full of terrorists and every child born there is already a terrorist, from the moment of his birth.”

77. On 16 October 2023 a member of Knesset, Merav Ben-Ari, contended in the parliament that “There is no equality with Gazan children [compared to Israeli children]. Children in Gaza brought [their own killing] on themselves.”

78. In February 2024, Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, a senior Israeli minister serving on several key committees,<sup>77</sup> demanded that the Israeli security forces unapologetically shoot anyone who get close to the Gaza border, tweeting on his social media account: “No apologies and no hesitation. Anyone who approaches the fence and endangers the citizens of the State of Israel and our heroic soldiers must be shot. That’s how it’s done in every normal country! We must not return to the October 6th concept!” This statement expressed Ben-Gvir’s support for the Israeli security forces’ ‘open fire’ directive and constituted encouragement for Israeli soldiers to view anyone, including children, as legitimate targets. It indicated blanket authority to the Israeli soldiers to shoot in the demarcation line area (see paras. 36-40 above on post-ceasefire shooting near or across the ‘yellow line’).

79. In July 2024, Israeli Knesset Member Amit Halevi stated that 300 Palestinian babies in the maternity ward of the besieged Al Shifa Hospital are “all born terrorists”.

80. During a Knesset plenary session on 9 May 2025, in response to Ahmad Tibi, a Knesset Member and chair of the Ta’al Party, Michal Waldiger, Knesset Member from the Religious Zionist Party, argued that military operations in Gaza must continue without restraint, declaring, “I cannot understand how this establishment does not shake when someone stands here, a member of the Knesset and speaks ill of IDF soldiers...I was a member of the Ethics Committee here we have determined repeatedly that IDF soldiers are above this argument and cannot be blamed. What was done in Gaza, it’s a shame that it did not get worse. There are no uninvolved. We saw what happened on October 7... IDF soldiers are the purest good, and they do everything to protect human life in the State of Israel... they fight every enemy... including children... Sometimes there is no choice...it’s a war. There are casualties in war.”

81. Moshe Feiglin, a far-right politician and former Likud member of the Israeli Knesset, in an interview with Israel’s Channel 14 in May 2025, said: “Every child, every baby in Gaza is an enemy. The enemy is not Hamas, and it is not Hamas’ military wing... Every child in Gaza is the enemy. We need to conquer Gaza and colonize it and not leave a single Gazan child there. There is no other victory.”

<sup>76</sup> <https://x.com/nissimv/status/1711261388809568458>

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/spoke-security030123>.

82. Several media reports in reputable Israeli media outlets point to directives issued by the Israeli security forces which include intentionally targeting children. In December 2024, Haaretz included testimonies of Israeli soldiers admitting to turning killing into an internal competition, with each soldier competing with how many civilians they can kill and classifying their victims, including children, as “terrorists”.<sup>78</sup> The article interviewed Israeli soldiers from the 252nd and 99th Divisions, which have been known to be operating on the ground in Gaza.<sup>79</sup> An Israeli soldier from 252nd Division admitted to shooting and killing an unarmed 16-year-old boy, after which the soldier was congratulated by his battalion commander.<sup>80</sup>

83. In July 2025, Israeli news site Siha Mekomit published an article which included testimonies of seven Israeli soldiers and officers, reportedly confirming the Israeli security forces’ targeting of unarmed children (and women) by using drones to force them to leave their homes or to prevent them from returning home.<sup>81</sup> One of the Israeli soldiers also confirmed that soldiers identified the targets remotely through drones and shot to kill.<sup>82</sup>

84. Another article in Haaretz in September 2025 recorded testimonies of Israeli soldiers, among them a sniper in the Nahal Brigade who recounted shooting 50-60 bullets each day, killing many, including children.<sup>83</sup> He explained that many times he was forced and threatened by battalion commander to shoot at the victims, despite their age.<sup>84</sup>

85. In the ITVX documentary, ‘Breaking Ranks: Inside Israel’s War,’ several Israeli soldiers who served in Gaza confirmed that they shot at unarmed Palestinians, including children, without any restraint. As one soldier said, “the first shot is directly to the head.” One soldier recounted seeing children getting shot in their heads, and said, “we saw two teenagers pushing some sort of cart and the first shot was directly to head.” Other Israeli soldiers narrated that, in accordance with Israeli army training, a soldier can fire only if the target “has the means, shows intent, and has ability to cause harm” but in Gaza Israeli soldiers do not adhere to such a directive. In Gaza, decisions are not determined by procedures or opening fire regulations but rather the appreciation of the commander on the ground. Soldiers also stated that they do not worry about international law in Gaza as they believe they will be shielded from prosecution. The Israeli security forces appear to have been influenced by rhetoric of Israeli politicians and officials portraying all Palestinians as legitimate targets, a mindset that has filtered through the Israeli army’s ranks.

86. The Commission notes a broad pattern of a permissive military culture in which Israeli soldiers are encouraged to directly target Palestinian children with or without directives from superior commanders.

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-12-18/ty-article-magazine/.premium/idf-soldiers-expose-arbitrary-killings-and-rampant-lawlessness-in-gazas-netzarim-corridor/00000193-da7f-de86-a9f3-fefff2e50000>.

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-israel-at-war/may-25-pr/idf-troops-dismantled-an-underground-route-approximately-2-kilometers-long-in-the-northern-gaza-strip/>;  
<https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-israel-at-war/july-25-pr/the-99th-division-eliminates-terrorists-and-dismantles-weapons-and-terrorist-infrastructure/>;  
<https://www.idf.il/en/articles/distributions-swords-of-iron-war-gaza/central-gaza/040624-idf-troops-continue-operations-against-terror-infrastructure-and-operatives-in-the-gaza-strip/>.

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-12-18/ty-article-magazine/.premium/idf-soldiers-expose-arbitrary-killings-and-rampant-lawlessness-in-gazas-netzarim-corridor/00000193-da7f-de86-a9f3-fefff2e50000>.

<sup>81</sup> [https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/152707/?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwLccBRleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHo9a3ZJZ8Z4yZn3ZnA3ZX7BIVQ0i\\_cP15njQ0KTeZ-y7wShWE-XWZkacVk\\_aem\\_DYRQ29FTOFgaK6KCnGKt-g](https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/152707/?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwLccBRleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHo9a3ZJZ8Z4yZn3ZnA3ZX7BIVQ0i_cP15njQ0KTeZ-y7wShWE-XWZkacVk_aem_DYRQ29FTOFgaK6KCnGKt-g).

<sup>82</sup> [https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/152707/?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwLccBRleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHo9a3ZJZ8Z4yZn3ZnA3ZX7BIVQ0i\\_cP15njQ0KTeZ-y7wShWE-XWZkacVk\\_aem\\_DYRQ29FTOFgaK6KCnGKt-g](https://www.mekomit.co.il/ps/152707/?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwLccBRleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHo9a3ZJZ8Z4yZn3ZnA3ZX7BIVQ0i_cP15njQ0KTeZ-y7wShWE-XWZkacVk_aem_DYRQ29FTOFgaK6KCnGKt-g).

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com.il/news/magazine/2025-09-15/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000199-379d-d336-addd-7fffd8c50000>.

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com.il/news/magazine/2025-09-15/ty-article-magazine/.premium/00000199-379d-d336-addd-7fffd8c50000>.

### C. Killing and maiming of children by the Israeli security forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

“We back our soldiers at any cost, regardless of the outcome...In Jenin, there are no innocent children. Those who were born in 2006 during the expulsion [disengagement] of Gush Katif are the Nakba of 2026 on 7 October [attack]...I have no, even for a little, any sense of compassion for my enemies.”

- Israeli Knesset member Yitzhak Kroizer (from Itamar Ben Gvir’s Otzma Yehudit party) during Knesset session on 25 March 2026.

87. The Israeli security forces killed 213 Palestinian children (206 boys and seven girls) in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, between 7 October 2023 and 20 October 2025.<sup>85</sup> The majority of these killings took place in the context of Israeli military operations in Jenin, Tulkarem, Tubas, and Nablus, despite the absence of general hostilities.<sup>86</sup> The Commission assesses that the high number of boys killed reflects a policy of targeting boys due to their perceived threat as “terrorists” or “future terrorists”.<sup>87</sup> The Commission finds that Palestinian boys are systematically targeted by the Israeli security forces as a distinct group, reflecting a gendered security framing that links Palestinian male identity, even as children, with threat. The targeting of Palestinian boys by Israeli security forces reflects an intersection of age and gender within the Israeli military’s operational and targeting practices. Palestinian girls are not safe either, as they are largely killed and injured even inside homes (see paras. 89 and 91 as example), underscoring that there is no safe space for Palestinian children.

88. “Operation Summer Camps” initiated on 28 August 2024 and continuing has been the largest Israeli military operation in the northern West Bank in over two decades. It has included the use of airstrikes in densely populated areas, similar to the bombing campaign in Gaza since October 2023. In January 2025, the Israeli security forces launched another large-scale military operation called “Iron Wall” in Jenin which spread across other areas of the West Bank, just days after the implementation of the second pause in fighting in Gaza.<sup>88</sup> According to OCHA, between January 2025 and mid-October 2025, the Israeli security forces killed 40 children in the West Bank, accounting for one in every five Palestinians killed (40 children out of 198 Palestinians killed).<sup>89</sup> OCHA reported that 29 percent of all casualties in the West Bank between 1 January 2024 and 31 August 2025 were caused by airstrikes, including drones.<sup>90</sup>

89. On 25 September 2024, at around 17:00, the Israeli security forces, including undercover operatives from the Duvdevan Unit, carried out an arrest operation in the village of Anza, south of Jenin. At the same time, a large group of girls and women were gathered at a house situated around 120 meters away, to mourn the death of a family member earlier that day. The girls and women were sitting in silence in the courtyard, while younger children played in front of them. Without any warning, Israeli soldiers fired live ammunition from the suspect’s home in the direction of the girls and the women in the courtyard. The fire was intense and indiscriminate, lasting intermittently for about 15 minutes. As a result, two girls (nine-year-old and 15-year-old) and a 77-year-old woman were wounded, and a 34-year-old woman was killed. The victims were unarmed and did not do anything that could have been perceived as a threat. The Commission is not aware of any reports of anyone else being killed or injured during the firing. The Israeli security forces claimed that local ‘terrorists’ had

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ohchr-press-release-17oct25/>. See also <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-262-west-bank;> <https://www.savethechildren.org.au/media/media-releases/west-bank-nearly-half-of-all-child-killings-since>; <https://www.savethechildren.ca/article/west-bank-nearly-half-of-all-child-killings-since-records-began-happened-in-last-two-years/>.

<sup>86</sup> A/80/337, paras. 40 and 41.

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBkNDNj05XA&t=4s> - Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israel’s national security minister, called the boy a “12-year-old terrorist” at 3:30 secs.

<sup>88</sup> A/80/337, paras. 40-42.

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-333-west-bank>.

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/west-bank-monthly-snapshot-casualties-property-damage-and-displacement-august-2025>.

opened heavy fire against the forces, who responded with fire to eliminate the threat. However, the Commission could not verify any claims of exchange of fire. Based on the above, the Commission reasonably finds that the Israeli security forces fired in the direction where women and girls were exclusively congregated, and the Israeli soldiers had used lethal force against civilians who posed no imminent threat.

90. Similarly to the Israeli military tactics in Gaza, the Israeli security forces have increasingly used attack drones in the West Bank, resulting in harm to children. In one case investigated by the Commission, on 8 January 2025, at around 09:30, a 10-year-old boy and an eight-year-old boy, along with their 23-year-old male cousin, were killed by a drone in Tammun village while they were sitting in front of their home. At the time of the incident, Israeli soldiers were approximately 800 meters away from the site. After the shootings, the Israeli soldiers arrived at the scene with an Israeli ambulance, ordered the family to go inside the house, confiscated their phones (presumably to destroy any video of the shootings) and surrounded the house so that family members could not step out. The Israeli security forces took and held the bodies for ten hours before returning them in the evening to the Palestinian authorities. The Commission finds that the Israeli security forces' "Jordan Valley and the Valleys Brigade" (also known as the 417th Territorial Brigade) was operating in the area. The internal investigation by the Israeli security forces into this incident reportedly found that the children and their adult cousin were targeted after the Israeli soldiers mistakenly concluded that they had planted an explosive device, though no bombs were found in the area. This case illustrates the application of the "messing with the ground" policy (see para. 93) and its harmful consequences for Palestinians, including children.

91. On 25 January 2025, at around 20:30, in Muthallath Al-Shuhada, south of Jenin, a two-year-old girl was shot in the back of her head while she was having dinner with her family and died immediately. She is the youngest child to have been killed by the Israeli security forces in the West Bank since 7 October 2023. The Commission finds that the Israeli security forces' Menashe Brigade was operating in the area at the time of the incident. The spokesperson of the Israeli security forces reportedly refused to respond to Haaretz newspaper's query on what the rules of engagement are in buildings in which civilians are known to be present.<sup>91</sup> The Commission is not aware of any investigation by the Israeli security forces regarding this incident.

92. In another case investigated by the Commission, on 28 January 2025, at around 18:10, the Israeli security forces shot a 10-year-old boy at his father's house during a military incursion in Tulkarem. The Commission viewed and verified CCTV footage depicting the moment the boy was shot. In the footage, the boy appears unarmed. The Israeli security forces detained the ambulance taking him to hospital for almost 30 minutes. One of the Israeli soldiers said to the boy's father, "I am the one who shot your son. God willing, he will die". The boy sustained a single gunshot wound to his waist that exited through his chest hitting vital internal organs. He died of his wounds on 7 February 2025. The Israeli security forces reportedly told Haaretz that soldiers thought that the boy was "messing with the ground" (see para. 93), without providing any evidence. Following the shooting, an investigation was reportedly launched by the Israeli security forces. The Commission is not aware of any findings of the reported investigation. The Commission assesses that Israeli soldiers were responsible for shooting and killing the boy and for blocking medical aid. The Commission finds that the Israeli security forces' Ephraim Brigade was operating in Tulkarem at the time of the incident.

93. On 10 February 2025, a report published by Haaretz noted that the Israeli security forces have expanded its open-fire orders in the West Bank to kill anyone "messing with the ground" (see paras. 90 and 92 for incidents investigated by the Commission linked to this expansion in the Israeli security forces' policy). This policy appears intended to target persons engaged in planting explosive devices on roads or actions that involve bending

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-01-30/ty-article/.premium/the-idf-fired-over-20-bullets-at-a-family-s-homes-one-of-them-killed-two-year-old-laila/00000194-b795-dec1-a5dc-f7f5e4e80000?lts=1742124305998>.

down, dropping an object, etc.<sup>92</sup> Reportedly, a more permissive “rules of engagement” in 2024 granted Israeli soldiers a broad discretion to treat any threat – regardless of means (for example, a stone) or actual harm potential – as actionable.<sup>93</sup> For instance, bending to pick up a stone could be construed as “messaging with the ground”, thus authorising lethal action. In such cases, suspects can be killed on the spot, without bothering with arrest.<sup>94</sup> These changes were reportedly initiated by the Israeli security forces’ Central Command Major General Avi Bluth and Judea and Samaria Division Commander Yaakov Dolf.<sup>95</sup> This expanded order has arguably resulted in increasing Palestinian casualties, including children, who were unarmed and not posing a threat.

94. On 16 November 2025, during an Israeli military raid on the Al-Faraa refugee camp in Tubas, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy was shot and killed by Israeli soldiers. The incident occurred when the boy went to play outside with friends and a cousin. The boy was alive on the ground bleeding for at least 45 minutes after he was shot, pleading for help while Israeli soldiers stood by around him without providing aid. In videos viewed by the Commission, the boy can be seen lying on the ground, throwing a cap towards Israeli soldiers who are huddled around him, seemingly in an attempt to get their attention; one soldier then kicks the cap back towards him. Around 10 soldiers are seen cordoning the boy. One soldier is filming him with his phone while others seem to be scanning the area and rooftops. A soldier then places a stone by him. Israeli soldiers also fired four shots toward the boy’s mother who tried to approach, which hit the wall and door of their house. Israeli soldiers also deliberately prevented a waiting PRCS ambulance from reaching the site by aiming gun laser light on the heads of the paramedic and the driver. After the boy died, the Israeli soldiers confiscated his body without giving the family access to him. Israeli authorities continue withholding his body. Another boy was lightly wounded in this incident.

95. In response, the Israeli security forces reportedly claimed to Haaretz that Israeli soldiers identified a “terrorist” who threw a concrete block at the force and posed an immediate threat, fired at him and provided first aid before he died. The video footage clearly shows otherwise. Not only was the boy not afforded any medical care, but soldiers stood by him, filmed him and planted a stone next to him, in an attempt to frame the incident as the result of stone throwing. The Commission assesses that the Israeli soldiers shot and killed the boy and blocked medical aid. The Commission finds that soldiers of the Israeli security forces’ Paratrooper Battalion were operating in the area, under the command of the Menashe brigade, also known as the 431st Territorial Brigade.

96. The shooting of children allegedly throwing stones at armed and armoured Israeli soldiers has been consistently documented by the Commission, amounting to unnecessary use of force by the Israeli security forces, disproportionate to the act and to the age, maturity and best interests of the child.<sup>96</sup> The Commission notes that Israeli soldiers, equipped with advanced weapons and protective armours, are relatively well protected against the threat of stone throwing, in particular by unarmed children,<sup>97</sup> and yet they have repeatedly used live fire in such circumstances. The Commission assesses that the Israeli military has repeatedly employed unreasonable, excessive and punitive force against

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/israel/20260105-thematic-report-israel-discrimin.pdf>; <https://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/testimonies/database/154077>.

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/israel/20260105-thematic-report-israel-discrimin.pdf>; <https://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/testimonies/database/154077>.

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-02-10/ty-article/.premium/israeli-army-expands-open-fire-orders-leading-to-surge-in-palestinian-civilian-deaths/00000194-ef85-dd03-add7-ffc72f120000>.

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-02-10/ty-article/.premium/israeli-army-expands-open-fire-orders-leading-to-surge-in-palestinian-civilian-deaths/00000194-ef85-dd03-add7-ffc72f120000>. See also: <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-israel-at-war/october-25-pr/the-chief-of-the-general-staff-at-the-central-command/>.

<sup>96</sup> A/78/198, para. 19.

<sup>97</sup> As the Commission reported in September 2023 (A/78/198), the Commission till date is not aware of a single Israeli security forces soldier being killed as a result of stone-throwing.

children as a tool of control, deterrence and collective intimidation of the Palestinian people in the occupied West Bank.<sup>98</sup>

#### **D. Killing and other forms of violence against children by Israeli settlers and other Israeli civilians**

“I tried to scream to alarm others, but I could not because the settlers had covered my mouth who forcibly and violently dragged me while cursing in Hebrew.”

- A female child survivor abducted and ill-treated by armed Israeli settlers.

97. Since 7 October 2023, there has been a sharp increase in Israeli settler violence directed at Palestinian civilians, including children, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.<sup>99</sup> In the first half of 2025, Israeli settlers, often supported or protected by the Israeli security forces, carried out more than 1,000 attacks, including property damage, across 230 Palestinian communities<sup>100</sup> in which 11 Palestinians were killed and 700 others injured by settlers or the Israeli security forces.<sup>101</sup> This is an average of nearly 133 attacks a month, the highest monthly average since the UN started compiling records in 2006.<sup>102</sup> June 2025 had the highest number of Palestinians injured by Israeli settlers in a single month. Between 7 October 2023 and 30 September 2025, settlers killed two boys among the 19 Palestinians killed, and injured 156 boys and eight girls among the 1,603 Palestinians injured.<sup>103</sup> In the same period, another boy was among 13 Palestinians killed either by Israeli settlers or soldiers, the actual killer not having been identified.<sup>104</sup> In many cases, it has been difficult to differentiate between the actions of settlers and the Israeli security forces because settlers often operate jointly with the soldiers or under the protection or inaction of the Israeli soldiers, blurring the lines between State and non-state actors, as the Commission has found in its previous reports.<sup>105</sup>

98. Israeli authorities are directly involved in settler attacks that have killed, caused physical and mental harm, and displaced Palestinian people. Israeli authorities have enabled such attacks through financial and military support while Israeli judicial and law enforcement authorities have maintained a status-quo of impunity for settler violence for decades. The marked increase in settler violence has been a result of several factors, including the Israeli Government’s accelerated expansion of existing settlements, its approval of the establishment of new settlements and its expropriation of Palestinian land for new settlements and outposts.<sup>106</sup> In addition, the Israeli Government has enlisted Israeli settlers for reserve duty and the Israeli security forces has armed and aided them. Israeli ministers, in their furtherance of policies to reverse the geographic, demographic and cultural

<sup>98</sup> See documentary film “Two kids a day” at <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt21350908/fullcredits/>.

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2025/1/1/occupied-west-bank-increased-israeli-violence-against-palestinians>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-337-west-bank>; <https://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/22907.html>.

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-316-west-bank>.

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/sitrep-westbanl-21aug25/#:~:text=OCHA%20has%20documented%20more%20than,as%20well%20as%20property%20damage>.

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/west-bank-monthly-snapshot-casualties-property-damage-and-displacement-august-2025>; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ocha-humanitarian-situation-update-305-west-bank/>.

<sup>103</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/israel/20260105-thematic-report-israel-discrimin.pdf>, para. 64.

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/israel/20260105-thematic-report-israel-discrimin.pdf>, para. 64.

<sup>105</sup> A/77/328; A/80/337, para 38; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ocha-humanitarian-situation-update-305-west-bank/>; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/israeli-settlers-supported-by-the-army-forcibly-displaced-palestinian-communities-from-the-jordan-valley-in-the-occupied-west-bank/>.

<sup>106</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session58/a-hrc-58-73-infographic-march2025.pdf>.

attributes of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have directly incited and inflamed settler violence against the Palestinian people.<sup>107</sup>

99. On 13 April 2024 at around 07:00, some 40 settlers accompanied by Israeli soldiers, entered Beitin village, northeast of Ramallah. The village residents threw stones at the settlers, while Israeli forces shot in the air and threw tear gas. The settlers left and came back at around noon, accompanied by Israeli security forces and Israeli police. The settlers then burned a Palestinian car in front of the soldiers who did not intervene. At around 21:00 shots were fired by an armed settler, and a 17-year-old Palestinian boy was hit and died from his wound. The Commission assesses that the Binyamin Brigade is responsible for operations in the Ramallah Governorate and was likely present during the attacks.

100. Palestinian children face violent assaults by Israeli settlers, with several cases involving abduction, reflecting a pattern of targeted intimidation. In one case investigated by the Commission, in April 2025 two settlers abducted two siblings, a girl and a boy under five years, while they were playing outside their village home. The settlers dragged the children at knifepoint to an olive grove, while covering their mouths. They tied the children to a tree using plastic hand ties. The family arrived at the scene some five minutes later, untied the children and released them. The two settlers were likely from the Itamar settlement, which is the closest settlement to their home. The Commission learned that the children have since been displaying signs of psychological trauma, such as nightmares and fear of stepping outside their house. In another case documented by the Commission in August 2024 a group of armed settlers abducted two 15-year-old boys who were herding cattle and physically and sexually assaulted them. The boys were beaten, blindfolded and stripped of their clothes by the settlers. A settler urinated on one of the boys and fractured his leg. OCHA reported that the Israeli settlers responsible for the attack were from a newly established Israeli outpost near Khallet an Nahala.

101. The Commission received several reports of settlers inflicting physical and mental harm, particularly targeting boys. The reports concerned four boys, one with special needs, between the ages of 12 and 16 years. On 9 February 2025, a 16-year-old boy was assaulted by two settlers while sleeping near a sheep pen in Masafer Yatta. One settler stepped on him with his foot, while the other hit him with a stick. The next day, the family filed a police complaint, but the Commission is not aware of any action taken following the complaint. In another incident, on 18 October 2024, a 16-year-old boy with hearing impairment was beaten by around 15 Israeli settlers, carrying sticks and knives, while he was working alone in his farm in Salfit. The settlers took turns kicking him, one of them pressed his knee on the boy's face and others banged his head against a rock. The boy lost consciousness during the attack and his hearing aid fell out.

102. In investigating many incidents, the Commission identified a pattern of settlers intentionally targeting Palestinian children while the children were engaged in ordinary activities such as playing near their homes, walking to and from schools, tending to farms or herding livestock, turning everyday spaces into sites of fear. Settlers forcibly seized children, dragging or forcing them to isolated spots, such as olive groves, and immobilizing them with ropes or ties, to exercise control and induce terror. The settlers often outnumbered the children and were often armed. The children endured life-threatening assaults in these incidents involving physical beatings, kicks, strikes with objects and degrading verbal abuse and threats, leaving them with injuries including bruises, fractures and psychological trauma. The attacks have instrumentalized children as part of a broader coercive strategy to drive Palestinians off their land.

## **E. Mistreatment of children during arrest and in detention**

“You are going to Israel; you are going to hell.”

- An Israeli soldier said to a blindfolded and handcuffed 15-year-old boy in an Israeli truck while transferring him to Israeli prison.

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ceirpp-chair-remarks-at-2025-jerusalem-conference-09jul25/>.

103. Palestinian children have been arrested and detained as part of the Israeli security forces' mass arbitrary arrests and detentions carried out in Gaza and the West Bank since October 2023.<sup>108</sup> The number of child detainees from Gaza remains unknown as the Israeli authorities have not disclosed the data nor the whereabouts of the arrested children. However, 44 Palestinian children arrested in Gaza after 7 October 2023 were released by Israel as part of the second pause in fighting and hostage exchange agreement of January 2025.<sup>109</sup> Additionally, as part of the October 2025 ceasefire agreement, Israel reportedly released nearly 2,000 Palestinians, political prisoners and detainees, including an unknown number of children.

104. As part of its military operation in Gaza, the Israeli security forces systematically and intentionally singled out boys aged 12 and above during mass arrests, tagging them as potential members of armed groups. These boys were forcibly separated from their families, detained and treated as adults with no separation applied between men and boys and essentially perceived and treated as suspects of "terrorism". Despite identification clearly proving they were children, the Israeli security forces nevertheless arrested and assaulted the boys, demonstrating a blatant disregard for age-based protection and a deep-rooted presumption of threat inherent in their Palestinian male identity. This conduct reflects entrenched age- and gender-related stereotypes and discrimination that see Palestinian boys as actual or potential fighters.

105. Palestinian children from Gaza have been held incommunicado and in unknown locations, in both Israeli Prison Service (IPS) and military facilities inside Israel. Between May and October 2024, HaMoked filed 24 petitions at the Israeli High Court of Justice for writs of habeas corpus for 30 individuals including a 17-year-old boy and a five-year-old girl. Israel responded that there was "no indication of arrest or detention" in the case of the five-year-old girl, according to the petition filed by HaMoked. The High Court of Justice rejected this petition, along with 16 other petitions.

106. Since 7 October 2023, over 1,655 children were detained in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, of which 600 were detained in 2025.<sup>110</sup> As of 31 December 2025, 51 percent of 351 Palestinian child detainees were held in the IPS under 'administrative detention', in which children are imprisoned indefinitely without charge. This is a record number of child administrative detainees. The other 49 percent of child detainees were held pending legal proceedings, detained under the Unlawful Combatants Law, or serving a sentence after conviction.<sup>111</sup> The IPS figures do not include Palestinian children held in military detention or interrogation centres, which operate outside the prison system.<sup>112</sup>

#### **Mistreatment of Palestinian child detainees and prisoners in military detention and IPS facilities**

"After showing my ID and confirming my age, I told the Israeli soldier that I want to go and sit with women and children, but the Israeli soldier said to me, 'No, you belong to armed groups, and you will pay a price.' I was being intentionally targeted because they [Israeli security forces] took me, interrogated me, found no connection with armed groups and released me."

- A 15-year-old boy arrested by Israeli security forces during a mass arrest from Gaza in December 2023

107. Children are frequently subjected to harm from the very outset of arrest, which are often conducted in the middle of the night when Israeli military storm their homes, damage property and generate intense fear and trauma for children and families, including through physical assaults, handcuffing and blindfolding children. Children reported facing extremely

<sup>108</sup> A/79/232.

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=5965#:~:text=Under%20the%20ceasefire%20agreement%20in,of%20the%20detainee's%20exchange%20deal>.

<sup>110</sup> <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/en/post-details/?postId=23530>.

<sup>111</sup> [https://www.btselem.org/statistics/minors\\_in\\_custody](https://www.btselem.org/statistics/minors_in_custody).

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

humiliating and abusive treatment when arriving at military detention facilities, included being forced to make confessions, being forced to strip to their underwear in front of others, being blindfolded and handcuffed while forced to kneel on gravel or asphalt, being beaten with weapons and kicked in the head and other body parts and being terrorised by dogs. In Sde Teiman, boys were separated from their adult male family members, kept with unrelated adult men and subjected to the same harsh conditions as men, including limited access to toilet facilities, severe restrictions of food and water, and physical punishment for speaking with other detainees or asking for medical treatment. The Commission is aware of similar reports by different organizations detailing serious allegations concerning the conditions for detained children, including instances of torture, starvation, deprivation of water, sanitation and hygiene, along with prolonged denial of access to toilet, resulting in painful infections.

108. A 15-year-old boy detained at Sde Teiman facility told the Commission that he had been the only child among 70 adults in a cell. He said that Israeli soldiers made him stand with his hands raised for hours as punishment on multiple occasions. His legs were shackled with metal chains and hands cuffed so tightly that they would bleed, without him receiving any medical attention. He was allowed to sleep for only four hours on a thin mattress and with only a thin blanket during winter. Israeli soldiers entered his cell with dogs, made him and other detainees lie on their stomachs and released the dogs on them. He described his 23 days of detention as “the worst days of my life”.

109. The Commission received testimony from a 15-year-old boy who described being arrested on 4 December 2023 during mass arrests in Gaza by the Israeli security forces. Israeli soldiers used identity cards to call his name, blindfolded and tied his hands, then moved him along with others at night to an unknown location where the detainees were denied water and told to drink their own urine. At midnight the boy was loaded into a truck with about 70 others and beaten. He was thrown onto rocky ground while naked and then taken to a military facility where he was interrogated about Hamas, tunnels and accused of participating in attacks in southern Israel on 7 October 2023. Over a period of 54 days he was repeatedly interrogated and tortured, including being electrocuted through a needle inserted into his shoulder, deprived of food and water, and forced into painful positions for up to 12 hours at a time, before being released through the Karem Shalom crossing and taken by an aid agency to a school where he stayed without his family, fearful, hungry, and cold.

110. When Israeli authorities released Gaza child detainees from military detention, they provided no medical care and made no arrangements for unification with their families. They dropped them off with adult detainees *en masse* at Kerem Shalom crossing between Israel and Gaza. This procedure has contributed to children from Gaza being separated from their family, because they returned unaccompanied, with limited ability to travel inside the Strip and to locate or communicate with their families, most of whom had been displaced many times. A 15-year-old boy who was released in this manner resided alone in a school in Rafah, as his father and uncle were in detention until released a month later and the rest of his family were in northern Gaza, which he could not reach.

111. Conditions of Palestinian children held in IPS prisons have significantly deteriorated since 7 October 2023, following directions from the minister in charge of prisons, the Minister for National Security, Itamar Ben Gvir, to impose far stricter conditions on prisoners. Children who used to be housed with five other detainees reported sharing rooms with at least 10 other detainees, including adults. A child rights organization shared with the Commission testimony from a 17-year-old boy from Nablus who detailed his experience in the juvenile section of Meggido Prison, where lights were kept on all night and unscheduled checks of inmates were conducted frequently during night hours, preventing the detainees from sleeping. Children were required to move prison cells frequently and subjected to daily cursing and beatings by guards.

112. Palestinian children from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, who were already in detention before 7 October 2023 described increased restrictions on contact with families and guards confiscating bedding, mattresses, blankets and utensils. They were also subjected to increased violence, including the use of tear gas inside the cells, beatings with sticks, use of dogs by Special Forces to intimidate and terrorize them, and no access to medical care or medicine. As part of the increased imposition of hardships, child detainees were subjected to

food and water restrictions, which, according to Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI), may amount to starvation in detention facilities run by IPS.

113. A May 2024 report<sup>113</sup> by the Israeli Public Defender's Office<sup>114</sup> provided details on overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions, poor hygiene and pest problems, improper ventilation, lack of basic equipment and other hardships amounting to ill-treatment. In November 2024 the IPS responded to petitions by several NGOs to the Supreme Court disclosing that 1,704 Palestinian prisoners were suffering from scabies in all the Israeli prison facilities, with 596 scabies patients in Megiddo Prison, 566 in Ketziot Prison and tens in Ofer Prison.

#### **Death of a 17-year-old Palestinian boy in Israel's Megiddo Prison**

“He had severe weight loss which did not just happen overnight for which he saw prison physicians at least a few times during his detention, so the Israeli prison authorities knew that he was losing weight and yet kept him in detention in poor conditions.”

- Witness, referring to the condition of a boy who died in an IPS prison.

114. On 22 March 2025, a 17-year-old boy from Ramallah died in Megiddo Prison. The boy had been held in prison since 30 September 2024, prior to which, according to his father, he was fit, athletic and healthy. After his arrest, he was examined twice at the prison medical clinic in December 2024 and February 2025 for scabies. In December 2024, he reported to the prison clinician and was diagnosed with head trauma and inadequate food. This diagnosis was included in his prison medical record viewed by the Commission. On 22 March 2025 at 07:48 he suffered from sudden loss of consciousness and died at 09:10.

115. The post-mortem analysis did not conclude a cause of death but stated that the boy suffered from severe, prolonged malnutrition leading to sarcopenia, a progressive loss of skeletal muscle mass and strength. As a result, he was in a state of severe weight loss and muscle wasting, along with inflammation of the colon indicating colitis, as well as scabies in his legs and genital area. The autopsy concluded that he potentially died from starvation, mediastinitis and dehydration due to poor water intake coupled with fluid loss from colitis-induced diarrhoea. Conditions like colitis and scabies are easily treatable, indicating that the boy did not have access to proper and timely medical treatment. In addition, it was clear that he had been deprived of sufficient food and water. The Commission finds that the prison authorities had severely mistreated the victim and caused his death, amounting to the war crimes of torture, inhuman treatment and wilful killing – see para. 313 below.

116. The family was not informed directly about his death but read about it in a media article the following day. As of 10 November 2025, the Israeli authorities were withholding his body, despite the completion of an autopsy and a legal request to release the body submitted by the family lawyer to the governor of West Bank.

117. According to a child rights organization, as of 17 February 2025 Israel was withholding the bodies of 40 Palestinian children. In a previous report, the Commission found that Israeli authorities routinely withhold the bodies of Palestinians, including children, to use them as bargaining chips in negotiations, with traumatic implications for victims' families.<sup>115</sup>

#### **Impact of detention on released child detainees**

118. Children released from detention following the November 2023 prisoners and hostages exchange agreement stated that prior to their release they were threatened by Israeli authorities with re-arrest if they spoke about what they endured in detention. These threats compounded the physical and psychological abuse suffered in detention and have led to an existence riddled by consistent fear of being re-arrested and strong feelings of insecurity. Some children spoke about being forced to sign a document or were ordered by Israeli forces that, if they engaged in certain acts (for example, celebrating the release of prisoners or

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.gov.il/he/pages/conditions-of-incarceration>.

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.gov.il/he/pages/conditions-of-incarceration>.

<sup>115</sup> A/78/198, page 14, paras 36 and 37.

raising any signs or banners) within three years of their release, Israeli forces would re-arrest them.

119. The Commission notes that clinical evidence and studies of arrested and maltreated children in detention indicate that abuse and severe trauma affect child detainees more severely than adult detainees due to children's unique vulnerability, including a lasting impact on their developing brains and stress response systems and the inability to fully comprehend the reason for their arrest. Trauma can re-wire children's neural pathways, disrupt physical and emotional development, and increase the risk of long-term mental and physical health problems, affecting their development through adolescence and adulthood. While adults are also deeply affected, their brains are developed to handle such situations. The Commission assesses that the fear and trauma experienced by detained, arrested and ill-treated Palestinian children will likely affect them more profoundly and for longer than adult detainees, due to the critical impact on their developing brains and bodies. This may lead to lasting negative neurological changes, mental health issues and developmental problems that may manifest in physical, emotional and behavioural symptoms in the long-term among the released child detainees.

120. Organizations who have supported child detainees released from Israeli prisons have reported that they suffer from severe trauma linked to the unprecedented use of violence by prison guards in the IPS after 7 October 2023. Abusive traumatic experiences, coupled with removal and separation from their families and the lack of communication with the outside world including denial of legal aid, have had a severe impact on children as they normally rely on social links with family and their communal environment outside prison.

121. The 17-year-old boy who died in Israeli custody (see paras. 114-116) died from preventable causes. This case, in addition to other cases of mistreatment documented by the Commission and the IPS' own data submitted to the Israeli Supreme Court, demonstrate that the IPS and Israeli authorities have deliberately deprived child detainees of resources necessary to sustain life and indispensable for their survival, such as adequate nutrition and water, access to medicines and treatment, and safe living conditions, as well as developmental resources such as education, legal counsel and psychosocial support. Other important resources for child detainees include protection from violence and abuse, and opportunities for contact with their families and lawyers which have been prohibited by the Israeli prison authorities.

## **F. Sexual and gender-based violence against Palestinian children**

“The convoy was led by an Israeli military jeep, followed by three trucks carrying stripped Gazan boys and men, followed by another military jeep with Israeli soldiers who took photos and videos and fired shots into the air near the trucks every five minutes.”

- A Palestinian detainee recounted how boys and men were stripped to their underwear in Gaza and taken to military bases in Israel.

122. The Commission already concluded in a previous report that Palestinian boys and men have been subjected to specific acts of a sexual nature based on their gender and their identity as Palestinians, which were committed with the purpose of punishing and humiliating them specifically for the acts committed on 7 October 2023.<sup>116</sup> The Commission reported on several incidents of sexual and gender-based violence committed by Israeli security forces against children, both boys and girls, in a previous report.<sup>117</sup>

123. Since 7 October 2023, Palestinian boys have been photographed and filmed in humiliating and degrading circumstances while subjected to acts of a sexual nature, including forced public nudity. The Commission investigated cases of sexual abuse committed by members of the Israeli security forces against boys. One witness described how a female Israeli soldier in Gaza ordered two teenage boys who had been stripped to their underwear to

<sup>116</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6.

<sup>117</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6.

dance in front of other detainees and recorded a video of them dancing while she was laughing.<sup>118</sup>

124. Photos and videos of mass arrests in Gaza appeared on social media, depicting boys detained in their undergarments in large groups in open air.<sup>119</sup> Most of the footage was first published on Israeli text messaging groups and later disseminated on a popular social media platform. The Commission's analysis of the videos and photos indicates that most were taken by Israeli soldiers. This is based on the proximity of the images to the soldiers, captions accompanying the footage, the military uniform of the cameraman appearing in some of the frames and the proximity to the photographed subject.<sup>120</sup> These incidents of forced public nudity were corroborated by testimonies provided to the Commission. In a previous report, the Commission noted that the photographing and filming of stripped or naked Palestinian boys and men, and the dissemination of such digital items, is a new and rapidly spreading practice since October 2023 intended to humiliate Palestinians.<sup>121</sup> Such acts were carried out both in revenge and with the purpose of punishing and humiliating the boys and men specifically.<sup>122</sup>

125. One man described to the Commission his experience of being detained and photographed in this manner, during the evacuation of Beit Lahia in early December 2023. The witness stated that he was in his home when soldiers entered the area and ordered people to evacuate. During the course of the evacuation, boys were forced to undress in front of family members and ordered to kneel. He and some 50 other men were ordered to walk barefoot in their underwear to the end of the street, where they were forced to kneel with about 250 other men and boys wearing only underwear. In this location, boys were forced to sit on their knees next to each other in rows, hands tied behind their backs and blindfolded. He recalled his relative, a 17-year-old boy, who was also stripped, as well as another boy around 15-year-old among those stripped and arrested. He estimated that there were around 30 boys between 16 and 18 years stripped and arrested. The witness was transported while still stripped, along with at least 10 boys, on a military truck to an unknown location, where an Israeli soldier removed his blindfold and photographed him and the other boys in the group. The Commission also verified digital footage confirming that Palestinian boys were detained and stripped down to their underwear along with adults in Yarmouk Stadium in December 2023.<sup>123</sup>

126. The Commission investigated incidents of forced public nudity during evacuation by the Israeli security forces against children along with their family members. One man told the Commission how he, together with his family and other displaced persons, was subjected to mistreatment, abuse and forced public nudity in early November 2023 on Salah al-Din Street during evacuations.<sup>124</sup> He described a military presence along the street, with many tanks and soldiers, including snipers positioned on buildings. He stated that women, men, girls and boys were all told to undress at gunpoint at a makeshift checkpoint, create a ball with their clothes and throw their clothes to the Israeli soldiers. They were told to hold their identity documents high in the air and continue walking while undressed. The Israeli security forces said that anyone who did not follow orders would be shot.<sup>125</sup>

127. In another case investigated by the Commission, girls were subjected to forced public nudity along with other family members while trying to evacuate through Salah al-Din street. A male witness reported that a teenage girl aged around 17-years-old, among several women, was stripped to her underwear and subjected to sexual harassment by the Israeli soldiers.<sup>126</sup>

128. Similar to the patterns of forced nudity and stripping boys in humiliating outdoor conditions during mass arrests in Gaza, the Commission documented an incident in the West

<sup>118</sup> See also A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 96.

<sup>119</sup> See also A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 94.

<sup>120</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 94.

<sup>121</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 202.

<sup>122</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 202.

<sup>123</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 96.

<sup>124</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 105.

<sup>125</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 105.

<sup>126</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 109.

Bank on 10 March 2025, when the Israeli security forces raided a home in Jenin around 04:20 and shot an elderly grandmother. The soldiers forced two cousins, a 7-year-old boy and a 13-year-old boy, at gunpoint to strip to their underwear in the cold, bound their hands with plastic ties, beat them, including the younger boy who was hit on his back, and held them outside while searching the house. The partially stripped boys were then shoved blindfolded into a military vehicle and driven to Jalameh interrogation center [Kishon detention facility], where they were held for nearly 12 hours in a dirty cell, witnessing abuse of other detainees, before releasing partially stripped and in foil below waist. The brothers were left deeply traumatized, suffering nightmares, fear and psychological distress.

129. In a case from East Jerusalem, a 14-year-old girl was reportedly searched and subjected to sexual assault when passing by the Bab Al Zahera Police station, on her way to a school.<sup>127</sup> A soldier ordered her to stop and then threw the content of her bag on the ground and dragged her to a nearby location that did not have surveillance cameras.<sup>128</sup> Two soldiers reportedly touched her on her breasts, neck and waist.<sup>129</sup> When she asked for a female soldier to do the search, she was slapped by one of the soldiers who also made sexual remarks and said, “you are murderers”.<sup>130</sup> The Commission found that these acts were intended to humiliate and subjugate the victim and were not carried out for security reasons.<sup>131</sup>

130. The Commission received a testimony from a teenage girl who described the conditions in which she was detained. On the day of her arrest, she described being shot in the left foot. After arrest, she was taken into a room where one female soldier cut off her veil, school uniform, shoes, and pants, in the presence of male soldiers, leaving her in underwear and a short-sleeved shirt. The female soldier lifted her shirt, exposed her bra, and photographed her; when she cried, a male soldier beat her and banged her head, before an ambulance arrived. She was taken to a hospital escorted by male soldiers for a surgery, after which she was taken back to prison in a car still largely unclothed, wrapped only in a hospital sheet. In the car, she was photographed by a male soldier. At the prison, she was given a uniform and questioned the next day by a male interrogator with her hands tied to a chair, who pressed her about alleged acts in Gaza and asked whether she preferred being detained with Hamas girls or with street girls.

131. According to testimonies of children received by the Commission, Palestinian children detained in the Israeli prison system undergo repeated strip searches as a standard procedure upon arrival and throughout custody exacerbating their vulnerability and humiliation. During transport in vehicles or armoured personnel carriers (APCs), children report being filmed by guards while beaten, accompanied by degrading verbal abuse relating to their mothers and sisters, setting a tone of dehumanization from the outset. These practices run parallel to other documented abuses, including being held naked, threats of sexual abuse and abuse of a sexual nature, as well as placement in solitary confinement, which isolates children for extended periods without family contact or oversight, compounding the psychological toll in an environment already stripped of dignity and basic protection.

132. Testimonies received by the Commission from released child detainees, especially teenage boys, from Gaza describe being stripped, forced to remain naked or in diapers, and subjected to genital beatings and other forms of sexualized torture carried out in front of other prisoners as a method of humiliation and domination. Several organizations have documented sexual violence against Palestinian children from Gaza and West Bank in Israeli detention as a systematic and integral component of the prison system’s torture regime, far beyond isolated incidents. These acts exploit children’s unique vulnerabilities – their physical fragility, emotional dependence and cultural stigma around male victimization – to inflict profound, irreversible trauma. Embedded in prison facilities without oversight, where children face parallel horror like starvation, torture and other cruel treatment (see Section E on Mistreatment of children during arrest and in detention), sexual violence occurs with tolerance or explicit encouragement within the custodial chain.

<sup>127</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 112.

<sup>128</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 112.

<sup>129</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 112.

<sup>130</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 112.

<sup>131</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 189.

133. Settlers were also responsible for acts of sexual violence against children. In one case documented by the Commission, two 15-year-old boys were abducted by armed settlers while herding cattle. They were beaten, blindfolded and stripped of their clothes, and a settler urinated on one of the boys, who also sustained a fracture on his leg (see para. 100).

134. The Commission previously found that adult male detainees were subjected to rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence in detention. In addition to its previous finding, the Commission has received new information from an organisation concerning sexual and gender-based violence against boys in detention, involving rape, threats of rape, sexual assault, violence to the genitals, forcible stripping and humiliating acts while stripped by the Israeli security forces. One boy reported being raped on more than one occasion by different guards. A 15-year-old boy reported being threatened with rape. The Commission was also informed that sexual threats and gendered insults were frequently used by Israeli guards against detained children. The Commission was not able to independently verify this information at the time of writing this report.

135. Based on investigated and documented cases, direct testimonies from child survivors and credible reports from different organizations, the Commission finds that sexual- and gender-based violence is being used in the context of detention and arrests as a method of warfare and intimidation against Palestinian children. Sexual violence against Palestinian children in Israeli detention is not exceptional but a systematic, state-enabled assault on their bodies and their dignity and deliberately meted out to cause humiliation. Child survivors face intense stigma, lessened self-esteem, fear of retaliation and almost no realistic prospect of perpetrators being held accountable, given the lack of transparent, independent investigations and failure to prosecute even when serious sexual abuse is captured on video.

## **G. Attacks on healthcare and its impact on children and newborns**

“I met a young boy with extensive injury to his lower extremities. He was being taken care by a few teenaged boys. When I asked the boy where his parents were, he replied in the north [Gaza], but the older boys were signalling from behind not to ask him about his parents. Later the older boys told me that his entire family was killed during evacuation, and they did not have the heart to tell him about his family. So now, the boy is being cared for by random people he met at the hospital.”

- A doctor who visited Gaza on medical mission.

### **1. Direct attacks on paediatric healthcare facilities**

136. Prior to 7 October 2023, there were at least three<sup>132</sup> major paediatric hospitals in Gaza, namely Al-Nasr Paediatric Hospital, Al-Durra Paediatric Hospital and Al-Rantisi Specialized Paediatric Hospital in northern Gaza, which provided specialized care for children up to 12 years old. All three paediatric hospitals were forced to close in the first two months of the hostilities. The Commission notes that hospitals in Gaza have been forced to close and have re-opened, generally only partially, repeatedly since October 2023, but the majority have not been able to fully function.

137. Al-Nasr Paediatric Hospital was attacked at least three times in November 2023, on 4, 9 and 10 November 2023. When the Israeli security forces’ attack cut off electricity supply, one baby died from lack of oxygen and eight other babies were put at risk.

138. An MSF staff member sheltering with his family and volunteering at Al-Nasr Paediatric Hospital described in December 2023 how the Israeli security forces repeatedly attacked the hospital including with a sniper shooting at the staff making it impossible to leave, while at the same time refusing to allow the hospital to transfer paediatric and neonatal patients. On 10 November 2023, the Israeli security forces gave Al-Nasr and Rantisi hospitals thirty minutes to evacuate. It issued a press release on its efforts to facilitate the evacuation

<sup>132</sup> Data on the exact number of paediatric hospitals and clinics operating in Gaza before 7 October 2023 remained unavailable at the time of investigating and writing this report.

of both hospitals.<sup>133</sup> According to Al-Nasr hospital director Dr. Mustafa al-Kahlout, however, staff evacuated under orders by the Israeli security forces were subjected to shelling. At least four premature babies dependent on life-support equipment could not be safely moved due to lack of portable oxygen and ongoing fire.

139. On 27 November 2023, during the first pause in fighting, the Emirati TV channel Al-Mashhad reported in a news video about the decomposing bodies of four babies left in the neo-natal intensive care unit at the Al-Nasr Paediatric Hospital, with the bodies still attached to the life support machines that were rendered defunct due to electrical outage and attacks on the hospital. These infants had been reliant on life-support equipment such as ventilators, IV tubes and oxygen monitors. They were found abandoned in advanced stages of decomposition, alongside milk bottles and diapers. The condition of the bodies indicated that they had been left unattended for approximately two weeks, highlighting the dire circumstances in which medical personnel were forced to evacuate on 10 November without the ability to transport the most vulnerable patients. The video was digitally verified by the Commission, as well as other entities including the Washington Post and CNN, confirming that it was recorded inside Al-Nasr Hospital's NICU. The Israeli security forces did not claim that Al-Nasr Pediatric Hospital was used by Hamas.

140. The Israeli security forces claimed in November 2023 that there was a Hamas terror network in Al-Rantisi Specialized Hospital.<sup>134</sup> The Commission could not independently verify this allegation but it notes that, even if the allegation was correct, the Israeli security forces should have taken necessary precautions in line with the best interests of the child and given sufficient time and assistance to the hospital staff for a child-responsive evacuation and transfer of pediatric and neonatal patients that could have prevented their deaths.

141. In November 2024, Al-Rantisi Hospital was reopened and was operational until it sustained damage by direct attack on 16 September 2025.<sup>135</sup> At the time of the attack, 80 patients were inside the facility. No fatalities were reported but there was severe damage to the facility's infrastructure and equipment.<sup>136</sup> 40 patients managed to escape but 40 others remained inside, including four children in the ICU and eight newborns.<sup>137</sup> Most of its medical equipment was transferred to Al-Helou, As Sahaba and Patient Friendly hospitals, all in Gaza City.<sup>138</sup> Al-Rantisi Hospital was Gaza's only specialized paediatric hospital at that time,<sup>139</sup> because other hospitals – Al-Durra Hospital, Al-Nasr Hospital, Kamal Adwan Hospital, the Indonesian Hospital and Beit Hanoun Hospital — had been forced to cease operations.

142. Other hospitals have also undergone similar attacks which severely impacted pediatric patients amid shrinking access to and availability of medical care. On 15 January 2024, MSF announced its staff were leaving the Al-Aqsa Hospital due to drone strikes, sniper fire and bombardments which made it unsafe and risky to continue operating.<sup>140</sup>

143. Similarly, Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia, which had over twenty beds and incubators in its neonatal and pediatric intensive care unit<sup>141</sup>, was attacked and besieged multiple times. By 16 December 2023, WHO reported that the destruction of Kamal Adwan Hospital rendered it non-functional, resulting in the deaths of at least eight patients, including a nine-year-old child.<sup>142</sup> On 19 January 2024, OCHA reported that the hospital had partially resumed operations amid several challenges.<sup>143</sup> In May 2024, WHO reported that the 10-bed

<sup>133</sup>  [Hamas - Israel War 2023 Resources Preparing for Evacuation of Rantisi Hospital | IDF \(www.idf.il\).](https://www.idf.il/)

<sup>134</sup> <https://x.com/idfonline/status/1724436020643438759?s=20>.

<sup>135</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/09/1165962>.

<sup>136</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/09/1165962>.

<sup>137</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/09/1165962>.

<sup>138</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/09/1165962>.

<sup>139</sup> <https://x.com/DrTedros/status/1970638058014851535>.

<sup>140</sup> <https://www.msf.org/evacuation-orders-and-bombing-around-gaza-hospitals-leaves-few-healthcare-options>.

<sup>141</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/sop/stories/kamal-adwan-hospital-hope-ruin-and-back-again>.

<sup>142</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/DrTedros.Official/posts/pfbid02nZepiowAqtwpy1FrtEQExguox1EE5qZYiE9qmXEVqg1z99mmBttci8s3Ugbr18l>.

<sup>143</sup> [https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-97#:~:text=Settler%20Violence,to%20property%20\(55%20incidents\)](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-97#:~:text=Settler%20Violence,to%20property%20(55%20incidents)).

stabilization centre at Kamal Adwan Hospital, the only facility treating severe acute malnutrition in northern Gaza, had to be evacuated.<sup>144</sup>

144. In November 2024, Kamal Adwan Hospital sustained several more attacks, damaging the only remaining neonatal intensive care unit in northern Gaza.<sup>145</sup> On 5 November 2024, a video recorded by medical staff from inside Kamal Adwan Hospital showed injured patients running down to lower floors of the hospital to escape bombings. In December 2024, WHO announced that Kamal Adwan Hospital went out of service again.<sup>146</sup>

145. As Gaza's paediatric and other large hospitals were among the first to be forced out of service, many children with complex, pre-existing conditions sought care at hospitals which were often not equipped to care for children with such conditions. A doctor who operated in Al-Ahli Hospital in November 2023 reported that children with complex medical problems, such as severe asthma and epilepsy, began to arrive at Al-Ahli Hospital but the hospital lacked the necessary medications, such as nebulizers, and the necessary equipment and expertise to be able to treat the children.

146. Health clinics for children were also attacked in Gaza. In one incident, on 10 July 2025, an Israeli airstrike killed about 15 civilians, including at least nine children and four women, and injured at least 30 others, including 19 children and at least three women, while they were waiting in line for nutritional supplements for children at the Altayara health clinic on Abu Hosni Street in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza.<sup>147</sup> The strike hit when the patients had gathered outside, waiting for the clinic to open treatment related to malnutrition and other health services. No warning was given prior to the attack. The Israeli security forces reportedly said that they were targeting a Hamas militant but did not identify the person, while adding that they were aware of reports regarding a number of injured individuals in the area and were reviewing the incident. Project Hope had to suspend the operations at the Altayara Clinic and reassigned the team to another health facility in Deir al Balah.

147. As a result of these attacks on healthcare facilities, limited treatment availability and the blockade imposed by Israel, children injured in Gaza will suffer well into their adulthood. Short-term complications will include infants not meeting motor developmental milestones within the first year of life. In the medium term, children will be unable to develop speech and meet language milestones, and their cognitive abilities could be impaired in the long-term. A doctor summarized the situation by saying that the essence of childhood has been destroyed in Gaza.

## 2. Impact of attacks on healthcare facilities for newborn care

“Every child, every baby in Gaza is an enemy. The enemy is not Hamas, and it is not Hamas' military wing, like our chief military prosecutor tells us, that we are not allowed to harm a Hamas member unless they are part of the military wing. Every child in Gaza is the enemy... We need to conquer Gaza and colonize it and not leave a single Gazan child there. There is no other victory.”

- Moshe Feiglin, a far-right politician and former Likud member of the Israeli Knesset, in an interview with Israel's Channel 14 on 20 May 2025.<sup>148</sup>

148. Israeli attacks on Gaza have severely impacted newborns requiring incubation and many have died as a result of lack of incubators. Lack of incubators and/or supplies to run

<sup>144</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/opt-emergency-situation-update-32-7-oct-2023-30-may-2024-1600#:~:text=Only%20one%20out%20of%20three%20severe%20acute,was%20evacuated%20follow%20wing%20strikes%20in%20its%20vicinity>; <https://www.who.int/news/item/22-05-2025-health-system-at-breaking-point-as-hostilities-further-intensify--who-warns>.

<sup>145</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/statement-unicef-middle-east-and-north-africa-regional-director-adele-khodr>.

<sup>146</sup> <https://www.who.int/news/item/28-12-2024-kamal-adwan-hospital-out-of-service-following-a-raid-today-and-repeated-attacks-since-october>.

<sup>147</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/china/en/press-releases/statement-unicef-executive-director-catherine-russell-children-killed-during>.

<sup>148</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DJ6SgIFAwSQ/>; <https://x.com/trtworld/status/1925256024191377783>.

incubators can be life-threatening for babies, leading to increased mortality, hypothermia, infections and developmental complications. Prior to the conflict, there were eight neonatal intensive care units in Gaza with a total of 178 incubators.<sup>149</sup> In November 2024, three of the NICUs in northern Gaza were destroyed and the number of incubators was subsequently reduced from 178 to 54.<sup>150</sup>

149. Medical personnel who operated in hospitals in Khan Younis, Rafah and Deir al-Balah between February 2024 and February 2025 described seeing three or four infants lying together in one incubator. As of 31 August 2025, newborn bed capacity was reduced by 50 percent, denying an estimated 2,500 infants' access to critical newborn care. As of 1 September 2025, MSF reported that there were 36 incubators available in northern Gaza compared to 126 before October 2023.

150. The situation for premature babies was the most severe in northern Gaza and Gaza City where most of the newborn care capacity of Ministry of Health hospitals was located prior to October 2023. The only functioning non-Ministry of Health newborn care in northern Gaza after October 2023 was the Patient Friendly Hospital (PFH) with five beds and Al-Sahaba Complex with five beds, as of 22 December 2024. However, PFH had been targeted in two separate attacks and was under an evacuation order as of 12 December 2024. Between October and December 2024, in northern Gaza, 68 neonates were admitted at PFH, of whom nine died, while Al Sahaba Hospital reported admitting 59 neonates, of whom 13 died in the same period. Due to Israeli attacks, in northern Gaza, Ministry of Health hospitals lost 100 per cent of their neonatal care bed capacity, overwhelming remaining facilities, while forcing families to seek care in facilities with inadequate resources, leading to preventable neonatal deaths.

151. The situation in central and southern Gaza has also been dire. Between October and November 2024, Nasser Medical Complex admitted 274 neonates and reported 35 neonatal deaths, while the Al Aqsa Hospital reported 203 neonates' admission, of whom 17 died. The Al Aqsa Hospital, European Gaza Hospital<sup>151</sup> and Nasser Medical Complex have been struggling to remain operational, with bed occupancy rate of all hospitals exceeding 100 percent. These facilities have been operating beyond their capacity leading to overcrowded wards and increased hospital-acquired infection risks due to compromised infection control practices resulting in neonatal deaths.

### 3. Impact of reproductive violence on birth outcomes

“There is a direct targeting by Israel to affect the long-term health outcomes of babies. There is no reason why we cannot bring medications into Gaza to help pregnant women and babies, so it makes no sense except to think that this particular group is being targeted due to which there is a higher mortality rate among newborns.”

- An emergency room and paediatric nurse.

152. In a previous report published in March 2025, the Commission concluded that Israeli authorities have destroyed in part the reproductive capacity of Palestinians in Gaza through the systematic destruction of sexual and reproductive healthcare, including the destruction of the Al-Basma In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) Centre, Gaza's largest fertility clinic, in December 2023.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>149</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/statement-by-unicef-05nov24/#:~:text=Before%20the%20war%20began%20in,development%2C%20birth%2C%20and%20care.>

<sup>150</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/statement-by-unicef-05nov24/#:~:text=Before%20the%20war%20began%20in,development%2C%20birth%2C%20and%20care.>

<sup>151</sup> At the time of writing this report, European Gaza Hospital is no longer functional after an attack on 13 May 2025 <https://x.com/DrTedros/status/1923081632237617512>; [https://www.who.int/news/item/22-05-2025-health-system-at-breaking-point-as-hostilities-further-intensify--who-warns.](https://www.who.int/news/item/22-05-2025-health-system-at-breaking-point-as-hostilities-further-intensify--who-warns)

<sup>152</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6.

153. This violence has had direct, disproportionate and long-term consequences on children at birth. Israeli attacks affecting reproductive, maternal, neonatal and infant (RMNI) services have led to a critical shortage of equipment, medicines and healthcare professionals, particularly affecting NICUs and the ability to provide essential care before and at birth. UNICEF reported that the number of babies born prematurely, undernourished or with developmental issues and other health complications has risen due to the conflict which has impacted foetal development, birth and care.<sup>153</sup> Healthcare workers interviewed by the Commission noted an increase in premature births, congenital defects or anomalies, low birth weight and other medical conditions.

154. In the first half of 2025, the Ministry of Health in Gaza recorded 17,000 livebirths, a 41 percent decline from 29,000 births in the same period in 2022. In addition to the decline in births, the Ministry of Health in Gaza also reported that, in the first half of 2025, 2,600 pregnancies ended in miscarriage, 220 resulted in intrauterine foetal deaths and 21 newborns died within 24 hours of birth.<sup>154</sup> Prior to October 2023, miscarriage rates in Gaza were around seven to nine percent of all pregnancies. Since October 2023, miscarriage rates have increased by up to 300 percent, as of July 2024.<sup>155</sup> By October 2024, women in Gaza were reported to be three times more likely to die in childbirth and three times more likely to miscarry than before 7 October 2023.<sup>156</sup> By 27 March 2026, one in three pregnancies were classified as high-risk.<sup>157</sup> In January 2026, the Commission spoke with a young woman in northern Gaza, who experienced two consecutive miscarriages over a span of two years. Doctors diagnosed the miscarriages as due to placental enlargement caused by extreme fatigue, physical exhaustion and elevated stress levels. The woman was told that she will not be able to carry a pregnancy to term without surgical intervention.

155. More babies in Gaza are being born underweight, pre-term or suffering from complications, due to conditions exacerbated by the conflict, leading to higher neonatal mortality.<sup>158</sup> Prior to October 2023, the prevalence of babies in Gaza born prematurely and with low birthweight was 9.5 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively. Between January and June 2025, 5,560 babies (about 33 percent of births) were reported to be born prematurely, underweight or requiring admission to neonatal intensive care or specialist care, which remained unavailable in Gaza.<sup>159</sup> Studies have shown that prenatal psychological condition and stress of a mother can affect the blood flow in the placenta which results in reducing foetal growth and birthweight. As of 27 March 2026, 70 percent of newborns were classified as either premature or underweight.<sup>160</sup>

156. In July 2025, UNFPA reported a surge in premature births and low birthweight<sup>161</sup> cases in Gaza, with more than 1,460 babies born too early, over 1,600 born underweight and over 2,500 infants admitted to neonatal intensive care. Doctors have reported no longer seeing “normal-sized” babies in Gaza. Many babies with low birthweight require being placed inside incubators which are largely unavailable (see paras. 148, 149, 165, 220, 292, and 297) and other neonatal medical resources such as intravenous nutrition and nasogastric tubes which are all scarce in Gaza. A pediatrician recounted that the lowest birthweight he had witnessed since 7 October 2023 was a baby girl born at 32 weeks at only 900 grams (0.9 kilos).

<sup>153</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/statement-unicef-middle-east-and-north-africa-regional-director-adele-khodr>.

<sup>154</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unfpa-situation-report-on-the-crisis-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-may-june-2025/>.

<sup>155</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/onslaught-violence-against-women-and-children-gaza-unacceptable-un-experts>; <https://www.ippf.org/media-center/press-release-gaza-nine-months-pregnant-women-carry-burden-conflict>.

<sup>156</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ohchr-press-release-11dec25/>.

<sup>157</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-27-march-2026>.

<sup>158</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148161>.

<sup>159</sup> <https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/news/unfpa-warns-catastrophic-birth-outcomes-gaza-amid-starvation-psychological-trauma-and>.

<sup>160</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-27-march-2026>.

<sup>161</sup> WHO and UNICEF define a low birthweight as less than 2500 grams (2.5 kilos); <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/low-birthweight/>.

157. Studies have shown that pregnant women exposed to armed conflict suffer from higher rates of miscarriage, stillbirths, prematurity, congenital abnormalities and other harmful outcomes. Medical practitioners told the Commission that they had witnessed an increase in babies born with congenital deformities, particularly three types of birth defects: congenital heart defects, gastrointestinal defects and neural tube defects (NTDs), as detailed below in paras. 158-160. Among the congenital heart defects, a pediatrician witnessed a large number of babies affected by the transposition of the great arteries (TGA) and by other heart defects, such as tricuspid atresia and pulmonary atresia. These babies require treatment with a medication called prostaglandin, which is in short supply in Gaza, and medical evacuation to West Bank or Israeli hospitals, which is rarely approved. A pediatrician told the Commission of a two-day-old baby boy who was born with ‘double deformity’, one in the heart and the other in the gastrointestinal tract (called esophageal atresia – see para. 158). The team of doctors prioritized gastrointestinal surgery in the hope that the baby would be evacuated for heart surgery as it was not possible to operate in Gaza. While the gastrointestinal surgery was successful, the baby died from his heart condition within five days, as he was not evacuated on time.

158. Among the congenital gastrointestinal defects, many newborns have been specifically affected by esophageal atresia and anal atresia, potentially from maternal infection or exposure to chemicals and pollutants. Babies with these conditions require urgent corrective surgery but, due to the large number of children with traumatic injuries at the hospital, these corrective surgeries were deprioritised, leading to avoidable death within the first few days after birth.

159. Some babies have been born with central nervous system defects or neural tube defects (spina bifida), hydrocephalus or macrocephaly, according to doctors, primarily due to the lack of folic acid in maternal nutrition during pregnancy leading to poor maturation of the central nervous system. These conditions are treatable with paediatric neurosurgery but, if untreated, they may lead to permanent disability, including growth and motor development delays in the long term. A doctor shared with the Commission a video of a four-month-old baby boy with spina bifida which caused a visible hole or opening that goes directly into the lower spinal cord. As a result of the condition, the baby was unable to move his legs. His condition required immediate surgical intervention which was not available in Gaza. As a result, the baby will have a lifelong disability.

160. Reports indicate significant prevalence of cleft lip and palate among newborns in Gaza due to lack of maternal nutrition, folic acid supplementation and special feeding bottles.<sup>162</sup> A paediatric nurse told the Commission that she had witnessed many full-term babies with cleft lip and palate who were unable to breastfeed or bottle feed.

161. Malnutrition is acute among pregnant and breastfeeding women, leading to increased pregnancy complications and negative impacts on the health of newborns. Folic acid, multivitamins, and other supplements are not available. Pregnant women have been experiencing significant weight loss owing to limited access to food and nutrition, which has led to poor personal, foetal and newborn health. Infections, including intrauterine infections from poor sanitation and hygiene, presented in many pregnancies. Nutritional deficiency in pregnant women, such as folic acid, interfered with the normal maturation of the foetus, resulting in higher number of babies born with related congenital deformities since 7 October 2023. This is exacerbated by the critical shortages of neonatal-specific medicines and supplies in Gaza’s hospitals, such as surfactant, total parenteral nutrition (TPN), intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG), bubble continuous positive airway pressure (B-CPAP), peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC), among others. Challenges in breastfeeding, due to malnutrition, lack of access to clean water and displacement, also adversely impacted the health of newborns.

162. Some mothers have resorted to unsafe options for feeding their babies, including giving a mixture of star anise with water which in the long term could potentially cause electrolyte imbalance of minerals and other health risks for babies. A paediatrician told the

<sup>162</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-humanitarian-response-update-25-may-7-june-2025>; <https://x.com/QudsNen/status/1965197918488457443>.

Commission, “In over 35 years of my medical career, I have never seen mothers helplessly resorting to such risky and poor feeding or weaning practices in Gaza.”

#### 4. Impact of hypothermia for newborn survival

“In my career – and I’m 72 years now – I have not seen this level of neonatal suffering caused intentionally by Israel. This kind of extreme situation has never been seen before in Gaza. This is not a normal situation for neonates to die from cold.”

- A paediatric doctor.

163. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, at least 15 newborns died from preventable hypothermia between December 2024 to February 2025. These deaths resulted from compounding factors including prolonged exposure to cold environment, severe malnutrition, lack of proper shelter, electricity and fuel, limited healthcare supplies and restriction of humanitarian aid imposed by Israel.<sup>163</sup>

164. A doctor told the Commission that, in February 2025, the Patient’s Friends Benevolent Society (PFBS) hospital admitted nine newborns for hypothermia, of whom five died, two girls and three boys. The youngest infant to die was a one-day-old baby girl. All of them were preterm babies under two kilos born with the gestation age of 31 to 34 weeks.

165. Another doctor told the Commission that, between December 2024 and February 2025, the Al Aqsa Hospital received many babies, usually preterm or with low birthweight, with dangerously low body temperature (less than 34° Celsius) from displaced camps. It was extremely difficult to treat such babies because they needed to be slowly re-warmed in special incubators, such as radiant infant warmers, which were not available in the hospital. UNICEF described these infant deaths from hypothermia as “preventable” because they were due to the deteriorating conditions created by Israel forcing children and families to live without nutrition, healthcare, adequate shelter and humanitarian aid.<sup>164</sup>

## H. Attacks on and military occupation of educational facilities and its impact on children

### *Gaza Strip*

“In my childhood, I’ve always dreamed of blowing up my school. Today I’m blowing up a school. Wow!”

- An Israeli soldier, in a video entitled “It’s always fun to blow up schools”, right before blowing up a school [as seen in the video posted by him].

166. Between 7 October 2023 and 11 October 2025, 459 of a total of 564 school buildings in Gaza were directly hit.<sup>165</sup> Of those hit, 208 school buildings were in Gaza, 125 in Khan Younis, 95 in North Gaza, 70 in Deir al Balah and 66 in Rafah governorates.<sup>166</sup> Since 61 percent of schools in Gaza had been operating on double or triple shifts prior to October 2023, each school building destroyed potentially affected hundreds and sometimes thousands

<sup>163</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/statement-unicef-regional-director-middle-east-and-north-africa-edouard-beigbeder>; <https://www.savethechildren.net/stories/why-are-children-gaza-dying-hypothermia>; <https://borgenproject.org/hypothermia-in-gaza/>.

<sup>164</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/12/1158576>.

<sup>165</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/verification-damages-schools-based-proximity-damaged-sites-gaza-occupied-palestinian-territory-update-11-nov-2025>.

<sup>166</sup> [https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-342-gaza-strip#:~:text=Of%20the%2027%20newly%20hit,of%20459\)%20were%20directly%20hit.](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-342-gaza-strip#:~:text=Of%20the%2027%20newly%20hit,of%20459)%20were%20directly%20hit.;); [https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/verification-damages-schools-based-proximity-damaged-sites-gaza-occupied-palestinian-territory-update-11-nov-2025?\\_gl=1\\*1hgvv6v\\*\\_ga\\*MTg1NzY3NTQwNS4xNzQ5NjI2OTc3\\*\\_ga\\_E60ZNX2F68\\*czE3NjQwMTk2NTk0b2g5JGcwJHQxNzY0MDE5NjU5JG02MCRsMCRoMA](https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/verification-damages-schools-based-proximity-damaged-sites-gaza-occupied-palestinian-territory-update-11-nov-2025?_gl=1*1hgvv6v*_ga*MTg1NzY3NTQwNS4xNzQ5NjI2OTc3*_ga_E60ZNX2F68*czE3NjQwMTk2NTk0b2g5JGcwJHQxNzY0MDE5NjU5JG02MCRsMCRoMA).

of students.<sup>167</sup> The 459 school buildings that were directly hit had served approximately 497,712 students and 18,740 teachers prior to the conflict.<sup>168</sup>

167. Between 7 October 2023 and 11 October 2025, 81.4 percent (459) of school buildings used as shelters were directly hit,<sup>169</sup> resulting in significant numbers of casualties. Of the total number of attacks on educational facilities in Gaza recorded by the United Nations in 2024, the highest number – 78 incidents – occurred in October.<sup>170</sup> North Gaza and Rafah Governorates have been the most affected, with 100 percent of their school buildings classified by the education cluster as either directly hit or damaged, followed by Khan Younis Governorate, with 98.4 per cent of its total school buildings classified as such as of October 2025.<sup>171</sup>

168. From October 2023 to July 2024, approximately one million displaced people sought shelter in UNRWA installations, including schools, and adjacent areas that were attacked.<sup>172</sup> In November 2025, UNRWA estimated that at least 851 persons sheltering in its facilities had been killed and at least 2,567 injured.<sup>173</sup>

169. All UNRWA schools and Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) in Gaza have been closed from as early as October 2023 for safety reasons, due to evacuation orders and to serve as shelters. Between 7 October 2023 and 26 September 2024, 125 out of 183 UNRWA educational facilities across the Gaza Strip were damaged.

170. As of November 2025, the education system in Gaza had collapsed, with over 97 percent of the schools damaged or destroyed and 93 percent of schools requiring significant rehabilitation or full reconstruction to be functional again.<sup>174</sup> In many attacks on schools, witnesses have reported the absence of any warning, or evacuation warnings being communicated shortly before the strikes took place, not allowing sufficient time for people to flee.

171. The Commission notes that the coordinates of UNRWA educational facilities that were attacked had been communicated to parties to the conflict on a regular basis and were clearly marked as United Nations premises with United Nations insignia visible from the air and the street.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>167</sup> [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/f4626a80-3cb1-42e5-9af5-91ed18532452/Preliminary%20school%20damage%20assessment\\_Mar2025.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/f4626a80-3cb1-42e5-9af5-91ed18532452/Preliminary%20school%20damage%20assessment_Mar2025.pdf); [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/web\\_unrwa\\_education\\_2030\\_baseline\\_report.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/web_unrwa_education_2030_baseline_report.pdf); and.

<sup>168</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/verification-damages-schools-based-proximity-damaged-sites-gaza-occupied-palestinian-territory-update-11-nov-2025>.

<sup>169</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/verification-damages-schools-based-proximity-damaged-sites-gaza-occupied-palestinian-territory-update-11-nov-2025>.

<sup>170</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/education-overview-2024-state-education-gaza-and-west-bank-current-realities-and-future-priorities-february-2025>, the figure was confirmed by the education cluster on 26/2/2025.

<sup>171</sup> [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/f4626a80-3cb1-42e5-9af5-91ed18532452/Preliminary%20school%20damage%20assessment\\_Mar2025.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/f4626a80-3cb1-42e5-9af5-91ed18532452/Preliminary%20school%20damage%20assessment_Mar2025.pdf).

<sup>172</sup> UNRWA and University of Cambridge report “Palestine Education Under Attack in Gaza”, Sept. 2024, p. 5, [Palestinian\\_education\\_under\\_attack\\_in\\_Gaza.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_-_incidents_impacting_unrwa_shelters_and_idps_in_gaza.pdf).

<sup>173</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-195-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>.

<sup>174</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/verification-damages-schools-based-proximity-damaged-sites-gaza-occupied-palestinian-territory-update-11-nov-2025>. Education Cluster in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is an inter-agency coordination mechanism, co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children, that coordinates education-related humanitarian responses in the West Bank and Gaza. <https://www.educationcluster.net/country/occupied-palestinian-territory> ; <https://response.reliefweb.int/palestine/education>.

<sup>175</sup> “Armed Conflict Incidents Impacting UNRWA Facilities and Displaced Persons Seeking Shelter in The Gaza Strip”, April 2024. [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary\\_-\\_incidents\\_impacting\\_unrwa\\_shelters\\_and\\_idps\\_in\\_gaza.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_-_incidents_impacting_unrwa_shelters_and_idps_in_gaza.pdf).

172. Higher education facilities were also targeted and destroyed or damaged, affecting about 88,000 university students.<sup>176</sup> These included a campus of Al-Azhar University, demolished in December 2023, and a campus of Israa University, demolished in January 2024 (see para 184). As of November 2025, 95 per cent of university campuses in Gaza had been affected, with 22 out of 38 completely destroyed and an additional 14 sustaining varying degrees of damage.<sup>177</sup>

173. The Commission investigated a series of attacks on the Al-Fakhoura school in Jabalia camp which took place on 4 and 18 November 2023. It was the largest school in Jabalia camp prior to October 2023, attended by approximately 2,300 middle school students, boys aged approximately 12 to 15 years, covering grades seven to nine.<sup>178</sup> The school was attacked during previous escalations in 2009 and again in 2014.<sup>179</sup>

174. During the 4 November 2023 attack on the Al-Fakhoura school, some 16,000 IDPs were sheltering at the school. The attack resulted in the killing of 15 people, including at least six children, and wounding of over 50, including at least four children. The Israeli security forces reportedly said that it had not targeted the location and that the explosion may have been a result of fire aimed at another target. The second attack on the Al-Fakhoura school came two weeks later, on 18 November 2023, after the Jabalia camp had been repeatedly bombarded in the previous days. The school was struck in the early morning and another school, the Tal al-Zaatar school, also in northern Gaza, was attacked later the same day.

175. The Ma'en School in Khan Younis was attacked on 5 December 2023. A witness told the Commission that, before the school was bombed, Israeli forces had dropped evacuation leaflets. As the witness' eight-year-old daughter and other children ran to grab the leaflets, the Israeli security forces dropped a bomb at the same location. The casualties were taken to the Nasser Medical Complex. The witness' daughter suffered a severe direct injury to her abdomen, due to which she lost a part of her intestine. The witness believed that the Israeli security forces dropped leaflets as a ploy to gather people, as most people killed and injured were running to grab the brochures.

176. On 21 October 2024, the Boys Preparatory School in Al-Fawqa, Jabalia, was attacked and at least 10 people were reported killed and 30 injured. A witness sheltering at the school who filmed the immediate aftermath told the media that a drone descended over the school in the morning with a loudspeaker giving sheltering civilians an ultimatum to leave within one hour "because they were in a dangerous fighting zone". According to the witness, Israeli airplanes struck the school 10 minutes later.

177. On 21 July 2025, a building housing the Al-Jinan Kindergarten, one of few remaining kindergartens, in the Al-Rimal neighbourhood in Gaza City, was indirectly hit when classes were in progress, in an attack that likely targeted an adjacent building. As a result of the attack, several children were injured, with video footage showing children, including a boy with blood on his face, screaming and crying while being rescued. The Commission assessed that the Israeli security forces' 98th Division is likely responsible for this attack. The Commission did not find any indication that the kindergarten, or any other part of the building, was being used by Hamas at the time of the strike.

178. Schools in what the Israeli security forces have designated as 'safe areas' were also attacked.<sup>180</sup> On 6 January 2024, the Israeli security forces distributed flyers in residential areas of Khan Younis advising residents to move to shelters in safe areas. Two days later, a girl aged 15 years and a woman aged 30 years sheltered in UNRWA Deir al-Balah

<sup>176</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/gaza-unesco-supports-students-amid-devastated-education-landscape>.

<sup>177</sup> <https://x.com/UNESCO/status/2041798986206486768>; <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-presents-assessment-damage-and-reconstruction-needs-higher-education-institutions-gaza#:~:text=95%25%20of%20campuses%20have%20been,severely%20damaged%20and%20cannot%20operate>; <https://x.com/UNISPAL/status/2041900344179851637>.

<sup>178</sup> <https://gis.unicef.org/portal/apps/dashboards/c6e0bfd744164b2f84276071b1a83e78>;

<sup>179</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/attacks-against-un-gaza-must-be-investigated>; <https://press.un.org/en/2014/db141014.doc.htm>.

<sup>180</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148716>.

Elementary Co-ed A and B school in Deir El-Balah, designated as ‘humanitarian zone’<sup>181</sup>, were injured from a quadcopter directly firing on that shelter.<sup>182</sup> The Israeli security forces took responsibility for the attack and stated that Hamas was operating inside a command-and-control center within the school.<sup>183</sup> However, the Commission could not verify this claim by the Israeli security forces and is not aware of any evidence provided by the Israeli security forces.<sup>184</sup> Airwars reported that it was not able to identify any militants killed in the attack; instead, it identified civilians killed belonging to three families.<sup>185</sup>

179. In January 2025, BBC Verify found that the Israeli security forces had attacked the designated ‘humanitarian zone’ in Gaza at least 97 times, killing more than 550 people, out of which the Israeli security forces publicly acknowledged 28 attacks between 6 May 2024 and 15 January 2025.<sup>186</sup> Forensic Architecture reported in May 2024 that 67 out of 92 schools within the expanded ‘humanitarian zone’ in Al-Mawasi had been damaged or destroyed.<sup>187</sup>

#### *Controlled demolition of education facilities*

“The destruction of the enemy also means the complete obliteration of their symbols of power and national sites. And indeed, maybe for the first time, we are hearing that the IDF is destroying targets that are not just military objectives. The destruction of the Supreme Court in Gaza (in the picture: before, during, and after), the destruction of the Islamic University.”

- An Israeli officer posted on 19 December 2023.

180. In addition to airstrikes on and shelling of education facilities, the Israeli security forces also carried out planned controlled demolition of education facilities in several areas of Gaza.<sup>188</sup> The Commission has found in its previous report<sup>189</sup> that the Israeli security forces burnt or demolished schools (as listed below in para. 183), many of which were empty at the time, that such destruction was deliberate and unnecessary and constituted a violation of the principles of necessity, distinction, precaution and proportionality under international humanitarian law.<sup>190</sup>

181. Since 7 October 2023, at least 10 UNRWA schools have been fully destroyed after the Israeli security forces conducted controlled detonations, resulting in full destruction of the respective installations. Among those, the Commission verified the demolition of two UNRWA schools in Beit Hanoun in the north of the Gaza Strip in mid-November 2023, namely the Beit Hanoun Preparatory Girls B School and the neighbouring Beit Hanoun Elementary Co-ed C School. These schools had served a total of 2,400 students. Both schools were severely damaged through the controlled demolitions. The Commission assesses that these actions were carried out by Israeli soldiers of the 8170th Combat Engineering Battalion of the 252nd Division. The Israeli security forces did not provide any information about these actions but the Commission notes that the Israeli troops, including the Givati Brigade, were engaged in large-scale military operations in Beit Hanoun during that period.

<sup>181</sup> <https://www.unognewsroom.org/teleprompter/en/2850/un-geneva-press-briefing-03-october-2025>; [https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Inhumane-Zones-Report-Forensic-Architecture\\_WEBSITE.pdf](https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Inhumane-Zones-Report-Forensic-Architecture_WEBSITE.pdf).

<sup>182</sup> Armed Conflict Incidents Impacting UNRWA Facilities and Displaced Persons Seeking Shelter in The Gaza Strip, April 2024, [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary\\_-\\_incidents\\_impacting\\_unrwa\\_shelters\\_and\\_idps\\_in\\_gaza.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_-_incidents_impacting_unrwa_shelters_and_idps_in_gaza.pdf).

<sup>183</sup> <https://t.me/idfofficial/13212>.

<sup>184</sup> <https://t.me/idfofficial/13212>.

<sup>185</sup> <https://airwars.org/civilian-casualties/ispt151224za-december-15-2024/#assessment>.

<sup>186</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2jld7j50eo>.

<sup>187</sup> [https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Inhumane-Zones-Report-Forensic-Architecture\\_WEBSITE.pdf](https://content.forensic-architecture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Inhumane-Zones-Report-Forensic-Architecture_WEBSITE.pdf).

<sup>188</sup> <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2025/02/04/satellite-imagery-shows-schools-and-hospitals-destroyed-in-northern-gaza/>, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/widespread-destruction-israeli-defence-forces-civilian-infrastructure-gaza>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/widespread-destruction-israeli-defence-forces-civilian-infrastructure-gaza>.

<sup>189</sup> A/HRC/59/26, para 80.

<sup>190</sup> A/HRC/59/26, para 80.

182. Israeli soldiers have recorded several incidents of demolition of education facilities and published their videos on social media. In some cases, soldiers are seen or heard making celebratory or demeaning comments and joking during or after demolitions. In one example, an Israeli soldier says, “for all those asking why there is no education in Gaza [a caption reads – “in the university of the terrorists”], oops a missile fell on you, that sucks, too bad. That is how you will not be engineers anymore.”

183. In addition, the Commission documented information indicating that between October and November 2024, the Israeli security forces intentionally burned down some schools, including the Mahdia al-Shawa boys’ secondary school in Beit Hanoun, UNRWA’s Girls Preparatory School A building and Alkwait Secondary Girls School in Beit Lahia, and the Aleppo/Halab Elementary Co-ed A and B schools in Beit Lahia.

184. In a previous report, the Commission found the Israeli security forces’ 710th Combat Engineering Battalion and the 8130th Armoured Battalion, under the commander of the 99th Division, demolished Al-Israa University’s Al-Zahara campus on 13 January 2024<sup>191</sup> and Israeli soldiers belonging to the 749th Combat Engineering Battalion demolished part of the Al-Azhar University’s Al-Mughraqa campus on 7 December 2023.<sup>192</sup>

185. Demolitions and attacks against universities impact a generation of children able and wishing to undertake higher education (see para. 193). Of the few demolition cases acknowledged by the Israeli security forces, it has only announced commencing an investigation into the demolition of al-Israa university and it has not published the results of that investigation, raising serious concerns over accountability for such actions. Statements of soldiers involved in such acts demonstrate a clear intention to exact revenge for the 7 October 2023 attack on Israel, inflict collective punishment on the civilian population and cause wanton destruction. Specifically in relation to cases of controlled demolition, the Commission has found in a previous report that such acts were indicative of the Israeli security forces’ intent to destroy these facilities because they were educational facilities, and to reduce Palestinian’s access to necessary civilian infrastructure in the long-term.<sup>193</sup>

#### *Military use of education facilities in Gaza*

186. In addition to direct attacks, demolition and burning of schools, the Commission found several instances in which the Israeli security forces seized and utilised educational facilities as military bases or as staging areas for military activity. Between 7 October 2023 and 15 March 2024, UNRWA reported that it had documented 42 incidents where parties to the conflict interfered with UNRWA schools, including their use for military purposes in Gaza.<sup>194</sup> Such interference included unauthorised entry, forced evacuation of persons sheltering in the schools, and use as firing positions, to store weapons, as barracks and for resupply missions. UNRWA indicated that the damage caused in the majority of incidents resulted from attacks and actions by the Israeli security forces, involving munitions impacts and interference with UN premises.<sup>195</sup>

187. The Commission’s analysis of the Israeli security forces’ activity along Route 749 in Netzarim Corridor suggests that, since March 2024, the Israeli security forces established five forward operating bases along Route 749, including in the Al-Azhar University campus and the Qeseria school, and at least 12 smaller defensive installations (platoon to company sized) within the wider passage. The Israeli security forces started fortification of the Qeseria Combined Secondary School in Juhor ad-Dik. Satellite images show that the Israeli security forces built a road connecting the school with Route 749 as early as 3 December 2023. By

<sup>191</sup> A/HRC/59/26, para 15.

<sup>192</sup> A/HRC/59/26, para 17.

<sup>193</sup> A/HRC/59/26, para. 80.

<sup>194</sup> [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary\\_-\\_incidents\\_impacting\\_unrwa\\_shelters\\_and\\_idps\\_in\\_gaza.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_-_incidents_impacting_unrwa_shelters_and_idps_in_gaza.pdf), Breakdown of the exact number of attacks by each party to the conflict remained unavailable at the time of investigating and drafting this report.

<sup>195</sup> [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary\\_-\\_incidents\\_impacting\\_unrwa\\_shelters\\_and\\_idps\\_in\\_gaza.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_-_incidents_impacting_unrwa_shelters_and_idps_in_gaza.pdf).

25 March 2025, the Israeli security forces began using Qeseria school as a base for conducting further clearance operations to the east of the school.

## 1. Impact of attacks and closure of schools on academic development and learning in Gaza

“When children lose their chance to access education, they lose their future.”

- A teacher told the Commission.

188. Before Israel’s attacks on Gaza from October 2023, Gaza had historically maintained one of the highest literacy rates in the world.<sup>196</sup> The Israeli attacks have devastated the education sector. Children in Gaza have missed three years of formal education.<sup>197</sup> In February 2025, the Education Cluster reported that over 668,000 school-aged children in Gaza had been denied access to formal education and the accompanying protective support of a functional education system.<sup>198</sup> As of January 2026, over 335,000 children under five were at risk of severe developmental delays due to the collapse of early childhood services.<sup>199</sup>

189. Online education platforms have been provided but they have not made up for the loss of formal education which includes a loss of an important sense of normalcy and stability.<sup>200</sup> UNRWA has provided learning services through Temporary Learning Spaces (TLSs) and through its distance learning initiative. By January 2026, around 136,000 children were enrolled in 100 TLS set up by UNICEF.<sup>201</sup> As of 15 March 2026, 59,980 children, including 34,165 girls and 25,815 boys and 838 children with disabilities, participated in learning and recreational activities delivered in 609 rooms, established across 75 UNRWA collective emergency shelters.<sup>202</sup>

190. With the start of the October 2025 ceasefire, one of the challenges in restarting formal education was identifying safe spaces to conduct classes, with more than 97 percent of schools damaged or destroyed. Absence of educational supplies has been an additional challenge, with UNICEF reporting that teachers have been writing on tent walls due to the lack of writing boards.<sup>203</sup>

191. Even where children have had access to online education, the harsh reality of constant attacks, starvation and inhumane living conditions has pushed their focus from learning to surviving. Parents have told the Commission that their children have had no education since 7 October 2023 and have been focused only on survival, including looking for food and shelter. Children have also been increasingly forced to seek informal work to support their family’s survival. A mother told the Commission that her 17-year-old son used to be top of his class but now sells cigarettes instead of studying. Another mother told the Commission

<sup>196</sup> [https://palestine.un.org/en/216291-united-nations-agencies-education-palestine-must-be-priority#\\_ftn1](https://palestine.un.org/en/216291-united-nations-agencies-education-palestine-must-be-priority#_ftn1); <https://palestine.un.org/en/216291-united-nations-agencies-education-palestine-must-be-priority>; <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DAhM-0Ggfar/>.

<sup>197</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/palestinian-children-are-deprived-education-third-year-row-enar>; <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/oct/19/education-gaza-children-teachers-two-years-without-school>.

<sup>198</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/education-overview-2024-state-education-gaza-and-west-bank-current-realities-and-future-priorities-february-2025>; [https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/07/1165417#:~:text=Systematic%20destruction%20of%20schools%20in,actions%20as%20possible%20war%20crimes.](https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/07/1165417#:~:text=Systematic%20destruction%20of%20schools%20in,actions%20as%20possible%20war%20crimes.;); <https://www.unicef.org/sop/stories/after-two-years-war-gazas-education-system-brink-collapse>.

<sup>199</sup> <https://www.unicef.ch/en/current/news/2026-01-28/rebuilding-hope-unicef-expands-back-learning-hundreds-thousands-children>.

<sup>200</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000123484>.

<sup>201</sup> [https://www.unognewsroom.org/story/en/2980/un-geneva-press-briefing-27-january-2026#:~:text=To%20this%20effect%2C%20UNICEF%20would,pupils%20aged%205%20to%2018](https://www.unognewsroom.org/story/en/2980/un-geneva-press-briefing-27-january-2026#:~:text=To%20this%20effect%2C%20UNICEF%20would,pupils%20aged%205%20to%2018;); <https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-02/ETF%20Education%20and%20employment%20in%20Gaza%20Report%20Feb%202026.pdf>.

<sup>202</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-216-humanitarian-crisis-gaza-strip-and-occupied-west-bank>.

<sup>203</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/sop/stories/after-two-years-war-gazas-education-system-brink-collapse#:~:text=More%20than%2097%20percent%20of,for%20over%20two%20academic%20years>.

that she used to dream of seeing her 15-year-old son as a doctor, but he spends his days fixing shoes to survive.

192. Children in Gaza have missed three full school years and lacked a stable, stimulating environment, which has limited essential brain development that enables learning. This could lead to long-term language and learning impairments, including in basic literacy and numeracy skills. Parents have reported that children are falling behind academically, forgetting basic literacy and language skills, after losing crucial years of education. A father told the Commission that his six-year-old daughter was supposed to start the first grade in 2024 but was still unable to do so. She still did not know how to read or write.

193. The transition to higher education in Gaza has also sharply decreased due to widespread destruction of university campuses, death and displacement of students and educators, and the collapse of the education system. Israeli attacks have severely damaged or destroyed over 79 percent of higher education campuses, cutting off access to physical institutions and making traditional education impossible for the 88,000 higher education students.<sup>204</sup>

194. The destruction of Gaza's education system is expected to harm Palestinians for generations to come, with consequent challenges in economic development, work and social abilities. Loss of human capital, combined with the physical destruction of infrastructure, has led to a projected setback of 69 years in Gaza's human development index and has created a potential "brain drain" by denying young generations access to education. This will hinder Gaza's long-term recovery.<sup>205</sup>

*West Bank, including East Jerusalem*

195. Israeli authorities have issued closure and demolitions orders against specific schools in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. On 8 April 2025, Israeli officials and security forces forcibly entered the six schools run by UNRWA in East Jerusalem, and ordered their closure, effective in 30 days,<sup>206</sup> and on 8 May 2025, Israeli security forces raided three of the UNRWA schools in Shu'fat Camp, expelling more than 550 children and forcing evacuation of the six schools.<sup>207</sup> The six schools remain closed to date, affecting approximately 800 students. Affected students had to be transferred to other available schools in their area or to access UNRWA online schooling.<sup>208</sup> As of 20 October 2025, 85 schools, serving approximately 13,000 students, including 6,557 girls, and staffed by at least 1,089 teachers, including 649 female teachers, in the most vulnerable areas of the West Bank, were facing partial or full demolition orders or had received stop-work orders.<sup>209</sup> According to OCHA, these demolitions and threat of demolitions contribute to a coercive environment, putting pressure on residents to leave and placing them at risk of forcible transfer.<sup>210</sup>

196. Settlers have directly attacked schools in the West Bank. In one case documented by the Commission, a school in Khirbet Zanuta village in the south Hebron hills was destroyed by settlers on multiple occasions, notably in November 2023 and again in April 2025, with

<sup>204</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/gaza-unesco-supports-students-amid-devastated-education-landscape>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e87i0G-3MRY&t=179s>.

<sup>205</sup> <https://www.undp.org/press-releases/new-un-report-impacts-war-have-set-back-development-gaza-much-69-years>; <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/gazas-day-after-reconstruction-and-governance-challenges/>.

<sup>206</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-commissioner-general-israeli-officials-jerusalem-municipality>.

<sup>207</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/news-releases/unrwa-commissioner-general-east-jerusalem-assault-children-assault-education>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-289-west-bank>.

<sup>208</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ocha-humanitarian-situation-report-1-may-2026/>. See also <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-statement-return-schools-occupied-west-bank>.

<sup>209</sup> See <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-333-west-bank>.

<sup>210</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-248-west-bank>.

renovated parts and furniture stolen or damaged.<sup>211</sup> Owing to repeated settler attacks on the village, including against the school, 285 residents, including 120 children, were forced to leave on 28 October 2023.<sup>212</sup> The Commission reviewed 2024 video footage that shows the village school largely demolished, burned and vandalized with graffiti. The settlers responsible faced no legal repercussions for their actions.<sup>213</sup>

197. A second documented settler attack targeted the Al-Kaabneh Basic School in the village of Al-Mu'arrajat near Jericho on 16 September 2024.<sup>214</sup> The school served 74 students, including 37 girls, supported by 15 teachers.<sup>215</sup> The attack took place during school hours. During the attack, settlers beat a human rights activist who was filming the scene, while a large group of distraught schoolchildren barricaded themselves in a classroom with their teacher. Five settlers, including two minors, were reportedly arrested and indicted for the attack on the school. The attack was not an isolated event. In a separate incident a week earlier, settlers reportedly had opened fire on children on their way to the same school, forcing them to turn back. In October 2024, settlers returned to the school trying to remove security cameras that had been installed after the earlier attack. OCHA reported that, between 2 and 3 July 2025, settlers raided the school again and attacked the community which resulted in forced displacement of the community of around 20 households comprising about 120 residents, including 66 children, and seven other families who lived on a seasonal basis.<sup>216</sup> As of 9 July 2025, the Al-Kaabneh school had been closed and the entire community had relocated.<sup>217</sup>

## 2. Impact of disruption of education for children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

198. Some 806,000 students have been affected by measures imposed, such as restrictive policies on UNRWA schools, displacements, etc., by the Israeli security forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since 7 October 2023.<sup>218</sup> According to the Palestinian Ministry of Education, in 2024 alone, 109 schools were attacked and vandalized, and 85 students and three teachers were killed, while 551 students and 18 educational staff were injured and 149 were arrested.<sup>219</sup>

199. Expansion of military roadblocks in the West Bank has impeded freedom of movement and hampered children's ability to access educational facilities. In January 2025, OCHA reported that, since 7 October 2023, in the H2 area of Hebron, school attendance dropped by 25 percent owing to increasing access restrictions. The Commission also received reports that some female students were afraid to pass through checkpoints to go to school, including a checkpoint in the H2 area of Hebron where incidents of Israeli soldiers exposing their genitals to women and girls had been reported.

200. Large-scale Israeli military operations in Tulkarem and Jenin in January and February 2025 have resulted in the displacement of 40,000 Palestinians, with a severe detrimental

<sup>211</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/protecting-education-under-attack-case-zanuta-school>.

<sup>212</sup> A/HRC/59/26, para 34.

<sup>213</sup> A/HRC/59/26, para 34.

<sup>214</sup> <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-219-west-bank-enarhe>.

<sup>215</sup> <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-303-west-bank>.

<sup>216</sup> <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-303-west-bank>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-303-west-bank>.

<sup>217</sup> <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-303-west-bank>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-303-west-bank>.

<sup>218</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/education-overview-2024-state-education-gaza-and-west-bank-current-realities-and-future-priorities-february-2025>.

<sup>219</sup> <https://x.com/PalestineMoE/status/1881619318250852736>, <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/education-overview-2024-state-education-gaza-and-west-bank-current-realities-and-future-priorities-february-2025>.

impact on education.<sup>220</sup> According to UNRWA, as of 1 September 2025, 10 UNRWA schools serving more than 4,000 children in the northern West Bank remained closed since the start of school semester.<sup>221</sup> In East Jerusalem, UNRWA was unable to open schools for the new academic year, following the forced closure of six UNRWA schools by Israeli authorities in May 2025, affecting nearly 800 children.<sup>222</sup>

201. The rise in settler violence has also affected the right to education in the occupied West Bank, as the destruction of schools and subsequent displacement of people have stopped children from attending those schools and have disrupted their education (see paras. 249-252 on ‘mental harm’). Attacks directly interrupted school and made it unsafe for children to attend classes, while creating a climate of fear among students and their parents.

## I. Attacks and damage to facilities caring for children (orphanages) in Gaza and their impact

“In case of babies of dead parents, with the help of ethical committee, they [hospital] searched for other family members or even neighbours to look after them because there was no place in the hospital and orphanages were full, with reduced capacity. So, these babies have no identity.”

- A paediatrician and neonatologist.

202. Since October 2023, tens of thousands of children in Gaza have been newly orphaned or separated from their families, leaving them as unaccompanied minors. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2020, there were 26,349 children (aged 0-17 years) in Gaza living as orphans, having lost one or both parents.<sup>223</sup> Between 7 October 2023 and 7 October 2025, an estimated 58,554 children lost one or both parents, and between 17,000 and 18,000 children were unaccompanied or separated from their parents.<sup>224</sup>

203. Children in Gaza have found themselves separated from their families, alone and unaccompanied. Some children were separated during attacks and hospitalized alone or were being cared for by strangers. In one example, a doctor told the Commission about an injured boy using a wheelchair at the Al Aqsa Hospital who was being cared for by a group of teenagers who did not inform the boy that his entire family had been killed, and he was the sole survivor, to avoid causing him pain. In March 2024, the Commission met an unaccompanied boy, heavily bandaged and completely immobile, in a hospital bed in Egypt. He had been medically evacuated from Gaza and was being taken care by a stranger in his early twenties who met the wounded boy at the hospital as he was accompanying his own injured brother hospitalised in an adjacent room.

204. Unaccompanied children have faced severe challenges due to the complete collapse of the social care system, repurposing of children’s residential facilities into shelters, physical destruction and harm to facilities (see paras. 206-210) and other conflict-related challenges. There has also been a lack of formal, alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children in Gaza, as reportedly at least four orphanages have been turned into shelters for the displaced. Available options have largely focused on informal care with

<sup>220</sup> UNRWA, Large-scale forced displacement in the West Bank impacts 40,000 people, 10 February 2025, <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/large-scale-forced-displacement-west-bank-impacts-40000-people>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-268-west-bank>

<sup>221</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-268-west-bank>.  
<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-statement-return-schools-occupied-west-bank>.

<sup>222</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-statement-return-schools-occupied-west-bank>.

<sup>223</sup> <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2707.pdf>.

<sup>224</sup> The Status of the Rights of Palestinian Children, 2025, section 5.1 Orphaned Children in Gaza Strip, page 47, <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2729.pdf>; <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2731.pdf>; [https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/10/1155356#:~:text=The%20A1%20Baraka%20orphanage%20camp,UN%20Children's%20Fund%20\(UNICEF\)](https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/10/1155356#:~:text=The%20A1%20Baraka%20orphanage%20camp,UN%20Children's%20Fund%20(UNICEF)).

family members or strangers. Reportedly, more than 40 percent of families in Gaza are taking care of non-biological children. Extended families have struggled to provide basic needs, resulting in children without a stable support system.

205. Due to the breakdown of family-based care and alternative support systems, many children have been found alone and, at times, injured in hospitals with no way of identifying and locating relatives. A surgeon described to the Commission how medical staff at Al-Shifa Hospital had coined a term, “Wounded Child No Surviving Family (WCNSF)”, to label the charts of injured children who were alone at the hospital. According to the surgeon, by 15 November 2023, only five weeks after the hostilities escalated, there were 120 WCNSF cases involving children between the ages of one and 14 years at the Al-Shifa Hospital before it was forced to be closed due to an Israeli raid later that month. Reportedly, in some cases, parents had written children’s names on their bodies so that, if the children died, they would not die nameless and, if the parents died, the children would be identified.

206. The Commission investigated and documented attacks that damaged and affected facilities caring for children. In one case, on 2 October 2024 the Israeli security forces attacked the Al-Amal orphanage in Al-Wehda Street in Gaza City. According to one witness, at the time of the incident the orphanage was housing 143 orphans, including 62 boys and 81 girls, and approximately 3,000 displaced people, including hundreds of displaced children. At around 12:45, the orphanage was bombed, killing nine people, including four children, and injuring 11 adults.

207. The attack damaged the ground and first floors on the northern side of the facility as well as several tents outside the building. The institute had not received warning before the attack. The Commission determined that the orphanage was struck by an airstrike. The level of destruction appeared to indicate that a 1000-pound bomb (GBU-32) was used, which caused extensive damage to parts of the orphanage in the compound, with rubble visible from the bomb’s impact. An image depicting the aftermath of the attack also showed the incendiary effects of the bomb that burnt some tents outside the main compound. The images reviewed by the Commission show that nearby buildings were not impacted during the attack, suggesting that the orphanage building was intentionally targeted.

208. The Israeli security forces has not made any public statements regarding the attack on the orphanage. The Commission assesses that the Israeli security forces should have known the location of the orphanage, as it was clearly marked. Moreover, there was no warning or an evacuation order given for the residents and displaced civilians to evacuate the orphanage.

209. In another incident, the Commission documented damage sustained to the Mubarrat Al Rehmat orphanage that housed more than 20 orphans, including 12 orphans with disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, blindness or multiple impairments. On 28 October 2023, a nearby mosque was bombed by an Israeli airstrike causing structural damage to parts of the orphanage as blast pressure blew out all the windows and destroyed the downstairs playroom, classroom and kitchen, leaving the children and staff crowded into the three rooms that remained usable. The children suffered minor cuts from shattered glass. The director tried to keep the orphans in the damaged building rather than attempt a dangerous evacuation. The children with disabilities at the orphanage were among the most vulnerable. Many of them were unable to walk or even sit unsupported, and so they depended on adults to carry them at all times, which made evacuation life-threatening. For weeks evacuation was considered practically impossible. Since then, the orphanage’s premises in Gaza City are no longer functioning as a children’s residential facility.

210. The attacks on facilities caring for children have had a significant impact on the available care for orphaned children in Gaza due to the damage sustained to the facilities attacked. Due to the attack on Al-Amal Orphanage, one of the injured boys had a limb amputated but he died from his wounds two days later at the hospital. Damage suffered by Mubarrat Al Rehmat orphanage has posed significant challenges to the continuation of care at the facility and severely impacted the orphaned children who developed severe anxiety, bed-wetting and other regressive behaviour. In early December 2023, the orphanage director reported that it had become impossible to continue operating safely in the damaged building, especially given the lack of power, food, water and medical supplies, and the children had to be evacuated toward southern Gaza with the help of neighbours. The director of the

orphanage reported that during evacuation his family separated and one of the orphans with special needs died due to lack of medications.

## J. Impact of displacement and siege on children's conditions of life in Gaza

“At one point, we had to eat cat food and grind donkey food to make bread. It tasted disgusting but we had to eat to survive, to stay alive.”

- A 13.5-year-old boy who was severely injured in an airstrike on his home in December 2023.

211. As of 13 October 2025, at least 1.9 million people, about 90 percent of the population, had been forcibly transferred inside the Gaza Strip.<sup>225</sup> The Commission analysed statements of Israeli officials and the methods and conduct of the Israeli security forces during the military operations and concluded in a previous report that Israel, as the Occupying Power, had forcibly transferred the civilian population within Gaza, constituting a war crime and a violation of international humanitarian law.<sup>226</sup>

212. The Commission also noted that, as a consequence of forcible transfer, civilians, including children, have been forced to live in shelters and camps, in conditions that were not only inhumane, degrading and humiliating, but dangerous and unsafe.<sup>227</sup> The Israeli security forces continued to attack locations of displacement, which were designated as safe.<sup>228</sup>

213. Families have been forced to evacuate multiple times,<sup>229</sup> with recent airstrikes destroying shelters in displacement sites, where overcrowding, sewage buildup, and lack of basic necessities continue to sustain dire living conditions, as of March 2026.<sup>230</sup> Each evacuation increased the insecurity of the evacuees and added to their trauma.<sup>231</sup> Children, along with their families, faced the task of repeatedly searching for somewhere safe to stay, food and water, and medical care if they were sick or injured.<sup>232</sup> The Commission spoke to many persons who had to undertake repeated evacuations and heard directly from them about the trauma of their experiences. One mother told the Commission about staying with her four young boys in a dog cage with a cover on top to give them some protection from rain and cold. Some recounted sharing mattresses with up to 10 people or sleeping in turns.<sup>233</sup> Hundreds of people shared the same bathroom. As a result, many Palestinians, especially children, suffered from skin diseases, infections and chronic diarrhoea.<sup>234</sup>

214. At the end of 2023, with the influx of IDPs southwards, Rafah was estimated to be the most densely populated area in Gaza, exceeding 12,000 persons per square kilometer.<sup>235</sup> The continued arrival of IDPs to Rafah from different parts of Gaza further exacerbated

<sup>225</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/joint-statement-ngo-13oct25/>;  
<https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-187-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>;  
[https://www.btselem.org/gaza\\_strip/202512\\_no\\_place\\_under\\_heaven\\_forced\\_displacement\\_in\\_the\\_gaza\\_strip\\_2023\\_2025](https://www.btselem.org/gaza_strip/202512_no_place_under_heaven_forced_displacement_in_the_gaza_strip_2023_2025).

<sup>226</sup> Rome Statute, art. 8(2)(b)(viii); GCIV, art. 49; ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules, rule 129(A).; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 440.

<sup>227</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 467.

<sup>228</sup> <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/deaths-starvation-and-disease-may-top-deaths-bombs-families-squeezed-deadly-safe-zones-two>; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 259.

<sup>229</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 100.

<sup>230</sup> [https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-27-march-2026?\\_gl=1\\*18edlhb\\*\\_ga\\*MjA2MzI0NzUwLjE3NTA5MzY0OTI.\\*\\_ga\\_E60ZNX2F68\\*cze3NzY2MzcxNTYkbzJGcxJHQxNzc2NjM3NjU2JGo2MCRsMCRoMA](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-27-march-2026?_gl=1*18edlhb*_ga*MjA2MzI0NzUwLjE3NTA5MzY0OTI.*_ga_E60ZNX2F68*cze3NzY2MzcxNTYkbzJGcxJHQxNzc2NjM3NjU2JGo2MCRsMCRoMA).

<sup>231</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 100.

<sup>232</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 100.

<sup>233</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 258.

<sup>234</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 258.

<sup>235</sup> <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-80>; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 259.

conditions related to the already overcrowded space and limited resources in the area.<sup>236</sup> A 13-year-old boy told the Commission, “There were so many of us in the house – it was very crowded and there was no privacy. We barely had food or water to drink and wash. I was in my dirty clothes as there was no water to wash dirty clothes. It was very cold and, since we were displaced, I didn’t have any warm clothes.” The Commission learned that girls and women had been forced to wear their veil or their prayer cover constantly as the living spaces were shared with men outside the immediate family.<sup>237</sup> The Commission received information that teenage girls and women remained covered 24 hours a day for fear that, if they were killed, they would at least die covered.<sup>238</sup> These kinds of conditions have persisted throughout Gaza since 7 October 2023 and continue now.

215. Since June 2007, Gaza has been under a partial siege/blockade imposed by Israel, following Hamas’ takeover, restricting movement of people and goods via land, sea, and air crossings.<sup>239</sup> This partial blockade tightened fully after Hamas’ attacks of 7 October 2023, with Israel declaring a “complete siege” on 9 October 2023, halting all food, fuel, water, and electricity.<sup>240</sup> Total siege periods ensued, notably between 9 October and 1 December 2023 (the initial phase), followed by intermittent full closures in March to May 2025 (with no aid trucks entering Gaza) – as chronicled in the timeline set out in the Annex I at the end of this report – exacerbating and sustaining dire conditions.

216. Israel’s total siege on Gaza has had devastating and disproportionate impacts on children, resulting in starvation, alarmingly high rates of acute malnutrition, increasing outbreak of diseases, such as cholera and chronic diarrhoea, and significant excess mortality<sup>241</sup> (see sub-sections. a). Preventable child mortality and morbidity, and b). Dermatological and dental conditions of children). Particularly concerning has been the lack of basic essential supplies, such as special infant milk, which led to serious complications and fatalities.<sup>242</sup>

217. Children have been exposed to extreme levels of food deprivation even when not immediately at risk of starvation.<sup>243</sup> In January 2024, UNICEF reported that Gaza’s 1.1 million children were food insecure, leading to serious concerns of malnutrition and mortality reaching famine thresholds.<sup>244</sup> In March 2024, UN agencies warned that one in three children below the age of two in northern Gaza were acutely malnourished or “wasted”, which means they were dangerously thin for their height and at risk of death.<sup>245</sup> The pattern of acute malnutrition among children under the age of two in the north increased from 15.6 percent in January 2024 to 31 percent in March 2024, while severe wasting among children in the south of the Gaza rose fourfold from one percent in January 2024 to more than four percent in

<sup>236</sup> OCHA Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #80, dated 29 December 2023, see also <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-80>; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 259.

<sup>237</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para 145.

<sup>238</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para 146.

<sup>239</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/mena/documents/gaza-strip-humanitarian-impact-15-years-blockade-june-2022#:~:text=UN0464407/EI%20Baba-,About,following%20political%20unrest%20in%20Egypt>.

<sup>240</sup> See Annex I at the end of this report.

<sup>241</sup> [FAO expresses deep alarm over acute hunger in the Gaza Strip](#), 21 December 2023; ‘Barely a drop to drink’: children in the Gaza Strip do not access 90 per cent of their normal water use, 20 December 2023; Water crisis threatens the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in Gaza, CARE International, 21 November 2023; [Five ways the war in Gaza is impacting Palestinians’ health](#), 27 October 2023; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 330.

<sup>242</sup> The Palestinian Ministry of Health reported on 15 April 2024 [www.moh.gov.ps/](http://www.moh.gov.ps/) <https://t.me/MOHMediaGaza/5312>; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 330.

<sup>243</sup> [Child deaths in the Gaza strip due to disease and malnutrition can and must be prevented](#), Global Nutrition Cluster, 3 December 2023; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 330.

<sup>244</sup> [Gaza: Malnutrition and disease threaten the lives of 1.1 million children](#), UNICEF, 8 January 2024; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 331.

<sup>245</sup> [Acute malnutrition has doubled in one month in the north of Gaza strip: UNICEF](#), 15 March 2024; [Famine imminent in northern Gaza, new report warns](#), WFP, 18 March 2024; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 332.

February 2024,<sup>246</sup> suggesting a severe and rapid decline in the health and nutritional state of children.<sup>247</sup> An injured boy who was evacuated from Gaza told the Commission that, once ordinary food was not available anymore, they had to grind and eat animal feed to survive.

218. The nexus between food insecurity and water scarcity due to the siege has severely impacted children. Even prior to the current total siege, the UN had warned that 96 percent of water in Gaza was “unfit for human consumption”.<sup>248</sup> Since the beginning of the siege, damage to water infrastructure has led to children drinking contaminated water.<sup>249</sup> Unsafe drinking water and lack of water and sanitation have resulted in diarrhoea which has further prevented children from getting the nutrients they need to survive and contributed to high number of cases of acute dehydration and malnutrition.<sup>250</sup> A mother from Gaza told the Commission, “We could barely get clean water. It was dirty and salty water; sometimes the children and I had to close our eyes when drinking because there were worms in the water.” In addition, children in Gaza walk long, dangerous distances to fetch water due to the destruction of water and sanitation infrastructure, spending six to eight hours daily carrying heavy water loads, replacing school time with daily survival tasks.<sup>251</sup> Many children, sometimes barefoot, search through rubble to find water, leading to severe fatigue and disease risks.<sup>252</sup>

219. In a previous report, the Commission noted the impact on girls due to the lack of access to safe water and sanitation facilities, combined with the lack of menstruation supplies and facilities to dispose of them, affecting their sense of dignity and physical and psychological well-being.<sup>253</sup> The Commission received information concerning girls and women resorting to homemade, makeshift alternatives for sanitary pads, which also put them at risk of reproductive and urinary tract infections, which could result in infertility, birth complications and increased risk of sexually transmitted infections. A medical professional told the Commission that, when occurring in bad hygienic conditions and without access to antibiotics, infections, particularly vaginal and urinary infections, are both painful and serious. External infections might develop into internal infections, and without proper medical care, this might lead to miscarriage, loss of fertility and, in the worst cases, death.<sup>254</sup>

220. Israel’s siege has also resulted in a 90 percent drop in electricity availability affecting hospital power supplies, which has disproportionately affected newborns in the hospitals.<sup>255</sup> In November 2023, WHO reported that, due to lack of electricity to run life support for premature babies at the Al Shifa hospital, two babies died and 31 babies had to be evacuated.<sup>256</sup> CARE reported newborns dying because there was no electricity for the incubators and as result the children stopped breathing.<sup>257</sup>

<sup>246</sup> [Acute malnutrition has doubled in one month in the north of Gaza strip: UNICEF](#), 15 March 2024; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 332.

<sup>247</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 332.

<sup>248</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 334.

<sup>249</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 334.

<sup>250</sup> [Children’s lives threatened by rising malnutrition in the Gaza Strip](#), WHO, 19 February 2024; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 334.

<sup>251</sup> <https://x.com/UNRWA/status/1809505062194147704> ; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/water-crisis-takes-toll-on-gazas-children-unicef/#:~:text=A%20lack%20of%20safe%20drinking,to%20maintain%20adequate%20personal%20hygiene> ; <https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d335/d3358261> ; <https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d336/d3360448>.

<sup>252</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/water-crisis-takes-toll-on-gazas-children-unicef/#:~:text=A%20lack%20of%20safe%20drinking,to%20maintain%20adequate%20personal%20hygiene> ; <https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d335/d3358261>.

<sup>253</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, see Section D. Menstrual and reproductive health concerns.

<sup>254</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, see Section D. Menstrual and reproductive health concerns.

<sup>255</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 336.

<sup>256</sup> [WHO-led joint UN and Red Crescent mission evacuates 31 infants from Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza](#), WHO, 19 November 2023; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 336.

<sup>257</sup> [CARE warns: 84% of Gaza’s lights extinguished, people left sick and starving](#), 29 February 2024; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 336.

221. Temporary shelters, with one toilet for 700 people on average,<sup>258</sup> became centres for disease outbreak. MSF reported witnessing children suffering from skin rashes due to the lack of clean water for bathing or washing.<sup>259</sup> These factors have led to outbreak of waterborne and other diseases (see sub-sections a). Preventable child mortality and morbidity, and b). Dermatological and dental conditions of children).<sup>260</sup> WHO reported 50,000 cases of diarrhoea by late December 2023 among young children under the age of five, which was 25 times higher than what was reported before October 2023.<sup>261</sup> The physical effects of the lack of food and water have compounded severe mental trauma for children (see Section (V). Mental Harm against Palestinian children by Israel).<sup>262</sup>

222. On 16 July 2024 traces of vaccine-derived polio virus were found in sewage samples in Gaza,<sup>263</sup> and on 29 July 2024 a risk of polio was officially declared by the Ministry of Health in Gaza.<sup>264</sup> On 16 August 2024, the Ministry of Health in Gaza confirmed the first case of polio affecting a 10-month-old unvaccinated baby,<sup>265</sup> who after a year was unable to stand or move his legs.<sup>266</sup> This marked the first occurrence of poliovirus in Gaza since it had been eradicated from the region 25 years previously.<sup>267</sup> On 16 August 2024, WHO reported that an additional three children were suspected of showing symptoms of polio<sup>268</sup> and estimated that between 7,000 and 10,000 children in hard-to-reach areas such as Jabalia, Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun remained unvaccinated and at risk of contracting the polio virus.<sup>269</sup> Three polio vaccination rounds were conducted in September and October 2024 and February 2025<sup>270</sup> but, due to Israel's humanitarian aid blockade of Gaza, the fourth round of polio vaccination campaign for 600,000 Palestinian children, scheduled in April 2025, had to be halted.<sup>271</sup> Prior to 7 October 2023, Gaza had 98 percent vaccination coverage and 54 vaccination sites, which after October 2023 dropped below 70 percent, with 31 vaccination sites destroyed or damaged, as of November 2025.<sup>272</sup>

<sup>258</sup> 'Ten weeks of hell' for children in Gaza: UNICEF, 20 December 2024; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 335.

<sup>259</sup> <https://www.msf.org/gaza-lack-clean-water-brings-disease-and-suffering>; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 335.

<sup>260</sup> 'Barely a drop to drink': children in the Gaza Strip do not access 90 per cent of their normal water use, UNICEF, 20 December 2023, *Women and newborns bearing the brunt of the conflict in Gaza, UN agencies warn*, WHO, 3 November 2023; *War in the Gaza Strip, Public Health Situation Analysis*, Health in Humanitarian Crises Centre, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 6 November 2023; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 335.

<sup>261</sup> *Gaza Strip Interim Damage Assessment* by the World Bank, the European Union (EU), and the *War in the Gaza Strip, Public Health Situation Analysis*, Health in Humanitarian Crises Centre, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 6 November 2023; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 335.

<sup>262</sup> *Lethal combination of hunger and disease to lead to more deaths in Gaza*, WHO; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 335.

<sup>263</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, Para 335.

<sup>264</sup> <https://www.unognewsroom.org/teleprompter/en/2282/un-geneva-press-briefing-30-july-2024/6842>; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/08/1153166>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/polio-cases-very-likely-gaza-population-who-says-2024-07-30/>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crgxjn9rkpo>.

<sup>265</sup> <https://t.me/MOHMediaGaza/5664>; <https://t.me/MOHMediaGaza/5665>.

<sup>266</sup> <https://t.me/MOHMediaGaza/5694>; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/who-confirms-polio-23aug24/>.

<sup>267</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/who-confirms-polio-23aug24/>.

<sup>268</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/who-confirms-polio-23aug24/>; <https://www.emro.who.int/emhj-volume-31-2025/volume-31-issue-2/polio-conflict-and-health-implications-in-gaza.html>.

<sup>269</sup> <https://www.who.int/news/item/16-08-2024-humanitarian-pauses-vital-for-critical-polio-vaccination-campaign-in-the-gaza-strip>.

<sup>270</sup> <https://www.emro.who.int/emhj-volume-31-2025/volume-31-issue-2/polio-conflict-and-health-implications-in-gaza.html>.

<sup>271</sup> <https://www.who.int/news/item/19-02-2025-mass-polio-vaccination-campaign-to-continue-in-the-gaza-strip>.

<sup>272</sup> <https://x.com/UNICEF/status/1916863796338954266>;

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-284-gaza-strip>.

<sup>272</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/11/1166278>; <https://www.unicef.org/sop/press-releases/catch-immunization-campaign-launched-gaza-strip>.

223. The Commission noted a marked increase in protection risks for adolescent girls, with a surge in child marriage and early pregnancy,<sup>273</sup> linked to the severe impact of the hostilities, with families resorting to such practices amid hunger, fear, displacement, loss of caregivers, and the collapse of education, as a survival strategy.<sup>274</sup> Child marriage rates in Gaza have risen sharply,<sup>275</sup> after previously declining from 25.5 per cent of all marriages in 2009 to 11 per cent in 2022. In 2024, UNFPA reported increased pressure for girls under 18 to marry and significantly underreported figures of licences issued for girls aged 14 to 16 in a short period.<sup>276</sup> This surge in early marriage contributed to around 10 per cent of newly registered pregnancies in 2025 being among adolescent girls, amid drastically reduced access to obstetric and neonatal care and heightened exposure to violence.<sup>277</sup> UNFPA further reported in 2025 that adolescent girls accounted for 12 per cent of reported gender-based violence survivors across the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>278</sup>

## 1. Preventable child mortality and morbidity

“The starvation campaign? It’s a disgrace and shame, our fault that they are hungry; they deserve to die! All of Gaza should be burned with its ‘innocent’ inhabitants, from the greatest to the smallest, who are children of Satan!”

- Israeli soldier posted on 18 March 2024.

224. The Commission concluded in its June 2024 report that Israel committed the war crime of intentionally using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.<sup>279</sup> This has had severe life-threatening consequences for children, including pediatric and neonatal patients. The destruction of the healthcare system, including infrastructure, has amplified these risks, turning minor, treatable illnesses into fatal life-threatening conditions.

225. Nearly 95,000 children were identified with acute malnutrition in 2025.<sup>280</sup> Approximately 320,000 children under-five are considered at risk of malnutrition, with roughly 100,000 requiring specialized treatment for wasting, as of December 2025.<sup>281</sup> Although post-October 2025 ceasefire, no areas in Gaza are in a situation of famine, nearly the entire Gaza population remains in emergency food insecurity.<sup>282</sup> Projections further indicate that, from December 2025 through mid-October 2026, nearly 101,000 children aged six to 59 months are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition, including over 31,000 severe cases.<sup>283</sup>

226. July 2025 was the deadliest month for child malnutrition deaths, with 24 children under five dying, representing 85 per cent of all malnutrition-related deaths in 2025. A doctor recounted to the Commission witnessing the death of a seven-month-old girl in July 2025 due to the unavailability of basic infant formula. By 1 October 2025, UNICEF reported 151 child deaths from malnutrition.<sup>284</sup> Child malnutrition deaths are all preventable; prevention requires nothing more than adequate nutritious food.

<sup>273</sup> See above Section G. (c). Impact of reproductive violence on birth outcomes.

<sup>274</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/press/surge-child-marriage-and-adolescent-pregnancy-threatens-generation-girls-gaza>.

<sup>275</sup> See below ‘Section J. Impact of displacement and siege on children’s conditions of life in Gaza’.

<sup>276</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/03/1167166>.

<sup>277</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/03/1167166>.

<sup>278</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/press/surge-child-marriage-and-adolescent-pregnancy-threatens-generation-girls-gaza>.

<sup>279</sup> A/HRC/56/26.

<sup>280</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/01/1166747>.

<sup>281</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unicef-state-of-palestine-2026-appeal-29dec25/>;

<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/state-of-palestine>.

<sup>282</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/12/1166638>.

<sup>283</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/12/1166638>;

[https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Gaza\\_Strip\\_Acute\\_Food\\_Insecurity\\_Malnutrition\\_Oct2025\\_Apr2026\\_Special\\_Snapshot.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Malnutrition_Oct2025_Apr2026_Special_Snapshot.pdf).

<sup>284</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/10/1166007>.

227. By February 2024, malnutrition and dehydration had afflicted 90 percent of children aged between six and 23 months across Gaza.<sup>285</sup> They have been consuming two or fewer food groups daily of the lowest nutritional value,<sup>286</sup> as opposed to WHO-recommended five nutritional-rich meals per day and on-demand breastfeeding.<sup>287</sup> By contrast, prior to 7 October 2023, acute malnutrition for children under five years was almost non-existent (0.8 percent) in Gaza.<sup>288</sup> Doctors told the Commission that children's immune systems have been compromised, severely impairing children's ability to heal when sick or injured and contributing to death of paediatric patients, as a direct result of starvation and malnourishment. In one example, a doctor told the Commission that, in July 2025, he had a 11-year-old female patient with a severe chest injury that damaged her lower oesophagus and so the doctor performed surgical reconstruction. However, post-operatively, the girl developed "refeeding syndrome", as child-specific enteral nutrition was not available and, by the time the hospital had arranged it, the girl had died.

228. After 22 months of famine warnings issued by the IPC,<sup>289</sup> on 22 August 2025, the IPC confirmed famine for the first time in Gaza Governorate and projected it to spread to Deir Al Balah and Khan Younis Governorates by the end of September 2025.<sup>290</sup> This marked the first time a famine had been officially confirmed in the Middle East region.<sup>291</sup> A doctor who visited Gaza twice in 2024 described this as "an intentional nutritional deprivation of children by Israel". Many doctors provided accounts to the Commission of treating severely malnourished children.

229. The Israeli authorities dismissed reports of children dying or at risk of starvation by citing pre-existing conditions, but these conditions were easily treatable that proved fatal for no reason other than starvation. Thus, children died of starvation as a result of the siege. A 12-year-old girl with celiac disease suffered severe malnutrition after Israel's March–May 2025 blockade restricted gluten-free foods, causing her to lose one-third of her body weight over six months, resulting in frail limbs, diarrhoea, fatigue and a weakened immune system. In October 2025, she was admitted to Nasser Medical Complex. Medical authorities applied for Israeli approval for her medical evacuation to enable her to receive treatment but there was no response. She died on 9 October 2025 due to septic shock from a simple infection. In early November 2025, about a month after her death, the Israeli authorities approved her evacuation to Italy.

230. In one case, a nine-year-old girl developed malabsorption due to villous atrophy, a known complication of severe malnutrition, and needed an elemental formula or TPN for survival, which was not available. As a result, she died of starvation in December 2024. In another case, a pre-term four-month-old baby girl admitted at the Al Aqsa Hospital suffered from nonketotic hyperglycinaemia<sup>292</sup> with seizures, drowsiness and developmental delay. The baby needed a specific feeding formula which was not available. She progressively slipped into a coma and died in December 2024.

231. WHO reported over 33,551 cases of diarrhoea in Gaza by early-November 2023.<sup>293</sup> Over half were among children under five, marking a steep rise compared to an average of

<sup>285</sup> <https://www.nutritioncluster.net/sites/nutritioncluster.com/files/2024-02/GAZA-Nutrition-vulnerability-and-SitAn-v7.pdf>.

<sup>286</sup> [https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Nutrition-Cluster-Bulletin-end-of-year\\_2024.pdf](https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Nutrition-Cluster-Bulletin-end-of-year_2024.pdf).

<sup>287</sup> <https://www.who.int/data/nutrition/nlis/info/infant-and-young-child-feeding>.

<sup>288</sup> [https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Nutrition-Cluster-Bulletin-end-of-year\\_2024.pdf](https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Nutrition-Cluster-Bulletin-end-of-year_2024.pdf).

<sup>289</sup> [https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Famine\\_Review\\_Report\\_Gaza.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Famine_Review_Report_Gaza.pdf).

<sup>290</sup> <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/countries-in-focus-archive/issue-134/en/>;

<https://www.wfp.org/news/famine-confirmed-first-time-gaza>;

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/08/1165702>.

<sup>291</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/08/1165702>.

<sup>292</sup> Nonketotic hyperglycinemia (NKH) is a metabolic disorder where the body cannot properly break down the amino acid glycine, causing it to build up in tissues, especially the brain and spine cord, and requires medication, early treatment and regular monitoring to manage the condition.

<sup>293</sup> <https://www.emro.who.int/media/news/risk-of-disease-spread-soars-in-gaza-as-health-facilities-water-and-sanitation-systems-disrupted.html>.

2000 cases monthly throughout 2021 and 2022.<sup>294</sup> Cases of diarrhoea among children under five increased from 48,000 to 71,000 in one week from 17 December 2023, with 3,200 new cases daily.<sup>295</sup> Since October 2023, acute watery diarrhea has been one of the most reported conditions,<sup>296</sup> accounting for one in every four cases of disease recorded in Gaza, as of June 2025.<sup>297</sup> A paediatrician told the Commission about a case of a nine-month-old boy who was admitted with diarrhoea to the MSF hospital. He had developed *Escherichia coli* (E. Coli) in his stool, as a result of poor sanitation and malnutrition, and later developed renal failure and microangiopathic anaemia/low platelets consistent with haemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). In July 2025, IPC noted alarmingly high morbidity levels among children; 43 percent of children were affected by diarrhoea, 58 percent experienced fever, 25 percent had acute respiratory infections and nearly half suffered from skin infections.<sup>298</sup>

## 2. Dermatological and dental conditions of children

“I was not able to finish any operation because, every time child patients were taken back to the operating room, their injuries would be covered in maggots and sepsis under the dressings – these child patients had no immune system due to malnutrition. Children just did not recover.”

- A doctor who visited Gaza on multiple medical missions.

232. Other indicators of long-term acute malnutrition have appeared among children in Gaza over time, including severe changes in skin, hair and dental conditions. These include brittle and inconsistently lighter hair, dried skin and changes in skin pigmentation, key indicators of children’s overall health. In one example, a six-year-old girl had contracted diarrhoea, which led to kidney failure and dysuria. She also had hypochromotrichia with her hair receding and turning a lighter shade as well as hypopigmentation of the face, causing loss of skin color and visible skin blotches around her eyes. The doctor treating her told the Commission that these are all signs of acute malnutrition which are slow to manifest in children. The Commission has documented several cases of children exhibiting skin and hair changes consistent with malnutrition.

233. Throughout more than two years of escalated hostilities, skin infections have increased in Gaza. In July 2024, WHO confirmed over 103,000 cases of scabies and lice, more than 65,000 cases of rashes, 11,000 cases of chickenpox and thousands of cases of impetigo, a highly contagious skin infection that predominantly affects children.<sup>299</sup> The Commission received photos of children, of different ages and gender, suffering from red and yellow crusted scabs on their faces, arms and buttocks.

234. A doctor told the Commission that scabies among children in Gaza has been further complicated by impetigo. The doctor shared photos of an infant boy and a teenage boy from a camp in Deir Al Balah who were suffering from scabies which gradually developed into impetigo.

235. Reports indicate a substantial dental health morbidity among children driven by malnutrition, including scurvy causing bleeding gums and gingivitis, reduced saliva flow, enamel weakening, poor hygiene from displacement, and lack of antibiotics and treatment. A doctor told the Commission that children’s oral health has been visibly impaired as a result of malnutrition, lack of access to calcium and vitamins, and lack of access to dental care.

<sup>294</sup> <https://www.emro.who.int/media/news/risk-of-disease-spread-soars-in-gaza-as-health-facilities-water-and-sanitation-systems-disrupted.html>.

<sup>295</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/01/1145317>.

<sup>296</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/who-sitrep-07aug25/>.

<sup>297</sup> [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/emergencies-trauma-care/who-phsa-opt-111125-final.pdf?sfvrsn=efa97590\\_1&download=true](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/emergencies-trauma-care/who-phsa-opt-111125-final.pdf?sfvrsn=efa97590_1&download=true).

<sup>298</sup> [https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Gaza\\_Strip\\_Acute\\_Food\\_Insecurity\\_Malnutrition\\_July\\_Sept2025\\_Special\\_Snapshot.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Malnutrition_July_Sept2025_Special_Snapshot.pdf).

<sup>299</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-197-gaza-strip>;  
[https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/emergencies/who-phsa-opt-100925.pdf?sfvrsn=367c45e4\\_1](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/emergencies/who-phsa-opt-100925.pdf?sfvrsn=367c45e4_1).

Poor oral health can affect the development and health of children's teeth and gums, and poor oral health makes it harder to eat and absorb nutrients, thus contributing to malnutrition, constituting a vicious cycle of deterioration in both oral and overall health.

236. The Commission received many photos of children with deteriorating oral health, particularly children up to six years of age who have deciduous or primary teeth, many of whom suffer from dental infection such as necrotic teeth with plaque buildup, patchy hyperpigmentation or tooth discoloration, leading to rotten teeth or tooth decay. In March 2024, the Commission met children from Gaza with similar dental conditions who were admitted in hospitals in Egypt.

237. The same doctor estimated that children's rotten baby teeth will impact their adult teeth which may have a wider impact on their health, including their bones, as teeth are an indicator of underlying bone health. If oral health complications among children persist, in the long term their bones will grow frail and brittle, likely making children susceptible to fractures and even organ dysfunction. The doctor also shared with the Commission photos of older children and adolescents with permanent teeth exhibiting severe decay, which puts them at a higher risk for further oral health problems.

## V. Mental harm against Palestinian children by Israel

“Children brought into the emergency department were seeing around them the chaos of mass casualty, with people screaming, limbs blown off, blood... these children were sitting in a corner, staring blankly, not talking and observing all that, without any adults helping them to process or offer any sense of security. Mental health of children has been completely jeopardized.”

- A doctor who visited Gaza on medical mission.

### A. Children's mental health and conditions in Gaza

238. Since the start of the Israeli attacks in October 2023, Palestinian children in Gaza have experienced increasing rates of death and injury, starvation, displacement, disproportionate health risks and significant morbidity,<sup>300</sup> in many cases while being orphaned, unaccompanied or separated from families.<sup>301</sup> In November 2024, a survey found that children under five have been psychologically the most affected by the war, followed by children aged 6-10 years.<sup>302</sup> The experience and exposure of children to the war have led to profound mental suffering.

239. In 2024, UNICEF estimated that nearly all of Gaza's 1.2 million children were in need of mental health and psychosocial support for depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.<sup>303</sup> By March 2026, UNFPA reported that 96 per cent of children in Gaza felt that death was imminent.<sup>304</sup> Multiple sources have reported that children talk about death and dying, with suicidal thoughts being common among children. A nurse told the Commission that in Tal al Sultan clinic she saw a teenage boy who attempted suicide by drinking a chemical agent.

240. Many medical reports have indicated that children in Gaza have been exhibiting acute trauma responses, including pervasive sense of fear, frozenness, mutism, convulsions, confusion, loss of bladder control and fear of various stimuli, such as loud noises. A study published by WHO in April 2025 highlighted broader patterns of psychological symptoms exhibited by children in Gaza, such as emotional dysregulation, hypervigilance, social withdrawal and hopelessness, as children lack the psychological readiness and coping skills

<sup>300</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4 Para 330.

<sup>301</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/stories-loss-and-grief-least-17000-children-are-estimated-be-unaccompanied-or>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68141039>.

<sup>302</sup> <https://palestine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2024-11/Gaza%20report%202024%20final%20version.pdf>.

<sup>303</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/media/158391/file/2024-HAC-State%20of%20Palestine-revised-June.pdf>; <https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc15975.doc.htm>.

<sup>304</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/03/1167166>.

to process and manage or handle their traumatic experiences, which will likely lead to long-term emotional, cognitive and behavioural challenges.<sup>305</sup>

241. As the situation in Gaza has sharply increased child marriage and early pregnancy (see para. 223), it has in turn severely impacted mental health of girls exposing them to physical, psychological and sexual violence.<sup>306</sup> Evidence suggests around 63 per cent of those married young experience such abuse, with rising divorce rates and widespread severe distress, and in the most extreme cases over 100 suicides or attempted suicides have been documented by UNFPA, as of March 2026.<sup>307</sup>

242. The serious psychological harm to children caused by continued Israeli attacks in Gaza has resulted in developmental and communication disorders and a range of speech problems, including ability to speak partially or fully, speech and language development delays and stuttering.<sup>308</sup> Therapists have also reported seeing traumatized children showing signs of withdrawn behaviour, such as complete silence or decreased interactions.<sup>309</sup>

243. Children with disabilities are disproportionately at risk of increased and intersecting forms of mental health issues, including higher levels of anxiety, depression and trauma. Their situation is exacerbated by factors such as breakdown of family and societal support systems, lack of access to and loss of assistive devices, inaccessible emergency infrastructures and provisions, such as shelter, healthcare, aid distribution points, comprehensible warning systems and accessible evacuation routes, and lack of basic items such as food and water.

244. Newly orphaned, unaccompanied and separated children have exhibited signs of emotional distress, eating issues and behavioural changes, such as aggression, pessimism, inattention, nightmares and social withdrawal. They also contend with identity struggles, as the absence of familial connections has hampered their sense of belonging and self-worth. In an incident between 20 and 21 December 2023 investigated by the Commission (see para. 42), two brothers, aged five- and six-year-olds, witnessed Israeli soldiers shooting and killing their mother, who was seven months pregnant, and father in their house in Sheikh Radwan. As of December 2025, the children suffered from serious mental trauma manifested in emotional and behavioural change, including emotional numbing or blunting, social withdrawal and hyperarousal behaviours (for example, aggression, irritability and defiance). The brothers stated that they wish to die and be with their dead parents, while also exhibiting aggressive behaviour with their aunt who is their guardian.

245. Children increasingly find themselves taking on the roles of adult following the deaths of adults and separation from families. A needs assessment study, conducted in June 2024 by the Gaza-based Community Training Centre for Crisis Management and the War Child Alliance, found that nearly one in four (24 per cent) of the 504 families surveyed were led by a child aged under 16 years.<sup>310</sup> Family heads who are children care for younger children, struggling to enable younger children to survive, including standing in line for provisions or queuing up at food distribution points, which has further exposed them to mental trauma, mental and physical exhaustion, injury and death.

246. Displacement, inadequate shelter and the constant threat of physical danger in external spaces have impaired children's ability to play, an integral part of their overall well-being. The impact of this will likely affect their cognitive development and their ability to process trauma, and increase the risk of depression, anxiety, and chronic illnesses in the future. Experts predict that children in Gaza who have lost their opportunity to play, learn new skills

<sup>305</sup> <https://www.emro.who.int/emhj-volume-31-2025/volume-31-issue-4/cases-of-trauma-due-to-war-and-violence-among-children-in-gaza.html>.

<sup>306</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/03/1167166>.

<sup>307</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/03/1167166>.

<sup>308</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/09/1154621>; <https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d325/d3254482>.

<sup>309</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/stories/gaza-returning-families-confront-incalculable-costs-chaos>; <https://www.msf.org/%E2%80%9Ci-really-worry-about-what-will-happen-people%E2%80%99s-mental-health-gaza-ceasefire-needs-hold%E2%80%9D>.

<sup>310</sup> <https://www.warchild.org.uk/news/war-child-shares-first-study-psychological-impact-war-vulnerable-children-gaza>.

and language, interact and engage in social activities are likely to experience impaired neural development in the long-term.

247. Exacerbating children's mental health is the complete collapse of the Gaza mental health system. All six Community Mental Health centres operating before 7 October 2023 have been forced to close and are no longer functional, due to Israeli bombardment and infrastructure damage, siege, mobility restrictions, safety risks and depletion of medications. Gaza's only psychiatric hospital was shelled in November 2023 and shut down. The scale of Israeli hostilities in Gaza, including Israel's attacks on healthcare workers and critical shortage of mental health professionals and medications, has far exceeded the capacity to meet the mental health needs of children and the broader community.

248. UN agencies have described the exposure of Gazan children to trauma as "chronic and unrelenting".<sup>311</sup> Experts have identified children's consistent and continuous experience of violence and blockade and have classified the situation as "continuous traumatic stress (CTS)". This explains the intergenerational and transgenerational trauma within the broader Palestinian community. While PTSD is typically a response to a specific, finite traumatic event, CTS stems from prolonged exposure to danger and trauma, which can last for years. This trauma has the capacity to create severe intergenerational trauma as evidenced among children and grandchildren of other atrocities. Experts estimate that Palestinian children in their critical development stages will likely suffer from lasting psychological impact of enduring prolonged traumatic conditions,<sup>312</sup> resulting in psychological and epigenetic transmission of this trauma affecting future generations. The exposure to past traumatic experiences during previous escalations of hostilities, military occupation and the blockade of Gaza have also played a role in exponentially increasing the current trauma.

## B. Children's mental health and conditions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

"I actually cry. I miss her and her seat/chair will remain empty when the family gathers at the Ramadan table. At school, I think about her and the blood on head and the floor and parts of her brain on the floor. At night, before I go to sleep, I always cry that I won't see her again. My siblings' psyche is not good either – now they have become intolerant of anything. They explode or scream very fast and have stopped tolerating anything."

- A boy who witnessed the killing of his grandmother in East Jerusalem.

249. The mental health of Palestinian children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has also deteriorated since October 2023, due to more frequent and more intense Israeli military operations, increased settlement expansion and settler violence, systematic discrimination, coercive environment, evictions and displacement of Palestinians from their homes, harassment and daily disruptions which have become routine and normalized in certain areas.<sup>313</sup> Throughout the conflict, UN agencies have highlighted that Palestinian children have been living in a constant state of fear, trauma, panic and anxiety, and are afraid to perform normal daily activities.<sup>314</sup>

<sup>311</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/stories/gaza-returning-families-confront-incalculable-costs-chaos#:~:text=Farah's%20concerns%20speak%20to%20the,levels%20of%20depression%20and%20anxiety.>; [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/22.8.24\\_-\\_mhps300\\_day\\_report\\_final.pdf?\\_cf\\_chl\\_tk=YwSvQcUGzqRhWZFr6aLbYs\\_AZERYNCTUUGNu718pNA-1756637930-1.0.1.1-jN3LqqsIN.EMqNKp1l0yZGia8batLDxXxyi3Dvwb5A](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/22.8.24_-_mhps300_day_report_final.pdf?_cf_chl_tk=YwSvQcUGzqRhWZFr6aLbYs_AZERYNCTUUGNu718pNA-1756637930-1.0.1.1-jN3LqqsIN.EMqNKp1l0yZGia8batLDxXxyi3Dvwb5A).

<sup>312</sup> <https://www.emro.who.int/emhj-volume-31-2025/volume-31-issue-4/restoring-stolen-dreams-and-futures-saving-gazas-children-from-generational-trauma.html>.

<sup>313</sup> A/78/198, A/80/337; [https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/pau24\\_protection\\_analysis\\_update\\_march\\_2024\\_opt\\_wb.pdf](https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/pau24_protection_analysis_update_march_2024_opt_wb.pdf).

<sup>314</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/palestinian-children-remain-deprived-most-essential-supplies-and-services#:~:text=Nearly%20all%20of%20the%202.4,%2C%20displacement%2C%20destruction%20or%20death.>; <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/supporting-mental-wellbeing-west-bank-communities>;

250. Children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are exhibiting clear indicators of depression, anger, withdrawal, social isolation, impaired ability to concentrate and stress, stemming from the continuing Israeli military operations, settler violence, raids and displacement, which over long period of time could lead to an increased risk of harmful behaviours. A 17-year-old boy, who witnessed the shooting of his grandmother in East Jerusalem on 25 June 2025, told the Commission that he had been unable to focus on studies during school time, constantly thinking of the incident, and noted a psychological and behavioural change among his siblings who react quickly and emotionally to situations since the killing.

251. Parents reported to the Commission that children are afraid to leave the house, have nightmares about attacks, refuse to take school routes that pass near Israeli military checkpoints and settlements, and show aggression or withdrawal. These are all markers of trauma that can impair learning, social development and thus future employment prospects, extending the impact of Israeli army violence and settler violence far beyond the immediate incident. A father whose daughter and son under five years were abducted from their home by armed settlers and tied to a tree, told the Commission that, since the incident, his children have stopped going outside to play, they are terrified at night and keep having nightmares, and other cousin siblings of the children, who saw the two children tied to the tree, have also been fearful of stepping outside.

252. Much of the harm caused by settler violence is invisible. This harm contributes to what has been defined as “slow violence”: a gradual, cumulative assault on bodies and minds through chronic insecurity, deprivation and fear rather than through single events. Even when there is no immediate physical attack, children suffer from mental harm as their lives are saturated with fear, insecurity, instability and structural deprivation, transforming normal daily activities, including going to school and playing outside, into acts carrying risk and stress. As an example, in November 2025, Israeli settlers raided a barn in the village of Wadi Ejheish in the south Hebron Hills, killing and mutilating livestock. Children, who were present inside the house, reported hearing the attack; they subsequently feared going to school and exhibited signs of mental trauma. In another incident on 25 January 2026, close to Ein al-Duyuk in Area A (northwest of Jericho), Israeli settlers attacked and chased a Palestinian school vehicle for two kilometres while it was carrying children. Footage and reports show settlers targeting the bus, smashing the vehicle’s rear glass and later requiring hospitalization for the driver.

253. The patterns of violence, destruction and discrimination in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since October 2023 have aggravated deep historical inter-generational wounds and have had profound psychological impacts on Palestinian children and their families. Parents, particularly those whose children have been killed, are also often traumatized and may struggle to support their children’s mental health,<sup>315</sup> creating an entrenched cycle of trauma that is passed from one generation to the next. The Commission spoke with a relative whose two cousin brothers, aged 10 and eight years, and 23-year-old brother, were killed in a drone attack (see para. 90). Since the children were attacked outside their house, the family has to walk through the site every day, which has been painful and difficult as a constant reminder of the incident. It has left a traumatic impact particularly on the children who no longer feel safe to go and play outside.

254. The mental health impact of occupation, dispossession and violence is not confined to one generation. Palestinian children born into these conditions have inherited an atmosphere of insecurity and fear from their parents. Older Palestinians have carried unprocessed memories and trauma from previous wars and displacements, transmitting their anxieties through stories, silence and behaviours. Palestinian parents often struggle to shield their children from the psychological burden of occupation and violence. However, their own trauma, often compounded by unemployment, social fragmentation and political

---

<https://www.unicef.org/media/166061/file/2025-HAC-State-of-Palestine.pdf>;  
<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/number-children-killed-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem-reaches-unprecedented>.

<sup>315</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/mental-health-under-fire-mother-supporting-her-children-amid-traumatizing-armed-raids>.

hopelessness, has to an extent impaired their ability to provide emotional security. This cycle has perpetuated psychological vulnerability and normalized persistent anxiety as part of life. Now in their fifth generation, Palestinian families internalize dispossession from the Nakba and Intifadas, reinforcing hypervigilance and micro-aggressions that perpetuate cycles of psychological suffering.

## VI. Dehumanization of Palestinian childhood

“Before my mother was killed [in an airstrike in which my two sisters were also killed], she told me, ‘I need you to be a good person in the society like doctor or engineer and do good for others.’ Despite everything that happened to my family, I will do anything that is good for the society.”

- A 13.5-year-old boy who was severely injured in the same airstrike on his house that killed his mother and two sisters in December 2023.

255. The Commission has noted a widespread pattern of members of the Israeli security forces filming themselves mocking, weaponizing and desecrating symbols of childhood in Gaza. The Commission has documented at least 35 instances in which Israeli soldiers filmed themselves in private family spaces (for example, residences, particularly instances occurring in children's bedrooms); public spaces (for example, stationery stores, schools, universities and destroyed neighbourhoods) and military installations (involving military tanks and weaponry). These are not isolated incidents. They demonstrate a prevailing dehumanizing attitude of the Israeli security forces towards Palestinians as a whole and Palestinian children in particular. The Commission assesses that the repeated occurrence of these acts, with the clear knowledge of the Israeli commanders, indicates a tacit acceptance by the Israeli security forces that enabled or helped in facilitating these acts.

256. The Commission documented several such acts filmed by the Israeli security forces within private family dwellings, including in bedrooms of abandoned apartments and houses in Gaza. In one video from December 2024, an Israeli soldier filmed himself in an apartment's bedroom displaying a doll with taped eyes and a teddy bear hung by its neck to the ceiling fan, before turning the camera to the window, showing the surrounding destroyed neighbourhood. In another video, several Israeli soldiers can be seen inside a destroyed apartment playing with a toy mockingly speaking to it with Arabic words, such as “Hamoud, Habibi, Hamoud!”, “Ma’a salama!” and laughing as the toy moves and repeats the words. In another example, the Commission viewed a group photo of Israeli soldiers in full combat gear against a damaged concrete floor, posing with children's toys and games.

257. One video depicts an Israeli soldier in full military combat gear riding a child's wooden toy horse in a debris-strewn apartment with scattered mattresses, and an open wooden doorway where a second armed Israeli soldier stood guard in silhouette. The Commission found that the video was posted on 14 September 2025 during the initial Gaza City offensive phase and determined that the soldiers in the video are likely members from the Israeli security forces' 98th, 99th or 162nd Divisions, since the military operations in Sheikh Radwan were led by the 98th Division for urban assaults, supported by the 99th Division (Reserve Infantry) and 162nd Division elements under Central Command, aligning with house-clearing tactics.

258. These acts also have a gender dimension. The Commission has previously documented many accounts of Israeli soldiers who have filmed themselves in private Palestinian spaces trying on women's clothes, including lingerie, mocking and humiliating Palestinian women.<sup>316</sup> The Commission has also found Israeli soldiers used girls' clothes in a similar manner. In a video dated October 2024, an Israeli soldier was filmed showing girls' clothes to a group of soldiers and joking, “Look at the outfit, it suits him. The pink one looks better on you. I think the pink one will make you look slimmer. Adiel, does it fit and flatter everyone?” and the soldier named Adiel proceeds to try on one of the outfits.

<sup>316</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6.

259. The Commission also documented similar acts carried out by the Israeli security forces in public domains, where Israeli soldiers are seen mocking and instrumentalizing children's toys, school supplies and sporting equipment as 'prized trophies' or using them as symbols of conquest over Gaza. In one video, an Israeli soldier in uniform and helmet can be seen proudly brandishing a child's trophy in a show of strength, claiming, "Poor thing, he got a trophy. You lost the trophy. We won! Not you, we! Understood?" In another video, an Israeli soldier is seen tearing writing notepads and breaking children's toys and gifts in a stationery store. In another video, Israeli soldiers set fire to items in a candy factory, while joking that the fire represents "the second candle of Hanukkah" and claiming the factory's candies were intended to be given out to children to celebrate terrorist attacks.

260. The Israeli security forces also mocked and utilized children's toys in proximity to or in military installations, including armored military vehicles. In two separate images, Israeli soldiers filmed children's stuffed animal toys, tied in front of their military vehicles, surrounded by Israeli soldiers looking down at the toys, against the backdrop of destroyed buildings. In another photo, a teddy bear is seen hung by its neck in the middle of the barrel of an Israeli tank.

261. In one video, an Israeli soldier in uniform and helmet can be seen repeatedly cocking the charging or bolt handle of a light machine gun with a plastic toy rhinoceros, taking aim by the window, while keeping his finger pressed on the trigger of the machine gun. The Commission found that this video was likely posted after the October 2025 ceasefire when the Israeli security forces maintained positions in Gaza City for demolitions and border security. The Commission determined the Israeli soldiers in the video are likely members of the 98th Division (Paratroopers) or the 162nd Division (Armored/Infantry) under Southern Command, as they held northern sectors matching the urban interior in the video.

262. In some instances, the Israeli security forces have taken toys as personal trophies from Gaza. Several Israeli media outlets have also reported a pattern of the Israeli security forces vandalizing homes and apartments and looting personal items of Gazans, which has also been admitted by Israeli soldiers in the documentary 'Breaking Ranks: Inside Israel's War'. In February 2024, the the Israeli security forces' Chief of Staff reportedly sent a letter to commanders in charge of units fighting in Gaza, urging Israeli soldiers "not to take anything that is not ours." The Commission has not found any evidence that the letter made any difference in the conduct of Israeli soldiers in Gaza who continued misusing and damaging children's toys through October 2025, including after the ceasefire agreement. However, the Commission is not aware of the Israeli security forces opening any investigation into such incidents.

263. The Commission observes that these acts are aimed at mocking Palestinians, including children, in Gaza with the underlying aim of dehumanizing, degrading and subjugating Palestinians collectively. Given the number of examples documented by the Commission, across different geographical locations and during different time periods, the Commission concludes that they are not isolated or personally motivated acts. Rather, they form part of Israeli military culture of degradation of Palestinians as a group by systematically exploiting and destroying items essential to children's welfare and development. These items are targeted to evoke communal shame and helplessness, as children symbolize the group's future, cultural continuity and inherent vulnerability. Because these videos and images were disseminated widely by the Israeli soldiers, their impact has likely extended broadly. The confidence of the Israeli soldiers to film themselves in this manner and post the evidence online is a clear reflection of the lack of accountability and the underlying unequal power dynamics between the Israeli security forces and Palestinians, which have reinforced the Israeli security forces' dominance and validated their use of violence against Palestinian children.

## VII. Analysis and legal findings

264. The Commission's factual findings above indicate that violence across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, has impacted Palestinian children differently across different age groups. Younger children, including newborns, face acute threats to their

survival and development, including the impacts of malnutrition, displacement, and disrupted access to basic services. School-aged children experience significant interference with their education and protection from violence, as settler violence and insecurity, trauma, and attacks on infrastructure have interrupted learning and exposed children to harm. Adolescents, meanwhile, encounter heightened protection risks, including detention and arrests, sexual and gender-based violence, and harmful coping mechanisms such as child marriage, affecting their rights to protection, health, and development. Across all age groups, the cumulative impact of Israel's hostilities and violence have eroded the full spectrum of Palestinian children's rights under the international law, including the CRC. In particular, the violence since 7 October 2023 has directly killed and injured tens of thousands of Palestinian children, with thousands more deaths and harm resulting from indirect effects.

265. In drawing up the legal analysis, the Commission has reviewed all the incidents and analysed the broader patterns of harm against and affecting Palestinian children. The Commission has highlighted some of the incidents below, which have been extensively investigated by the Commission, and which stand out due to their particularly egregious nature. These incidents are characterized by severe violations and clear patterns of harm, substantiated by significant evidence— thus, meriting in-depth legal examination, and elevation as exemplars for establishing patterns of conduct under international law.

## A. Extermination and wilful killing

266. In its report to the Human Rights Council in June 2024, the Commission found, in relation to Israeli military operations in Gaza, that the chapeau elements for crimes against humanity had been fulfilled and that underlying acts of murder and extermination, as crimes against humanity, had been committed by the Israeli authorities and security forces.<sup>317</sup> The Commission made these findings based on direct and indirect means of killing, such as the targeting of the civilian population and the intentional infliction of conditions of life, including through starvation, blocking of humanitarian aid and assistance, and the destruction of structures, such as medical facilities, that are essential for the population's survival.

267. The Israeli security forces have intentionally killed Palestinian children through airstrikes on densely populated residential areas using high payload munitions and weapons with wide-area impact,<sup>318</sup> and through direct targeting of children.<sup>319</sup>

268. In relation to attacks on residential areas, the Israeli security forces knowingly and foreseeably caused child deaths by launching continuous intensive airstrikes on densely populated areas, deploying large-yield bombs calibrated for maximum casualties, contributing to the fact that 27 percent of those killed or wounded in Gaza between 7 October 2023 and 7 October 2025 were children. These deliberate attacks wiped out entire families across two or three or even four generations, with the Israeli security forces fully aware that children would be present and that children, with their small fragile bodies, have a higher chance of death and serious injury in such attacks. The Israeli security forces continued and repeated these attacks over a two-year period, without amending targeting criteria or selection of weapons, while child casualties mounted. This indicates that such attacks, which killed children in such high numbers, were intentional.<sup>320</sup> The Commission concludes that children were intentionally targeted collectively because the Israeli security forces considered the civilian population as a whole to be associated with Hamas and other armed groups, and that the Israeli security forces knew that children were present in the areas it attacked, and yet it intentionally directed its attacks on civilian residential areas and civilian property. The

<sup>317</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para. 458.

<sup>318</sup> See Children CRP, Section IV.A. Child casualties due to Israel's use of explosive weapons in populated areas; and Section IV. A. a). Continued killing and maiming of children since the October 2025 ceasefire agreement, paras. 26-40.

<sup>319</sup> See Children CRP, Section IV. B. Deliberate targeting of children by the Israeli security forces in the Gaza Strip, paras. 48-86.

<sup>320</sup> See CRP, Section IV.A. Child casualties due to Israel's use of explosive weapons in populated areas; and Section IV. A. a). Continued killing and maiming of children since the October 2025 ceasefire agreement, paras. 26-40.

Commission finds that attacks on residential buildings which resulted in child casualties also constitute violations of principles of international humanitarian law,<sup>321</sup> including the principles of distinction and proportionality, and constitute war crimes. Child deaths as a result of such attacks were foreseeable but the Israeli security forces persisted in the attacks. Israel has failed to prevent the attacks or to investigate and punish the perpetrators. Therefore, Israel violated the right to life under the CRC and the ICCPR.<sup>322</sup>

269. In relation to direct targeting of children, the Commission documented a large number of cases in Gaza, four of which it investigated as representative cases. Examined as a whole, these cases reveal recurring patterns of conduct that cannot be the result of isolated incidents. The cases documented and the sample of cases investigated and other evidence collected enable the Commission to draw broader conclusions about the scale, nature and systemic character of these attacks. The Commission's findings indicate that, since 7 October 2023, Israeli security forces have consistently, directly and intentionally targeted individual children across Gaza during evacuations, in shelters and designated safe zones, at Gaza Humanitarian Foundation distribution sites and after the ceasefire agreement in and around the so-called 'yellow line'. Children of all ages were targeted, from newborns to adolescents. Some were holding white flags. The Commission considers such targeting of children to have been deliberate, on the basis that (i) in many cases the Israeli security forces used single, precision gunfire resulting in single precise wounds, indicating an intention to kill or injure; (ii) injury patterns, as well as other evidence collected by the Commission, indicate the specific weapons used by the Israeli security forces, including sniper rifles, drones and quadcopters, are weapon systems which allow operators a high degree of clear visual confirmation of the target, including whether the target is a child; and (iii) many children were targeted alone or attacked while with adults who were unharmed, indicating a clear intention to hit the child. Importantly, the Commission notes that the act of killing anyone "messing with the ground", as reported by Haaretz,<sup>323</sup> if verified, (see para. 93) would amount to international crimes.

270. The killing and maiming of children in Gaza persisted during pauses in fighting. In an attack on 18 March 2025, the Israeli security forces killed at least 170 children, over half of 404 Palestinian deaths, including 80 women, and injured 562 others before midday.<sup>324</sup> In another recent case investigated by the Commission,<sup>325</sup> two brothers aged 10 and 9 were deliberately shot and killed by an Israeli drone strike in southern Gaza in November 2025 while gathering firewood near the so-called 'yellow line'. The Israeli security forces claimed that they were an 'immediate threat' and so killed. The Commission finds that this claim is baseless, given the ages of the victims and their clear appearance as children, their engagement in collecting firewood when they were targeted and the Israeli use of an aerial weapon in broad daylight that would have allowed the operator unobstructed visibility of the boys to identify them as children. Based on the incidents investigated and documented,<sup>326</sup> the Commission finds a systematic pattern where <sup>327</sup> the Israeli security forces often refer to Palestinian boys as "terrorists" in an attempt to justify the murder of Palestinian children in Gaza.

271. The Commission concludes that the conditions imposed by the Israeli authorities on Gaza since October 2023, including attacks and the total siege severely undermining access to paediatric and neonatal health care, created unsafe conditions and posed additional danger to children. Attacks by the Israeli security forces on hospitals serving children and newborns, including the destruction and forced closure of major paediatric and neonatal facilities (see

<sup>321</sup> AP I, art. 51(4).

<sup>322</sup> CRC art. 6; ICCPR, art. 6.

<sup>323</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-02-10/ty-article/.premium/israeli-army-expands-open-fire-orders-leading-to-surge-in-palestinian-civilian-deaths/00000194-ef85-dd03-add7-ffc72f120000>.

<sup>324</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para 32; see also Children CRP, Section IV. A. Child casualties due to Israel's use of explosive weapons in populated areas, para 33.

<sup>325</sup> Children CRP, Section IV. A. a). Continued killing and maiming of children since the October 2025 ceasefire agreement. Para 38.

<sup>326</sup> See Children CRP, Section IV. A. a). Continued killing and maiming of children since the October 2025 ceasefire agreement. Paras. 36-40.

<sup>327</sup> See also A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 44.

below Section (G). Violations related to attacks on healthcare facilities), combined with siege induced shortages of medicine, equipment and essential supplies, resulted in the deaths of children, including newborns, who desperately needed medical care. The Commission finds that the Israeli security forces has intentionally inflicted these conditions of life, in particular on Palestinian infants, children and young persons in Gaza, and caused their deaths due to the lack of essential medical care. The Commission concludes that such acts amount to the war crime of wilful killing and the crime against humanity of extermination.

272. The Commission concludes on reasonable grounds that, from 7 October 2023 to date, including during pauses in fighting, the Israeli security forces have intentionally directed lethal force against children as such, in violation of the prohibitions on arbitrary deprivation of life and on targeting civilians under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and that these acts amount to war crime of wilful killing and the crime against humanity of extermination.

## B. Persecution and enforced disappearance

273. The Commission has found in its previous reports<sup>328</sup> that the Israeli security forces have systematically targeted and intentionally mistreated Palestinian children, particularly adolescent boys, subjecting them to severe deprivation on discriminatory grounds as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the Palestinian population (see below Section (C). Torture and other inhumane acts). New cases that the Commission has investigated and documented indicate the continuation of this targeting and mistreatment. These acts were carried out on account of the children's age, which intersects with the systematic discrimination against Palestinians on the grounds of gender, nationality, ethnicity, culture and religion. Although age is not explicitly listed under article 7 of the Rome Statute among the enumerated bases of persecution, the Commission considers that the article captures persecution based on age as an "other ground" that is universally recognised as impermissible under international law. This is consistent with article 21(3) of the Rome Statute, which requires the interpretation of the Statute to be consistent with internationally recognised human rights and without distinction based on, *inter alia*, age, and with the Policy on Children at the International Criminal Court issued by the Office of the Prosecutor, which notes that "the residual category of "other grounds" could include the targeting of children due to their age."<sup>329</sup>

274. The Commission finds that the conduct of the Israeli security forces is part of a wider attack that falls under article 7 of the Rome Statute, the chapeau elements of which the Commission has already established (see para. 266). Based on this, the Commission has reasonable grounds to conclude that the crime against humanity of persecution has been perpetrated based on age intersecting with gender, nationality, ethnicity, culture and religion.<sup>330</sup> These acts manifested in two distinct manners: (i) deliberate killing by sniper, drone and quadcopter of Palestinian children, from newborns to adolescents, targeted by head and upper body shots, across different areas of Gaza<sup>331</sup>; and (ii) arbitrary arrests<sup>332</sup> of adolescent boys systematically labelled as "terrorists", "suspects" or "fighters", even after age-verifying identity cards were presented.

275. The Commission also finds that the arbitrary arrest of Palestinian adolescent boys amounts to the crime against humanity of enforced disappearance,<sup>333</sup> driven by discriminatory intent to punish, humiliate and subjugate Palestinians in Gaza, including children. Israel implemented a concerted campaign of enforced disappearances of children

<sup>328</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, paras. 198-205. A/79/232, paras 42-47, 51-55, 59-61, 106.

<sup>329</sup> <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2023-12/2023-poeduction-children-en-web.pdf>, fn, 47.

<sup>330</sup> Enumerated grounds under Article 7 of the Rome Statute.

<sup>331</sup> See Children CRP, Section IV. B. Deliberate targeting of children by the Israeli security forces in the Gaza Strip. Paras. 49 – 86.

<sup>332</sup> See Children CRP, Section E. Mistreatment of children during arrest and in detention. Paras. 103 – 121.

<sup>333</sup> Rome Statute, Arts. 7(1)(i) and Article 7(2)(i); International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Art. 25.

by removing children from Gaza and keeping them in incommunicado confinement, deliberately concealing their location and condition. The Commission found that the arbitrary and unlawful arrest and detention of children and their transfer to Israeli military barracks and detention facilities were carried out as a collective punishment for the 7 October 2023 attacks. The Commission considers that such acts also constitute ‘abduction’ of Palestinian children from Gaza, a grave violation against children in armed conflict under the international humanitarian law.<sup>334</sup> Importantly, the Commission highlights that international humanitarian law obligates the occupying power to detain protected civilians inside the occupied territory,<sup>335</sup> and the transfer of such persons outside the territory is prohibited and amounts to deportation, which is a crime against humanity and a war crime.<sup>336</sup>

### C. Torture and other inhumane acts

276. The Commission identified a pattern<sup>337</sup> of severe and deliberate mistreatment systematically inflicted upon Palestinian children, particularly boys, while detained by Israeli security forces and Israeli prison services (or *Shabas*). The mistreatment included: forced stripping to their underwear constituting gendered degradation; prolonged blindfolding to induce disorientation and vulnerability; prolonged forced kneeling on gravel or asphalt or other hard and sharp surfaces causing pain, lacerations and abrasions; severe beatings and kicks deliberately targeting vulnerable areas including the head, face, torso, genitals and extremities; terrorizing with dogs; being detained with adult male detainees in the same cells; and being subjected to detrimental and inhuman detention conditions, such as deprivation of food and water, unsanitary and overcrowded cells, prolonged sleep deprivation, exposure to extreme temperatures and systematic denial of medical care despite evident injuries or illness.

277. A 15-year-old boy detained in Sde Teiman required multiple surgeries after his release from Israeli detention to address his injuries. The boy continues to suffer from physical harm, including chronic pain, and psychological trauma, rendering him unable to lead a normal life.<sup>338</sup> This case exemplifies the severe mistreatment that detained boys from Gaza have faced in Israeli detention facilities. The Commission documented similar patterns across multiple child victims.

278. The Commission determines that the gravity, consistency and severity of injuries sustained by detained children are indicative of deliberate infliction of severe bodily and mental harm by the Israeli security forces, intended to cause physical and mental suffering. Physical and mental harm and the trauma of mistreatment in detention can also potentially lead to lifelong psychosocial impairment.

279. The Commission finds that this conduct is part of a wider attack covered under article 7 of the Rome Statute, the chapeau elements of which the Commission has already established (see para. 266). The Commission therefore concludes that conduct of the Israeli security forces towards detained children constitutes the crimes against humanity of torture and other inhumane acts causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health.<sup>339</sup> These crimes were perpetrated as punishment targeting children on account of their Palestinian identity, in direct retaliation for the 7 October 2023 attack in Israel. Such acts further amount to collective punishment of a civilian population, also imposed on children solely by virtue of their group affiliation, a practice prohibited under customary international humanitarian

<sup>334</sup> [https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/sites/default/files/2022/05/22-00040\\_Abduction-Guidance-for-CAAC\\_FINAL\\_WEB-1.pdf](https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/sites/default/files/2022/05/22-00040_Abduction-Guidance-for-CAAC_FINAL_WEB-1.pdf).

<sup>335</sup> GCIV, Art. 76. See also GCIV, Art. 49.

<sup>336</sup> Rome Statute, Arts. 7(1)(d), 8(2)(a)(vii) and 8(2)(b)(viii).

<sup>337</sup> See Children CRP, Section E. Mistreatment of children during arrest and in detention, Paras. 103 – 121.

<sup>338</sup> See Children CRP, Section E. Mistreatment of children during arrest and in detention, Paras. 108 and 110.

<sup>339</sup> Rome Statute, arts. 7(1)(f) and (k).

law<sup>340</sup>, which amounts to war crimes and the crimes against humanity of torture<sup>341</sup> and other inhumane acts.<sup>342</sup>

#### **D. Sexual and gender-based violence against children**

280. The Commission finds that Palestinian boys and girls have been subjected to forced public nudity by the Israeli security forces, constituting sexual and gender-based violence. In all the cases of forced public nudity against children documented by the Commission, the children were forced to undress in the presence of adults, including family members and their community. For girls, this has a particularly detrimental impact on their mental health and can have long term irreversible consequences for the girls' future within their community. The Commission finds that investigated cases of forced public nudity (see paras. 123-127) constitute sexual violence and amount to the war crime of torture, inhuman treatment or outrages upon personal dignity, and crimes against humanity in Gaza. The failure to separate boys and girls from adults in these instances and the failure to treat them in accordance with their age and gender are violations of international law and the special protection afforded to children.

281. The Commission has documented other forms of sexual violence against children in detention, including sexual assault, genital violence and sexual threats. Sexual violence against children is a serious human rights violation and may amount to a grave breach of international humanitarian law. The Commission notes that sexual violence against Palestinian children is a grave violation against children in armed conflict and so constitutes a war crime.

282. The Commission has stated in previous reports<sup>343</sup> that the sexual nature of attacks against Palestinians has caused severe physical and psychological harm to the victims which will affect generations of Palestinians. Sexual and gender-based violence against children, and adults, has been instrumentalised not only as punishment against the individuals but as part of a pattern of collective punishment to fracture, humiliate and subjugate the Palestinian population as a whole. The Commission notes that the impact of these sexual and gender-based crimes, on the individuals themselves and the affected communities, are profoundly graver when the victim is a child because children are at a stage of life when the body, mind and sense of self are still developing. Children often lack the physical ability to resist and the psychological maturity to understand and deal with what has happened, making the harm both deeper and longer-lasting.

283. The Commission notes that the sexual violence against Palestinian children is a grave violation against children in armed conflict and constitutes both a war crime and a crime against humanity,<sup>344</sup> for which both the individual perpetrators and the Israeli authorities are responsible.

#### **E. Violations related to attacks on facilities caring for children (orphanages)**

284. In relation to the 2 October 2024 attack on the Al-Amal orphanage,<sup>345</sup> the Commission notes that the orphanage was clearly marked and the Israeli authorities should have had its geolocation, thus the Israeli security forces should have known its location and purpose. In addition to orphans, the orphanage was also sheltering displaced Palestinian civilians, including children. Despite these factors, the Israeli security forces attacked the orphanage

<sup>340</sup> GCIV, Common, art. 33; AP I, Art. 75.

<sup>341</sup> Rome Statute, arts. 7(1)(f) and 8(2)(a)(ii); A/HRC/56/26, para. 84; A/79/232, paras. 102, 105, 109.

<sup>342</sup> Rome Statute, art. 7(1)(k); A/HRC/56/26, para. 84; A/79/232, paras. 98, 109; A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 174.

<sup>343</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6; A/HRC/56/CRP.4.

<sup>344</sup> <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/sexual-violence/>.

<sup>345</sup> See Children CRP, Section I. Attacks and damage to facilities caring for children (orphanages) in Gaza and their impact. Paras. 206-208.

with heavy munitions at nighttime, with no prior warning, while orphans and displaced civilians were asleep, resulting in the deaths of children and other civilians and extensive damage to the structure, while surrounding structures were not hit. Given these factors, the Commission finds that the Israeli security forces intended to target the building, even they knew or ought to have known that children were present, violating the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions.<sup>346</sup> This constitutes the war crime of intentionally directing attacks against civilian objects that are not military objectives or justified by military necessity or not imperatively demanded by the necessities of the conflict.<sup>347</sup>

285. In another incident documented, on 28 October 2023 the Israeli security forces struck a building adjacent to the Mubarrat Al Rehmat orphanage,<sup>348</sup> which housed orphans with special needs, including physical and intellectual disabilities. The blast to the nearby building caused damage to the orphanage. This damage was compounded by relentless attacks in the surrounding area, prolonged electricity cuts and total siege conditions, which disrupted life-sustenance including medicines, water and food supply, ultimately forcing the orphanage to be evacuated and its residents dispersed into precarious conditions without adequate alternative shelter or care, leading to death of an orphan during evacuation.

286. Attacks on civilian objects that are facilities dedicated to caring for children have had direct and foreseeable impacts on orphans' development and living conditions. These impacts include loss of safe, secure shelter leading to exposure and disease, psychological trauma from death and injury and from destruction, and disruption of specialized care for disabled orphans resulting in health deterioration and long-term impairment.<sup>349</sup> These constitute breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention<sup>350</sup> and war crimes.<sup>351</sup> The Commission also finds on reasonable grounds that such deliberate conduct would have foreseeably caused great suffering; as such, the Commission finds that the attacks against facilities caring for children amounts to the crime against humanity of other inhumane acts causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or mental or physical health.<sup>352</sup>

## F. Violations related to attacks on educational facilities

287. The Commission has extensively documented the widespread destruction of educational facilities across Gaza since 7 October 2023,<sup>353</sup> including intentional systematic attacks on schools and universities through airstrikes and tank fire, controlled demolitions of buildings and setting buildings ablaze. The targets of the attacks include schools located in designated safe zones, supposedly intended to protect displaced civilians. More than 97 percent of schools have been damaged or destroyed,<sup>354</sup> effectively dismantling the education system and imposing severe, long-term consequences for Palestinian children and adolescents and the cultural identity of the Palestinian people as a group. These facilities served as essential civilian shelters for displaced families, providing physical safety and psychosocial stability amid the hostilities. The attacks have triggered further mass displacement, intensifying Gaza's dire living conditions characterized by food insecurity, poor sanitation and constant threat.

<sup>346</sup> ICRC, Henkaerts, J. and Doswald-Beck, L., *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, Volume I: Rules, rules 1, 5, 14 and 18.

<sup>347</sup> Rome Statute, arts. 8(2)(b)(ii).

<sup>348</sup> See Children CRP, Section I. Attacks and damage to facilities caring for children (orphanages) in Gaza and their impact. Para. 209.

<sup>349</sup> Children CRP, Section I. Attacks and damage to facilities caring for children (orphanages) in Gaza and their impact. Para. 210.

<sup>350</sup> GCIV, art. 50.

<sup>351</sup> Rome Statute, article 8(2)(b)(ii) and (b)(v).

<sup>352</sup> Rome Statute, art. 7(1)(k).

<sup>353</sup> See Children CRP, Section H. Attacks on and military occupation of educational facilities and its impact on children, Paras. 166-187. See also, A/HRC/60/CRP.3, paras. 91-92; A/HRC/59/26, paras. 76, 80.

<sup>354</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/sop/stories/after-two-years-war-gazas-education-system-brink-collapse> as of 11 November 2025.

288. The Commission determines that the Israeli security forces have intentionally directed attacks against educational facilities, resulting in the denial of Palestinian children's right to education for present and future generations. This has been compounded by displacement-related insecurity, continued attacks and killings and the absence of or limited alternative educational options amid the hostilities.<sup>355</sup> Palestinian children in Gaza have been out of formal education for three full years, causing profound harm including irreversible learning loss, neural developmental delays and diminished future opportunities that will burden today's children individually and collectively directly and future generations indirectly.<sup>356</sup> The destruction of the education system has been an attack on the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people as a whole.

289. Consistent with its prior findings,<sup>357</sup> the Commission concludes that Israeli attacks on educational facilities constitute the war crimes of intentionally directing attacks against civilian objects not justified by military necessity or imperatively demanded by the conflict,<sup>358</sup> and intentionally launching an attack with the knowledge that it will cause excessive civilian harm or environmental damage compared to the military advantage.<sup>359</sup> These attacks systematically undermine the societal foundations essential for the survival and development of Palestinian children.

## G. Violations related to attacks on healthcare facilities

290. The Commission has documented and reported on numerous attacks and forced closures of paediatric hospitals across Gaza since October 2023, including Al-Nasr Hospital, Al-Rantisi Specialized Paediatric Hospital and other facilities dedicated to child healthcare, resulting in a systematic and total denial of essential, life-preserving medical services to Palestinian children,<sup>360</sup> in direct violation of their protected rights under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including the CRC.<sup>361</sup> These closures were enforced through intensive military siege, direct bombardment and fuel and supply blockades. Evacuation orders were issued to paediatric hospitals and wards without designation of feasible alternative paediatric facilities, rendering hospitals inoperable and foreseeably exposing thousands of critically ill, injured and vulnerable children to heightened mortality risks from treatable conditions, including infection, neonatal failure, chronic disease exacerbation and traumatic injuries.

291. Decomposing bodies of newborns were found in the neonatal intensive care unit at Al-Nasr Paediatric Hospital following attacks and enforced closure by the Israeli security forces in November 2023.<sup>362</sup> Photos and videos of the deceased infants establish direct causation between the actions of the Israeli security forces in attacking the hospital, including their refusal to grant adequate and sufficient time for the safe and feasible evacuation of newborn infants, the forced cut-off of electricity, imposition of a fuel blockade and obstruction of essential medical supplies, resulted in preventable deaths of vulnerable neonates. The Commission determines that such deprivation of indispensable paediatric care constitutes the war crime of intentionally depriving civilians of objects indispensable to their survival,<sup>363</sup> and a breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention,<sup>364</sup> as the foreseeability of hospitalized newborns dying was clear and unequivocal.

<sup>355</sup> See Children CRP, Section H. a). Impact of attacks and closure of schools on academic development and learning in children in Gaza, Paras. 188-194.

<sup>356</sup> See Children CRP, Section H. a). Impact of attacks and closure of schools on academic development and learning in children in Gaza, Paras. 188-194.

<sup>357</sup> A/HRC/59/26.

<sup>358</sup> Rome Statute, art. 8(2)(b)(ii).

<sup>359</sup> Rome Statute, art. 8(2)(b)(iv).

<sup>360</sup> See Children CRP, Section G. Attacks on healthcare and its impact on children and newborns, Paras. 136-151. See also, A/HRC/59/26; A/HRC/58/CRP.6; A/79/232.

<sup>361</sup> CRC, Art. 24.

<sup>362</sup> See Children CRP, Section G. a). Direct attacks on paediatric healthcare facilities, Paras. 136-147.

<sup>363</sup> Rome Statute Art. 8(2)(b)(xxv).

<sup>364</sup> GCIV Art. 55.

292. The broader attacks on Gaza's healthcare infrastructure have contributed to a catastrophic health crisis for children<sup>365</sup>, marked by acute shortages of medicines, anaesthetics, medical equipment and fuel to run the machines, due to the Israeli-imposed siege. Injured children arriving with shrapnel wounds, burns, fractures and blast injuries could not receive timely treatment, were forced to endure unrelieved pain and secondary infections as antibiotics, painkillers and surgical supplies were entirely exhausted. In their absence, medical personnel resorted to operations without anaesthetics and with unsanitary, unsterilized equipment, resulting in rampant post-operative sepsis, amputations and preventable deaths or terminal diseases among paediatric patients. Neonatal units collapsed without power for incubators and ventilators, causing newborn deaths. Emergency rooms overflowed with untreated trauma cases, where children languished for days in filth, without hydration or nutrition.

293. The Commission determines that attacks and measures imposed by Israel which resulted in the destruction of the healthcare system constitute war crimes under the Rome Statute, including intentionally directing attacks against hospitals<sup>366</sup> and intentionally launching attacks against hospitals in the knowledge that such attacks will cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians.<sup>367</sup> The Commission also finds that the intentional destruction of healthcare facilities amounts to the crime against humanity of other inhumane acts causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.<sup>368</sup> The foreseeable cumulative health implications for children, including newborns, which continued over time with no change of policy of the Israeli security forces to alleviate the situation, compounded the unliveable conditions for Palestinian children in Gaza (see further below sub-section (III). Genocide, 'Deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction of Palestinians in Gaza, including children').

## H. Reproductive violence and its direct impact on newborn health and neonatal deaths

294. The Commission finds a disproportionate, direct and acute impact on newborns from conditions imposed by Israel's blockade, siege and attacks on reproductive healthcare in Gaza, as previously reported.<sup>369</sup> The Commission notes a sharp and measurable deterioration in reproductive and neonatal health across Gaza, as previously reported by the Commission.<sup>370</sup> According to available data and humanitarian assessments, birth rates in Gaza in the first half of 2025 were 41 percent less than in the same period in 2022. There were increases in miscarriages and pregnancy related deaths, preterm births, low birthweight deliveries and neonatal deaths.<sup>371</sup> By October 2024, women in Gaza were three times more likely to die in childbirth and three times more likely to miscarry compared to before October 2023, with a 300 percent escalation in miscarriages and childbirth complications.<sup>372</sup> These figures are likely underestimates of the true scale of harm since most of Gaza's health information systems have been destroyed and many births and deaths remain unrecorded.

295. The impact of total siege and the broader humanitarian crisis, including systematic shortages of food, clean water and nutrition supplements, have directly undermined

<sup>365</sup> See Children CRP, Section G. b). Impact of attacks on healthcare facilities for newborn care; c). Impact of reproductive violence on birth outcomes; d). Impact of hypothermia for newborn survival, Para. 148-165.

<sup>366</sup> Rome Statute Art. 8(2)(b)(ix).

<sup>367</sup> Rome Statute Art. 8(2)(b)(iv)).

<sup>368</sup> Rome Statute, Art. 7(1)(k).

<sup>369</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6.

<sup>370</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6.

<sup>371</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unfpa-situation-report-on-the-crisis-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-may-june-2025/#:~:text=Maternal%20and%20newborn%20care%20is,births%20were%20reported%20in%20Gaza;https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/news/unfpa-warns-catastrophic-birth-outcomes-gaza-amid-starvation-psychological-trauma-and>.

<sup>372</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/news/famine-looms-gaza-pregnant-women-and-newborns-face-life-threatening-health-risks>; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ohchr-press-release-11dec25/>.

reproductive and newborn health. Pregnant and lactating women, already physiologically vulnerable, are exposed to severe malnutrition, which increased the risk of low-birth-weight babies, preterm delivery and other health complications, including babies born with congenital defects, and raised the risk of infant mortality and long-term developmental impairment. At the same time, the collapse of public health programs, including maternal health follow-up,<sup>373</sup> have eroded the conditions necessary for a healthy next generation.

296. The Commission assesses that these harms to newborn were foreseeable and were repeatedly raised as warnings. Over the last two years, the Commission itself,<sup>374</sup> UN entities and humanitarian organizations<sup>375</sup> have consistently cautioned that cutting off food, medical supplies fuel and access to functioning hospitals would collapse maternal and newborn health services and increase mortality among newborns and their mothers. Against this background, rates of miscarriage, stillbirth, low-birthweight infants and congenital defects have increased, exactly as predicted.

297. The Commission finds on reasonable grounds that Israel's imposed conditions, including destruction of the healthcare system, blockade, imposition of total siege and the dismantling of conditions necessary for safe pregnancy and healthy newborn survival resulted directly in severe harm to the health of fetuses and newborns. Infants are born in Gaza into settings without functioning incubators, oxygen supplies, neonatal intensive care or adequate nutrition for their mothers, resulting in foetal and newborn deaths and congenital defects. These must be understood not as isolated medical events but as the foreseeable cumulative consequences of Israel's actions. These acts also undermine key newborn outcomes, including the ability to establish breastfeeding, maintain body temperature (leading to hypothermia), avoid severe infections and access basic treatments and medicine, leading to a sharp rise in preventable neonatal morbidity and mortality.

298. The policies and conduct of Israel in Gaza since October 2023 constitute a pattern of actions that, in their combined and foreseeable effects, give rise to multiple violations of international humanitarian law<sup>376</sup> and international human rights law (see below), including a violation of Israel's obligation to respect and protect the wounded and sick, including pregnant women and newborns, failure to permit and facilitate the passage of essential supplies to pregnant women and children, violation of the prohibition on starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, violation of the rules of distinction and proportionality in relation to paediatric and neonatal facilities and violation of the obligation to ensure humane treatment and basic standards of living for protected persons.

299. Under international human rights law, Israel has violated the right to life, survival and development of the child<sup>377</sup>; the right to the highest attainable standard of health,<sup>378</sup> the prohibition of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment,<sup>379</sup> the prohibition of discrimination and the obligation of special protection of children (and women).<sup>380</sup> The Commission finds that the the Israeli security forces caused serious bodily and mental harm to Palestinian newborns and children in Gaza, and concludes that such conduct amounts to the crime against

<sup>373</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6.

<sup>374</sup> A/HRC/56/26, A/HRC/56/CRP.4, A/79/232, A/HRC/58/CRP.6, A/HRC/60/CRP.3.

<sup>375</sup> <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/news/2025/07/108795/catastrophic-birth-outcomes-gaza-threaten-whole-generation-warns-un>; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unfpa-situation-report-on-the-crisis-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-may-june-2025/#:~:text=Maternal%20and%20newborn%20care%20is,births%20were%20reported%20in%20Gaza>; <https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/news/unfpa-warns-catastrophic-birth-outcomes-gaza-amid-starvation-psychological-trauma-and>; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ohchr-press-release-11dec25/>; <https://www.unfpa.org/news/famine-looms-gaza-pregnant-women-and-newborns-face-life-threatening-health-risks>; <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Palestine%20SitRep%2016%20%28Final%29.pdf>; <https://www.unfpa.org/press/women-gaza-cut-accessing-maternal-health-supplies-aid-blockade-enters-fourth-week>; <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/press-briefing/2025/03/un-geneva-press-briefing-6>.

<sup>376</sup> GCIV, Arts. 16, 23, 89 – 91; AP I, Arts. 51(4), 57; AP-I, Arts. 54(1)–(2); 55.

<sup>377</sup> CRC, Art. 6; ICCPR, Art. 6.

<sup>378</sup> CRC, Art. 24; ICESCR, Art 12; CEDAW, Art. 12.

<sup>379</sup> CRC, Art. 37; ICCPR, Art 7.

<sup>380</sup> CRC Arts. 2, 24; ICCPR, Art. 2.

humanity of other inhumane acts causing great suffering and serious injury to body and health, and the war crimes of intentionally directing attacks against hospitals and other civilian objects, and wilfully causing great suffering and serious injury to body and health. Notably, the Commission has found in previous reports that the Israeli authorities and security forces have committed the war crime of intentionally using starvation as a method of warfare by depriving the civilian population of the Gaza Strip of objects indispensable to their survival, including by cutting off access to medical care and wilfully impeding relief supplies.<sup>381</sup>

## **I. Conditions of life affecting children in Gaza due to measures imposed by Israel**

300. In a previous report,<sup>382</sup> the Commission found that the Israeli authorities have committed the war crime of intentionally using starvation as a method of warfare by depriving the civilian population of the Gaza Strip of objects indispensable to their survival, including food, water, fuel, shelter and medical care and by wilfully impeding the delivery of humanitarian relief.

301. These conditions have had particularly severe and multifaceted impacts on children.<sup>383</sup> Prolonged restrictions on food, clean water and basic health services have driven acute malnutrition among children and increased child mortality and contributed to stunting and long-term developmental harm. These effects are visible in children's physical deterioration, including skin lesions and rashes, hair loss or discoloration and poor oral health. The deliberate destruction of the health system has sharply reduced the availability and quality of paediatric and primary care, leaving common childhood illnesses untreated and increasing the risk of illness and of preventable deaths.

302. The collapse of routine public health functions has also undermined disease prevention, including immunization programmes.<sup>384</sup> Interruptions to vaccination campaigns have led to large cohorts of unvaccinated or under-vaccinated children. In this context, the re-emergence and transmission of vaccine-preventable diseases such as polio after 25 years is a foreseeable consequence, posing risks of paralysis and lifelong disability, reflecting both the breakdown of basic health infrastructure and the broader conditions of total siege and displacement. Such outbreaks posed a particular risk of lifelong disability among children, including irreversible paralysis, compounding the already grave impact of malnutrition and inadequate medical care.

303. In parallel, severe constraints on medical evacuations from Gaza have prevented many critically ill or injured children from accessing specialised care not available in Gaza. Thousands of children who were unable to receive treatment in Gaza and required complex surgery, intensive care or rehabilitation have been denied Israeli approval to leave Gaza, even though local facilities were non-functional, resulting in avoidable deaths and permanent impairments. The combination of reduced in-territory capacity and blocked evacuation channels has contributed to elevated child mortality and morbidity.<sup>385</sup>

304. The Commission considers that Israeli policies, including the total siege, denial of essential healthcare, food and water, and obstruction of life saving medical evacuation, amount to the war crime of intentionally using starvation of civilians, including children, as a method of warfare (for further analysis, see Section (L)). Violations of international humanitarian law).<sup>386</sup> The Commission concludes that the conduct of Israeli authorities also constitutes the genocidal act of deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life

<sup>381</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, paras. 451, 464.

<sup>382</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 140; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, paras. 451, 464.

<sup>383</sup> See Children CRP, Section J. Impact of displacement and siege on children's conditions of life in Gaza, Paras. 211-237.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>386</sup> AP I, Art 54; Rome Statute, Arts. 8(2)(b)(xxv).

calculated to bring about physical destruction of the Palestinian group in Gaza, in whole or in part.<sup>387</sup>

## J. Destruction of children's belongings

305. The Commission has documented widespread patterns and multiple instances of Israeli soldiers destroying Palestinian children's toys, such as dolls and stuffed animals, trophies and sports and playground equipment, deliberately filmed and posted by Israeli soldiers for public dissemination and seemingly for public amusement since the Israeli ground invasion of Gaza.<sup>388</sup>

306. The Commission finds that these acts are direct interference with the rights of children protected under international human rights law. Children are entitled to special protection. The CRC requires that the best interests of the child be a primary consideration in relation to all actions concerning and affecting children.<sup>389</sup> The Commission notes that the taking of children's toys and the destruction of children's equipment within an armed conflict should not be trivialised merely because the items do not, in general, hold high monetary value. For children, such objects are essential to their daily lives and may provide some form of security and emotional and mental stability and may ultimately affect their development, wellbeing and recovery from trauma. In addition, the CRC recognises that children have the right to rest, leisure and play.<sup>390</sup> Toys are the essential instruments for the enjoyment of this right. The Commission finds that the conduct of the Israeli soldiers has violated Palestinian children's right to adequate standard of living and development,<sup>391</sup> their right to rest, leisure and play<sup>392</sup> and their right to psychological recovery and social integration.<sup>393</sup>

307. The widespread repeated nature of these acts, across different geographical areas of the Gaza Strip and across the whole period of the hostilities and conducted by different units of the Israeli security forces with no disciplinary consequences against the Israeli soldiers, reflects a climate of total impunity for the misconduct of Israeli soldiers and an attempt to shame and erode Palestinians' psychosocial stability, cultural continuity and intergenerational resilience.

## K. Violations committed by Israeli soldiers and settlers in the West Bank and Israel

308. The Commission has identified a pattern of targeting of Palestinian children in the West Bank, mirroring Israeli practices in Gaza including deliberate shooting of children, particularly of boys. Israeli soldiers target boys, labelled as "terrorists", on the basis of their male and Palestinian identity, with lethal force.

309. On 16 November 2025 a 14-year-old boy was killed by the Israeli security forces in Tubas.<sup>394</sup> The Commission found on reasonable grounds that Israeli soldiers: (i) knew the victim was a child and yet shot him while he was with two other boys, one of whom was also injured; (ii) left him to bleed for about 45 minutes, while soldiers stood around him talking; (iii) cordoned and filmed the injured boy while preventing medical assistance from reaching him; (iv) sought to falsely incriminate the boy in stone throwing when one soldier placed a stone near him; and (v) confiscated and withheld his body, denying his family access, closure or dignified burial rights. The Israeli security forces reportedly sought to defend their conduct, but the Commission found that the Israeli security forces' defence was demonstrably false and inconsistent with the evidence and made to conceal wrongdoing and shift

<sup>387</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 93 *et seq.*; A/HRC/58/CRP.6 paras. 175-176 and 178. See also, A/79/232.

<sup>388</sup> See Children CRP, Section VI. Dehumanization of Palestinian childhood, Paras. 255-263

<sup>389</sup> CRC, art 3.

<sup>390</sup> CRC, art 31.

<sup>391</sup> CRC, art. 27.

<sup>392</sup> CRC, art. 31.

<sup>393</sup> CRC, art. 39.

<sup>394</sup> See Children CRP, Section C. Killing and maiming of children by the Israeli security forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Paras. 94-95.

responsibility onto the boy. This incident reflects a broader, recurrent pattern in which Israeli security forces lie to shift responsibility to Palestinian children until contradictory evidence arises and, even then, avoid systemic accountability by attributing incidents to individual error, as found previously by the Commission in relation to Gaza.<sup>395</sup>

310. The Israeli security forces' intent to target children is also evident in the shooting and killing of a 10-year-old boy at the front of his house in the West Bank on 28 January 2025.<sup>396</sup> The Commission found that (i) Israeli soldiers knew the victim was a child; (ii) the soldiers delayed an ambulance for 30 minutes from reaching the victim; and (iii) one soldier confessed to the shooting, telling the father he hoped the boy would die. The soldier's statement represents a clear admission of intent and, in this context, can be seen as an indicator of a broader culture of systemic impunity where such conduct is not only tolerated but normalized, especially when such incidents are not followed by meaningful investigations, disciplinary action or prosecution.

311. Palestinian girls in the West Bank also face lethal violence, even inside their homes, resulting in death and injury. For example, in an incident on 25 September 2024 in Anza (see para.89), Israeli soldiers fired for about 15 minutes intermittently, allegedly responding to terrorist fire. The shooting led to the severe injuring of two girls and one woman and killing another woman. The Commission found that the women's gathering was clearly visible from the soldiers' shooting position, a courtyard approximately 120 meters away, and that the women and girls posed no imminent threat. The Commission further found that even if claims by the Israeli security forces were true, evidence suggests that the Israeli security forces would have reasonably foreseen that the women and girls were within the line of fire and the lethal outcomes given the weapons used and firing duration. The Commission finds that the Israeli forces have unlawfully used excessive and unnecessary lethal force in this incident. This incident demonstrates that no domestic space affords Palestinian girls' safety from Israeli soldiers.

312. In the cases it investigated, the Commission finds that the Israeli security forces intentionally targeted Palestinian children in the West Bank, evidenced by (i) use of disproportionately heavy weaponry and tactics, (ii) prevention and/or delay of medical assistance and (iii) wound patterns. This standard operating procedure is starkly demonstrated by killings of children "messing with the ground",<sup>397</sup> a permissive policy endorsing lethal violence. The Israeli security forces kill children with total impunity, and the State of Israel acquiesces to systemic unlawful conduct, not merely isolated misconduct, against Palestinian children. The Commission concludes that the cases it investigated show a consistent pattern of conduct of the Israeli security forces which amounts to the war crime of wilfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health, and, where such conduct led to the deaths of children, it amounts to the war crime of wilful killing.

313. The Israeli security forces has detained hundreds of Palestinian children from the West Bank in deplorable conditions, with prolonged solitary confinement, inadequate food, safe water and medical care, unsanitary cells, inappropriate mixing with adult males and sexual violence, inflicting severe physical and psychological harm and in at least one case, resulting in death.<sup>398</sup> A 17-year-old boy from Ramallah died in Megiddo Prison on 22 March 2025<sup>399</sup> due to Israeli authorities' deliberate denial of food, medical care and necessities over a period of six months, reasonably foreseeable to be detrimental to his health, leading to death. The Commission finds that Israeli prison officials caused this preventable death, since they were aware of his dire, deteriorating condition during the prolonged detention and intentionally failed to intervene. This intentional deprivation violates fundamental protections for children,

<sup>395</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 44.

<sup>396</sup> See Children CRP, Section C. Killing and maiming of children by the Israeli security forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Para. 92.

<sup>397</sup> See Children CRP, Section C. Killing and maiming of children by the Israeli security forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Paras. 90, 92, 93.

<sup>398</sup> See Children CRP, Section E. Mistreatment of children during arrest and in detention, Paras. 103-121.

<sup>399</sup> See Children CRP, Section E. Mistreatment of children during arrest and in detention, Paras. 114-116.

in particular for children in detention, under international law<sup>400</sup> and amounts to the war crimes of torture, inhuman treatment and wilful killing.<sup>401</sup>

314. Israeli settler violence against Palestinian civilians, including children, has surged in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since October 2023.<sup>402</sup> Children are harmed by settler violence both as a result of attacks on the Palestinian people and in ways that target them as children. In one example, on 13 April 2024 settlers attacked the town of Beitin in the West Bank, shooting and killing a 17-year-old boy. Israeli soldiers escorted the settlers instead of protecting Palestinian children by preventing the assault. The Commission found that the Israeli security forces' deliberate inaction in this case contributed to the boy's death. Palestinian children are subjected to settler violence when they are engaged in quintessentially childhood activities, such as playing outside their homes, walking or going to and from school, or tending to flocks and fields. In one example, in April 2024, settlers assaulted and abducted a girl and her brother under five years while they were playing outside their house and tied them to a tree.<sup>403</sup> The cases investigated by the Commission where settler violence led to the death or harming of Palestinian children show that the Israeli authorities have failed to implement measures to prevent Israeli settlers from inflicting harm against Palestinian children or to pursue accountability, encouraging a culture of impunity and leniency in relation to settler violence against children. The deliberate or knowing exposure of children to such risks compounds the immediate physical harm with long term psychological impacts, disrupting their education, their freedom of movement and their basic sense of security.

315. Settler violence has also ruthlessly targeted Palestinian properties and education, with schools being forced to close in at least two documented cases,<sup>404</sup> directly depriving children of their right to learn as part of an attempt to force Palestinians from their land. Settlers enjoy near-total impunity, with scant, if any, accountability, entrenching deliberate violence against Palestinian cultural and intellectual resilience.<sup>405</sup> Demolition and closure orders on schools issued by Israeli authorities<sup>406</sup> have compounded the impact on the education system in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

316. The Commission finds that the State of Israel bears legal responsibility for failing to protect Palestinian children from settler violence in the West Bank. It acquiesces in, permits and fosters a sustained campaign of settler violence against Palestinians, including children, in violation of its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law to accord children special protection.<sup>407</sup> Despite periodic token government statements condemning settler violence and the occasional dismantling of one or two unauthorized outposts, Israeli authorities have taken no meaningful or sustained measures to curb settler attacks. The Commission concludes, on the basis of all examined evidence, that settler violence functions not as a deviation from state policy but as a means of implementing it. Both the State of Israel and violent settler groups share and collaborate in the same strategic objectives: the entrenchment of Israeli settlement on Palestinian land, annexation of Palestinian territory and the displacement of Palestinian people from their land.

317. The Israeli government's actions and omissions in relation to settler violence violate international humanitarian law and may amount to war crimes. The Israeli government's continued acquiescence in and support for settler violence demonstrate that the Israeli

<sup>400</sup> Rome Statute, Arts. 8(2)(a)(ii), 8(2)(a)(iii); GCIV, Arts. 76, 85–94, 50, 82, 33(1); CRC, Arts. 37(b), 37(a), 24, 12, 9, 20, 3(1), 2; ICCPR, Article 7.

<sup>401</sup> Rome Statute, Arts. 8(2)(a)(i), 8(2)(a)(ii), 8(2)(a)(iii); GCIV Art. 147.

<sup>402</sup> See Children CRP, Section D. Killing and other forms of violence against children by Israeli settlers and other civilians, Paras. 97-102.

<sup>403</sup> See Children CRP, Section D. Killing and other forms of violence against children by Israeli settlers and other civilians, Para. 100.

<sup>404</sup> See Children CRP, Section H. Attacks on and military occupation of educational facilities and its impact on children, Paras. 196-197.

<sup>405</sup> See Children CRP, Section H. Attacks on and military occupation of educational facilities and its impact on children, specifically on West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Paras. 196, 197 and 201.

<sup>406</sup> See Children CRP, Section H. Attacks on and military occupation of educational facilities and its impact on children, Paras. 195-201.

<sup>407</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 239.

authorities have no intention to implement the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 2024.<sup>408</sup>

318. Israel unlawfully applies the conduct of hostilities paradigm to law enforcement operations in the West Bank in violation of its obligation under international human rights law to adhere strictly to the law enforcement framework, as previously reported by the Commission.<sup>409</sup> This has immense immediate practical meaning for Palestinian children, who are less protected, underscored by the disregarding of foundational distinctions critical to protecting children's lives and rights.

319. The Commission therefore concludes that Israel, as a State Party to the ICCPR, CRC and CAT, violated the following Palestinian children's rights in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, while failing to protect Palestinian children: (i) right to life<sup>410</sup>; (ii) prohibition against torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment<sup>411</sup>; (iii) liberty and security<sup>412</sup>; (iv) right to privacy, family and home<sup>413</sup>; (v) right to security and development; (vi) right to education<sup>414</sup>; (vii) right to play and recreation.<sup>415</sup> Israel further breached international human rights law by neglecting to prevent foreseeable settler harm to children, to prosecute perpetrators and to provide remedies for victims.

320. Israel has further violated international human rights law by systematically confiscating and withholding the bodies of killed Palestinian children, which also amounts to a violation of customary international law which obligates each party to the conflict to evacuate the dead without delay and adverse distinction.<sup>416</sup> This cruel practice also contravenes UDHR, profoundly dehumanizing the murdered children and devastating their families.<sup>417</sup>

## L. Violations of international humanitarian law

321. Under international humanitarian law, Israel as the belligerent occupying power is obligated to ensure the protection of civilians in Gaza and the West Bank. Such obligation is particularly significant in relation to children.<sup>418</sup> Under customary international law, children affected by armed conflict are entitled to special respect and protection.<sup>419</sup> In particular, such special respect and protection shall include (i) protection against all forms of sexual violence; (ii) separation from adults while deprived of liberty, unless they belong to the same family; (iii) access to education, food, shelter and healthcare and other humanitarian assistance; (iv) evacuation from areas of combat for safety reasons, including assistance in evacuating and in settlement while evacuated; (v) prohibition of torture, abuse or neglect; and (vi) reunification of unaccompanied children with their families.<sup>420</sup>

322. The Commission finds on reasonable grounds that, since 7 October 2023, the Israeli authorities and their security forces have violated fundamental protections granted to children under international law.

323. First, the Commission finds that the killing and maiming of children through air strikes and direct targeting indicate a clear pattern where the Israeli authorities and their security forces violate basic principles of international humanitarian law, namely the principles of distinction, proportionality, necessity and precaution, all of which are applicable to Palestinian children in Gaza (see further Section. VII (A). 'Extermination and wilful killing').

<sup>408</sup> ICJ, *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Including East Jerusalem*, Advisory Opinion, 19 July 2024, paras. 267-272.

<sup>409</sup> A/78/198, para. 69.

<sup>410</sup> ICCPR, art. 6; CRC, Art. 6.

<sup>411</sup> CRC, art. 37(a); ICCPR, art. 7; CAT, art. 2.

<sup>412</sup> CRC, art. 37(b)-(d); ICCPR, art. 9(1).

<sup>413</sup> ICCPR, art. 17.

<sup>414</sup> CRC, art. 28; ICESCR, art. 13.

<sup>415</sup> CRC, art. 31.

<sup>416</sup> ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules, Rules 112 and 114.

<sup>417</sup> UDHR, Arts. 3 and 5. See also Arts. 12 and 16(3).

<sup>418</sup> For example, GCIV, arts. 24, 50, 82, 89, 94.

<sup>419</sup> ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules, Rule 135.

<sup>420</sup> ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules, Rule 135.

324. Second, the Commission finds that the Israeli authorities and their security forces have systematically and deliberately mistreated Palestinian children during arrest and in detention (see further Section. IV (E). ‘Mistreatment of children during arrest and in detention’). The Commission finds that Israel, through the conduct of its authorities and security forces, has violated customary international law which obligates it, as the occupying power, to ensure the protection of children from torture, abuse or neglect (see further Section. VII (C). ‘Torture and other inhumane acts’). The Commission highlights the conditions of detention to which Palestinian children have been and are being subjected, including the refusal of medical care and lack of appropriate shelter and essentials, and finds that such conduct is abusive – both physically and mentally – against Palestinian children, which is a violation of international humanitarian law.<sup>421</sup> Furthermore, international humanitarian law provides that children who are deprived of their liberty must be held in quarters separate from those of adults, except where they are families.<sup>422</sup> The Commission finds that the Israeli authorities have violated such protection granted to children; on the contrary, Palestinian children endured excruciating conditions during detention which, in one case, led to death.

325. Third, the Commission finds that Israel has failed to protect Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory from all forms of sexual violence. Not only did Israel as the occupying power fail to take all legislative, administrative and preventive measures to ensure such protection afforded to children; on the contrary, through its security forces, Israel has subjected children to sexual and gender-based violence during their detention (see further Section. VII (D). ‘Sexual and gender-based violence against children’).

326. Fourth, as the occupying power, Israel has failed to facilitate the proper working of all institutions necessary for the care and education of children and to prevent the destruction of the much-needed facilities for the care of children and it has itself destroyed them.<sup>423</sup> It has specifically ensured that these facilities were destroyed during its military campaign in Gaza, in direct violation of customary international law which requires the occupying power to facilitate the proper working of institutions dedicated to the care and education of children and prohibit any interference of such special protection for children (see further sections VII (E). ‘Violations related to attacks on facilities caring for children (orphanages)’, (F). ‘Violations related to attacks on educational facilities’ and (G). ‘Violations related to attacks on healthcare facilities’).

327. Fifth, the conditions of life imposed by Israel in Gaza are in direct violation of its obligation to ensure special protection of children under international humanitarian law. In relation to the displacement of children, the Commission finds that the conduct of the Israeli authorities and their security forces amounts to forcible transfer, which is a violation of customary international law.<sup>424</sup> While displacement of the civilian population may be allowed for the security of the civilians or if imperative military reasons so demand, all possible measures must be taken to ensure that the civilians concerned are provided with support in evacuation and satisfactory conditions of shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition, that members of the same family are not separated and that displaced persons have a right to return to their homes as soon as the reasons for their displacement cease to exist.<sup>425</sup> The Commission finds that these conditions were not met; therefore, the displacement of Palestinian children in Gaza is unlawful (see further Section. VII (I). ‘Conditions of life affecting children in Gaza due to measures imposed by Israel’). Furthermore, the Commission also finds that Israel, as the occupying power, is responsible to ensure that children receive the necessary nutrition and humanitarian aid for their well-being during the conflict. However, as detailed above (see further Section. IV (J). ‘Impact of displacement and siege on children’s conditions of life in Gaza’), Israeli authorities and their security forces have intentionally imposed a total or partial siege on Gaza and used starvation as a method of warfare, neglecting its obligations under international humanitarian law to provide, especially for children, access to food, healthcare and other humanitarian assistance.

328. Based on the abovementioned reasons, the Commission finds that, as a belligerent occupying power in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israel has violated its obligations

<sup>421</sup> ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules, Rule 118.

<sup>422</sup> ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules, Rule 120.

<sup>423</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para. 435.

<sup>424</sup> ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules, Rule 129.

<sup>425</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para. 436.

under international humanitarian law to ensure special respect and protection for children since 7 October 2023.

## M. Summary of International Criminal Law findings

329. The conduct of the Israeli authorities, Israeli security forces and Israeli settlers detailed in this report does not constitute mere incidental harm or collateral damage done to Palestinian children. On the contrary, Israeli security forces and Israeli settlers have directly and intentionally targeted Palestinian children in many instances, killing tens of thousands and leaving tens of thousands of others with irreversible harm, including long-term physical and mental harm.

330. Israel continues to blatantly disregard the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of 19 July 2024 in respect of the *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, and, importantly, the orders for provisional measures issued on 26 January, 28 March 2024 and 24 May 2024<sup>426</sup> in the case of the *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, which are binding on Israel.

331. Based on the evidence reviewed, and consistent with its previous reports, the Commission finds on reasonable grounds that the Israeli authorities and the Israeli security forces have continued to commit the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in the Gaza Strip and war crimes in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

### 1. War Crimes

332. The Commission finds that Israeli security forces have committed the following war crimes against and affecting Palestinian children, consistent with its findings in previous reports: wilful killing<sup>427</sup>; torture and inhuman and degrading treatment causing severe physical and psychological harm<sup>428</sup>; wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health through deliberate deprivation and violence<sup>429</sup>; intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population and individuals not taking direct part in hostilities, including children<sup>430</sup>; destruction of property<sup>431</sup>; and outrages upon personal dignity<sup>432</sup>, particularly through systematic humiliating and degrading conduct designed to dehumanise and subjugate the Palestinian population, including children.

## II. Crimes against Humanity

333. In previous reports,<sup>433</sup> the Commission has found that the chapeau elements for crimes against humanity have been fulfilled in Gaza, namely that attacks by the Israeli security forces since 7 October 2023 have (i) involved “multiple commission of acts”; (ii) directed against any civilian population; (iii) that are widespread or systematic; and (iv) that were committed as part of the attack.

334. The Commission found consistent evidence that indicates a clear pattern of the Israeli security forces intentionally targeting Palestinian children in Gaza.<sup>434</sup> The Commission therefore concludes that killings and maiming of children that it investigated constitute

<sup>426</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, paras. 192-194.

<sup>427</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, paras. 420, 428-429; A/79/232, paras. 89, 91, 95, 102; A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 214; A/HRC/59/26, paras. 79, 90.

<sup>428</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para. 441; A/79/232, paras. 89, 102, 108-109; A/HRC/58/CRP.6, paras. 174, 190, 193, 195.

<sup>429</sup> A/79/232, para. 108; A/HRC/58/CRP.6, paras. 174, 190.

<sup>430</sup> Rome Statute Arts. 8(2)(b)(i) and 8(2)(e)(i); GCIV Art. 3; AP I, Art. 77. See also A/HRC/56/CRP.4, paras. 427; 429; A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 168; A/HRC/59/26, paras. 79, 90.

<sup>431</sup> Rome Statute, Art. 8(2)(a)(iv).

<sup>432</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, paras. 441, 444-445; A/79/232, para. 109; A/HRC/58/CRP.6, paras. 174, 193, 195-197.

<sup>433</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 163; A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para. 458.

<sup>434</sup> See Children CRP, Section IV. Physical harm against Palestinian children by Israel, Paras. 38, 48 – 86.

crimes against humanity amounting to extermination,<sup>435</sup> murder<sup>436</sup> and other inhumane acts.<sup>437</sup> These acts also amount to grave violations against children in armed conflict,<sup>438</sup> for which the State of Israel bears responsibility.

335. The Commission investigated and documented severe mistreatment of Palestinian children in detention in harsh conditions.<sup>439</sup> Their injuries indicate causing intentional severe bodily harm, designed to inflict long-term physical and mental damage. The Commission concludes that this constitutes crimes against humanity amounting to torture<sup>440</sup> and other inhuman acts<sup>441</sup> and, as punishment for the 7 October 2023 attacks in southern Israel, amounts to prohibited collective punishment under customary international law.<sup>442</sup>

336. The Commission finds that the Israeli security forces perpetrated age-based persecution against Palestinian children, particularly against boys, intersecting with gender, nationality, ethnicity, culture and religion under Rome Statute Article 7 (see paras. 273-274). This is evidenced by deliberate targeting through (i) precision shootings knowingly aimed at children; and (ii) arrests, detention and mistreatment of boys falsely and presumptively labelled as ‘terrorists’ or ‘fighters’ despite age-verifying identity cards.<sup>443</sup> These acts have been part of a widespread, systematic attack constituting the crime against humanity of persecution. In relation to the direct targeting of children where Israeli security forces shot and killed or harmed Palestinian children, such conduct is also part of a strategy or plan to destroy the biological continuity of the Palestinians in Gaza (see further sub-section. III. Genocide).

337. The Commission finds that arrested Palestinian children endured incommunicado detention without access to lawyers or family. Israeli authorities consistently withheld information on their whereabouts and conditions or denied custody altogether. These acts constitute the crime against humanity of enforced disappearance. These acts also amount to abduction as a grave violation against children in armed conflict,<sup>444</sup> for which Israel bears responsibility. Importantly, the Commission highlights that the transfer of detainees outside of the territory is prohibited and amounts to deportation, which is a crime against humanity and a war crime.<sup>445</sup>

### III. Genocide

338. In a previous report,<sup>446</sup> the Commission has found that the Israeli authorities and Israeli security forces have committed and are continuing to commit four categories of underlying acts of genocide in the Gaza Strip with the specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, the Palestinian group, as such. Three of those four categories are especially relevant to children, namely (i) killing members of the group; (ii) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; and (iii) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.<sup>447</sup>

<sup>435</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, paras. 460-468; A/HRC/56/26, para. 84; A/79/232, paras. 89, 94; A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 166; A/HRC/59/26, paras. 79, 92.

<sup>436</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para. 458.

<sup>437</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para. 459; A/HRC/56/26, para. 84; A/79/232, paras. 98, 109; A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 174.

<sup>438</sup> <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/killing-and-maiming/>.

<sup>439</sup> See Children CRP, Section E. Mistreatment of children during arrest and in detention, Paras. 103-121

<sup>440</sup> A/HRC/56/26, para. 84; A/79/232, paras. 102, 105, 109.

<sup>441</sup> A/HRC/56/26, para. 84; A/79/232, paras. 98, 109; A/HRC/58/CRP.6, para. 174.

<sup>442</sup> ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules, rule 103.

<sup>443</sup> See Children CRP, Section E. Mistreatment of children during arrest and in detention, Paras. 104, 107-110.

<sup>444</sup> <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/six-grave-violations/abduction-of-children/>; [https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/sites/default/files/2022/05/22-00040\\_Abduction-Guidance-for-CAAC\\_FINAL\\_WEB-1.pdf](https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/sites/default/files/2022/05/22-00040_Abduction-Guidance-for-CAAC_FINAL_WEB-1.pdf).

<sup>445</sup> Rome Statute, Arts. 7(1)(d), 8(2)(a)(vii) and 8(2)(b)(viii).

<sup>446</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3.

<sup>447</sup> Additionally, the Commission has found that the Israeli authorities and Israeli security forces have committed the fourth category of underlying act of genocide (‘Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group’) with the specific intent to destroy, in part, the Palestinian group, as such, in the Gaza Strip (A/HRC/60/CRP.3). This finding does not apply to children.

*Killing of and causing serious bodily and mental harm to Palestinians in Gaza, including children*

339. Palestinian children in Gaza have been directly targeted in various ways by the Israeli security forces since 7 October 2023, including during evacuations, at shelters, and at Gaza Humanitarian Foundation distribution sites (as detailed above and in a previous report<sup>448</sup>)<sup>449</sup>

340. The Commission has found a clear pattern of conduct since 7 October 2023 showing the Israeli security forces directly targeted Palestinian children in different circumstances with the intention to kill them. In all the cases investigated and documented by the Commission where children were directly targeted, none of the children posed any threat to the Israeli security forces.<sup>450</sup> Medical professionals treated many children with direct gunshot wounds to their head and upper body, indicating the children were shot by snipers or drones or quadcopters.<sup>451</sup> Medical professionals were also informed by parents that the children were alone when they were shot or that the adults who were with the children were completely unharmed.<sup>452</sup>

341. In relation to serious bodily and mental harm, the Commission finds that Palestinian children who were physically and mentally harmed by the Israeli security forces' military operations will continue to suffer from long-term harm of such a serious nature that may impede – and has actually impeded – their ability to lead a constructive life, and that that result was reasonably foreseeable.<sup>453</sup> Importantly, such impacts have materialised, as detailed above; yet, children were continuously targeted by the Israeli security forces.<sup>454</sup>

342. The Commission finds that Israeli security forces have inflicted severe, irreversible bodily harm on Palestinian children, including causing severe physical and psychological injury, traumatising children and creating a generation of orphaned, separated and unaccompanied children as well as children with permanent disabilities, through targeted violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, and systemic deprivation. Tens of thousands of children have sustained injuries from bombings, intentional shooting, collapsing buildings, lack of medical care and denial of access to adequate nutritious food and safe water, causing polytrauma, amputations, burns and long-lasting disabilities requiring multiple surgeries. The destruction of hospitals, scarcity of medicine and medical supplies and siege-induced starvation have made recovery incredibly difficult and continue to prevent recovery.<sup>455</sup> Malnutrition and diseases have further weakened their bodies and immune systems, making even minor illnesses potentially life-threatening. These physical harms are compounded by children's daily struggle for survival in unsafe and overcrowded conditions.

343. The Commission has previously established that the Israeli security forces inflicted sexual violence with the intent to destroy the Palestinian group in Gaza, in whole or in part.<sup>456</sup> The Commission finds that sexual violence committed against Palestinian children constitutes part of the genocidal act of causing serious bodily and mental harm. Such deliberate violence was intended not only to cause immediate and long-term harm to the individual children but to target and destroy the Palestinian group in Gaza, because children embody the group's biological continuity and collective survival.

344. In its previous report, the Commission has found that Palestinians who were physically and mentally harmed by the Israeli security forces' military operations will continue to suffer from long-term harm of such a serious nature that they will no longer be able to lead a normal and constructive life.<sup>457</sup> The Commission finds that the impact of such

<sup>448</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, paras. 20-44, 53-71. See Children CRP, Section. IV (A). Child casualties due to Israel's use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

<sup>449</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 215.

<sup>450</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 218. See Children CRP, Section. IV. (B). Deliberate targeting of children by the Israeli security forces in the Gaza Strip.

<sup>451</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 216.

<sup>452</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 216.

<sup>453</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 78.

<sup>454</sup> See Children CRP, Section (IV). Physical harm against Palestinian children by Israel, and Section (V). Mental harm against Palestinian children by Israel.

<sup>455</sup> See Children CRP Section VII (M)(III)(ii). Deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction of Palestinians in Gaza, including children.

<sup>456</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, paras. 209-213.

<sup>457</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 78.

harm on children is profoundly graver. The mental harm on children is as devastating, widespread and irreversible as the physical injury they endured. Continuous exposure to explosions, loss of family members, denial of health care and schooling, and uncertainty about safety have inflicted deep emotional wounds. Many experience nightmares, anxiety, depression and signs of traumatic stress from witnessing and enduring violence. Compounded by absence of stable schooling, safe spaces or consistent psychological support, children in Gaza are growing up in an environment where fear and grief have become part of everyday life. This continuing trauma, even after the October 2025 ceasefire agreement, has not only affected children's current well-being but threatens to shape the mental and emotional development of many future generations.

345. The Commission has found in a previous report that (i) the extensive and deliberate targeting of Palestinians, including children, showed that the military operations were not conducted solely to defeat Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups as Israeli officials claimed, nor can they legitimately contribute to the other stated goals of defending the state of Israel and securing the release of Israeli hostages; and (ii) the direct and intentional targeting of Palestinian children was intended to physically destroy the larger Palestinian group in Gaza.<sup>458</sup>

346. The targeting of Palestinian children is central to establishing genocidal intent of the Israeli authorities and security forces to destroy the larger Palestinian group in Gaza. The Commission notes that the 'intent to destroy' does not mean that such destruction needs to have occurred; however, specific intent may be established based on the totality of the evidence, through the pattern of conduct of the Israeli authorities and the Israeli security forces, including when the targeting of children continued despite clear warnings and, importantly, even when the foreseeable impacts of such targeting have been actualised. Children are not just part of a population; their survival is central to the existence and continuity of the Palestinian group. The sheer number of cases investigated and documented by the Commission showing a clear pattern that children were directly targeted by the Israeli security forces constitutes a key element in the Israeli authorities' genocidal intent to destroy the Palestinian group in Gaza.<sup>459</sup>

347. The Commission finds that the killing of and serious bodily and mental harm inflicted upon Palestinian children was part of a strategy to destroy the biological continuity and future existence of the Palestinian group in Gaza. The Commission therefore reiterates its conclusion that the Israeli authorities and the Israeli security forces have committed the crime of genocide in Gaza by killing and causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, including Palestinian children, therein.

*Deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction of Palestinians in Gaza, including children*

348. The conditions of life imposed by Israel on the Palestinian group in Gaza, including children, constitute a deliberate and systematic infliction of harm calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Palestinians in Gaza as a group. The sustained blockade, recurrent bombardments and deliberate obstruction of humanitarian access have deprived the population of essential means of survival, including adequate food, clean water, fuel, medical care and safe shelter, with especially severe impacts on children. Civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, sanitation systems and educational facilities, has been repeatedly and intentionally targeted and destroyed. Schools have been struck during periods of active use as shelters and learning spaces. The systematic attacks on educational institutions have not only deprived children of their right to education but have also directly caused death and injury, rendering these facilities places of danger rather than safety.

349. In Gaza, births rates have decreased amid increasing neonatal risks, including newborn deaths, surge in premature and underweight infants, and congenital defects in newborns requiring intensive care.<sup>460</sup> Different organizations, including this Commission,<sup>461</sup> have highlighted evidence of the effects of the violence in Gaza and the

<sup>458</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 218.

<sup>459</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, Section IV(B)(ii), in particular paras. 214-219.

<sup>460</sup> See Section VII. Analysis and legal findings, sub-section H. Reproductive violence and its direct impact on newborn health outcomes, Paras. 294-299.

<sup>461</sup> A/HRC/58/CRP.6.

siege on newborns and children under two years. Israel had sufficient actual and constructive notice of these effects and yet Israel has continued to impose and maintain measures in Gaza that have resulted in causing adverse pregnancy and birthing outcomes. The harm caused by Israel is thus both intended as an accepted consequence and a clearly foreseeable result of the sustained measures imposed by Israel in Gaza, including deprivation and health system collapse resulting from Israel's blockade, total siege, and bombardment. Therefore, Israel has imposed and maintained measures on Gaza which have systematically restricted and diminished the survival capacities and health of Palestinian newborns, who have been rendered especially vulnerable by the cumulative effects of Israel's systemic violence and siege.

350. The Commission also found that, in relation to the total siege imposed on Gaza, the following factors indicate the Israeli authorities' intention to impose conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction of the Palestinian group in Gaza, including children, thus establishing a genocidal intent: (i) the nature of the siege imposed, its duration and the vulnerability of Palestinians in Gaza, especially children, who are dependent on the humanitarian aid blocked by Israel; (ii) Israeli awareness of the objective probability that the conduct would lead, and has actually led, to the destruction of Palestinians in Gaza as a group, at least in part; (iii) the continuation of the siege despite warnings, including the flagrant disregard of binding orders of the International Court of Justice; and (iv) the entrapment of Palestinians in Gaza, ensuring they cannot escape the violence and intended destruction of the group.<sup>462</sup>

351. The cumulative effect of these acts, including attacks against health systems and essential civilian infrastructure, amounts to the intentional destruction of the foundations required for children's survival and development. Israeli political and military authorities have created living conditions that are fundamentally incompatible with the physical growth and intellectual development of children and the holistic environment necessary for children's well-being. They have acted to promote the physical and psychological destruction of the Palestinian population in Gaza, including children. The foreseeability and consistency of these effects clearly indicate both knowledge and intent regarding their destructive outcome upon the Palestinian group in Gaza, including children. Having assessed as a whole, taking into account the nature and duration of these acts, their foreseeable consequences and the prolonged denial of remedial measures, the Commission reiterates its finding that Israeli authorities and security forces deliberately inflicted on the Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction, in whole or in part, with specific intent to destroy the group, as such.<sup>463</sup>

## VIII. Conclusions

**352. As an occupying power, Israel is legally bound to ensure the protection, care and survival of Palestinian children. However, through the nature, scale and extent of Israel's military operations in Gaza, the Israeli government and security forces have deliberately carried out acts inflicting death and severe bodily and mental harm on hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children, irreparably destroying the sanctity of childhood, including family ties, identity, innocence, safety and future. The Commission found that much of the harm suffered by Palestinian children was not incidental but intended to destroy the existence of the Palestinians in Gaza as a group. Since children embody the biological and social continuity of the group, the Commission has reasonable grounds to conclude that these acts form part of a deliberate strategy to destroy the future of the Palestinians in Gaza by targeting their children.**

**353. The protection, care, and survival of Palestinian children and pregnant women, are inextricably linked to the Palestinian people's fundamental right to self-determination, as children represent the future bearers of their collective identity and resilience. By targeting children, Israel is eroding the foundational structure of Palestinian society, weakening the demographic vitality, and overall capacity of the Palestinian people to sustain and exercise its right to determine its future as a people.**

<sup>462</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, paras. 190-203.

<sup>463</sup> A/HRC/60/CRP.3, para. 83 et seq.

354. Israel has targeted Palestinian children in Gaza in two distinct ways: directly by shooting at their vital organs using precision weapons such as quadcopters and snipers; and through use of high impact weapons causing widespread and systematic attacks on residential buildings, schools, and displacement camps crowded with children. Israel is also legally responsible for failing to protect Palestinian children from being targeted by Israeli soldiers and settlers in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and for allowing, enabling and encouraging ongoing settler violence, which serves to entrench settlements, annex Palestinian land and force Palestinians off their land.

355. The killings continued even after the October 2025 ceasefire. After October 2025, children continued being killed and injured in various circumstances, including when approaching the so-called ‘yellow line’, indicating Israel’s flagrant disregard of the terms of the ceasefire. The Commission maintains that a ceasefire that allows Israeli security forces to open fire on children crossing an ill-defined boundary cannot credibly be seen as a cessation of hostilities. The vague markings, absence of clear warnings, and lack of safe corridors have turned the area into a death trap, particularly for children. Egregiously, the ‘ceasefire’ has effectively solidified Israel’s continuous occupation of Gaza, marked by restricted civilian movement and attacks resulting in casualties, including children.

356. Based on its own investigations and documentation, the Commission has concluded on reasonable grounds that following divisions, brigades or units of the Israeli security forces may be responsible for the killing and injuring of Palestinian children in Gaza and the West Bank in the following incidents:

- (a) Kfir Brigade for drone strikes and killing two brothers, aged 10 and nine, near Bani Suheila, east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza on 29 November 2025.<sup>464</sup>
- (b) 162nd Division, specifically the 401st Brigade and Shayetet 13, for throwing hand grenades inside a house with 30 family members, severely injuring a five-year-old boy, and later shooting and killing eight of his family members, including the boy’s seven-months pregnant mother and the father, in Sheikh Radwan between 20 and 21 December 2023.<sup>465</sup>
- (c) 401st Brigade, under the 162nd Division, for shooting and killing Hind Rajab and her extended family members, including Layan and other children in the car, and shelling the PRCS ambulance, killing two Palestinian humanitarian workers in Tel al-Hawa, Gaza City on 29 January 2024.<sup>466</sup>
- (d) 98th Division for shooting and killing a 15-year-old boy holding a white flag and his brother using sniper rifle in the west of Khan Younis on 24 January 2024.<sup>467</sup>
- (e) Multi-Dimensional Unit/Unit 888 or “Refaim” (Ghost) Unit, which operates quadcopters,<sup>468</sup> for shooting and injuring a 10-day-old baby boy on 12 April 2024<sup>469</sup> and a four-year-old girl on 24 August 2024.<sup>470</sup>
- (f) 99th Division for shooting and injuring an eight-year-old boy using sniper rifle in the Bureij refugee camp on 10 December 2024.<sup>471</sup>
- (g) Duvdevan Unit for shooting and injuring two girls (and an elderly woman) in Anza, south of Jenin on 25 September 2024.<sup>472</sup>
- (h) “Jordan Valley and the Valleys Brigade” also known as the 417th Territorial Brigade, for the killing of a 10-year-old boy, an eight-year-old boy along with

<sup>464</sup> See para 38.

<sup>465</sup> See paras 42 and 244.

<sup>466</sup> See paras 49-55.

<sup>467</sup> See paras. 56-58.

<sup>468</sup> See para. 72.

<sup>469</sup> See paras. 59-60.

<sup>470</sup> See paras. 61-62.

<sup>471</sup> See para. 68.

<sup>472</sup> See para. 89.

their 23-year-old male cousin through a drone attack in Tammun Village on 8 January 2025.<sup>473</sup>

- (i) Menashe Brigade for shooting and killing a two-year-old girl in south Jenin on 25 January 2025.<sup>474</sup>
- (j) Ephraim Brigade for shooting and killing a 10-year-old boy in Tulkarem on 28 January 2025.<sup>475</sup>
- (k) Paratrooper Battalion, who were operating under the command of the Menashe brigade, also known as the 431st Territorial Brigade, for shooting and killing a 14-year-old boy in Al Faraa refugee camp on 16 November 2025.<sup>476</sup>

357. Israeli attacks in Gaza have created a new generation of Palestinian children who will now face a lifetime of disability that will shape their sense of autonomy and agency over their own future. Children now suffer from a myriad of compounding injuries which have transformed them into long-term patients who will require repeated surgeries and rehabilitation (services largely unavailable in Gaza) as they grow, anchoring disability into every phase of their lives. As a result, disability among Palestinian children has ceased to be an individual medical condition and has now become a defining demographic reality – a cohort of Palestinians growing up without one or more limbs, with chronic pain, and visible and invisible scars.

358. Israel is responsible for causing a severe orphan crisis. The Israeli security forces have orphaned thousands of Palestinian children in Gaza. Compounding the situations of orphans, at least two orphanages in Gaza have been damaged through direct and indirect attacks. Israel has essentially turned these spaces of care into militarized zones throughout their military campaign in Gaza.

359. Palestinian children from Gaza and the West Bank, especially adolescent boys, have been arrested, tortured, and ill-treated in Israeli prisons and detention facilities. Removing them from their families and communities and punishing them based on their age and their identity as Palestinians – or presuming they pose threats for future acts they have not committed – raise critical issues of proportionality, necessity and reasonableness under international law. They were held with adults, routinely subjected to torture and physical violence, without any access to lawyers, parents, or information about their whereabouts. This has created prolonged uncertainty for their families, amounting to enforced family separation. Their detention may also amount to enforced disappearances.

360. The Commission has also documented incidents of sexual and gender-based violence targeting Palestinian children, often during arrests or in detention, causing severe physical and mental harm. Consistent with the Commission's previous findings on sexual violence committed against Palestinians, Israeli security forces used sexual violence as a tactic of war to punish, instil fear, and treat the bodies of Palestinians, including children, as instruments of collective shaming and oppression, entrenched within a prolonged, ethnic, gendered, and intergenerational pattern of Israeli occupation and hostilities.

361. Israel's deliberate attacks on hospitals, including those serving children and newborns, systematically dismantled children's access to life sustaining care, undermining their survival as a protected group. These attacks, including the forced closure of paediatric hospitals, form part of a broader pattern of targeting infrastructure essential to children – including newborns' health and survival. As Gaza's healthcare system collapsed, injured children have undergone procedures in overstretched or damaged facilities, often without anaesthesia, sterile conditions, or postoperative care, leading to lifelong harm and increased mortality. Healthcare facilities caring for children were targeted and destroyed by Israeli security forces, with the foreseeable effect of depriving children, including newborns, of essential healthcare,

<sup>473</sup> See para. 90.

<sup>474</sup> See para. 91.

<sup>475</sup> See para. 92.

<sup>476</sup> See para. 94-95.

causing long term physical and psychological harm and preventable deaths. One egregious outcome is that Gaza now has the highest concentration of child amputees in the world.

362. The Commission contends that Israel's targeting and destruction of neonatal and maternity healthcare infrastructures in Gaza has had particularly severe impact on birth rates and infant health outcomes. These attacks have disrupted prenatal care, induced maternal trauma, and contributed to a systemic collapse of the neonatal healthcare system, leading to a rise in miscarriages, premature births, low birth weights, and neonatal mortality, as well as an array of congenital birth defects that has induced lifelong vulnerabilities among newborns. Over two years, the birth rate in Gaza has decreased, undermining the continuity of the Palestinian population. The harming of Gazans' reproductive capacity and the denial of reproductive health care have inflicted grave, disproportionate, and long-term harms on pregnant women and newborns and future generations.

363. Israel's use of starvation as a method of war, imposed through a blockade and siege, has produced acute and chronic malnutrition among children in Gaza, removing the basic conditions necessary for their survival. Children, including newborns, have been deprived of calories, proteins, and nutrients necessary for growth, with visible effects such as damaged hair, skin, teeth, and paralysed limbs. Immunological vulnerabilities have also contributed to the re-emergence of diseases like polio. Growing food insecurity, destruction of healthcare, and reduced immunization have severely undermined children's health. Israel's use of starvation as a method of war has also caused severe reproductive harms to women and girls, impacting all aspects of reproduction, including pregnancy, childbirth, post-partum recovery and lactation, as well as adversely impacted the health of newborns.

364. Israel's attacks on schools in Gaza and the broader disruption of access to education due to the conflict have resulted in the complete removal of children's education in the Gaza Strip. Repeated bombardment, displacement, and the collapse of basic services have severed years of schooling, weakening core skills like reading, mathematics, memory retention, and structured study. Children in Gaza have effectively been 'left behind' even if they have been able to receive some informal learning in makeshift classrooms or online classes. Disruption of education has also extended to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, where Israeli security forces and settlers have closed schools, attacked students and schools, and interfered with schooling. The Commission highlights that the cognitive damage caused by disruption to education extends beyond lost years. It reconstructs Palestinian childhood around survival rather than learning, particularly in Gaza. By severing schooling, Israeli authorities have systematically disrupted children's ability to learn, thereby sabotaging the intellectual and social foundations of Palestinian society itself.

365. Children in Gaza have been suffering from immense psychological harm as a direct result of the hostilities and the deteriorating conditions of life. They have been stripped of any sense of safety and future. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli military operations, arrests and detention, checkpoints, raids, settler violence, and constant surveillance have terrorised children and created a pervasive sense of hopelessness among children. Israeli policies have produced a constant situation of diffused, ambient terror, that does not require constant bombing to remain effective. Mental harm has become intergenerational, producing a distinctive "occupied psyche" in which the freedom to play, imagine, hope, and develop an identity has been eroded. Israel's occupation and control have functioned as long term mechanisms of domination, subjugation and oppression, thereby damaging memory, identity and hope across generations.

366. Israeli soldiers in Gaza filming themselves destroying and mocking children's toys raise serious ethical, disciplinary, and legal concerns, symbolising the dehumanization of Palestinian childhood itself. The Commission considers that such acts were carried out in order to show Israel's dominance and control of the population by reducing symbols of childhood into objects of debasement and ridicule and Israel's subversion of an entire community through the desecration of shared possessions and spaces.

## IX. Recommendations

### A. To the Government of the State of Israel:

- (a) Immediately halt military operations in Gaza, including in populated areas in Gaza and close to the so-called ‘yellow line’; strictly adhere to the principles of necessity, distinction and precaution in the use of force; end the use of high-impact weapons in residential areas, as well as quadcopters, drones and snipers; withdraw all the Israeli security forces to the 1967 boundary between Gaza and Israel;
- (b) Immediately implement the orders for provisional measures of 26 January, 28 March and 24 May 2024 of the International Court of Justice in the case concerning Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel) and the advisory opinion of 19 July 2024 in respect of the Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and end the unlawful occupation, including by ceasing all new settlement activity and evacuating all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
- (c) Immediately implement and comply with the recommendations made by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in September 2024;<sup>477</sup>
- (d) Ensure accountability for all those with responsibility for crimes against and affecting Palestinian children, both individual perpetrators and those in positions of political or military command responsibility (including, but not limited to, the specific Israeli military units identified by the Commission in this report – for example, see Section. (VIII). Conclusions, para. 356);
- (e) End arbitrary and administrative detention of children and use of torture and ill-treatment; ensure that all children are treated in accordance with international laws and juvenile justice standards including the presumption of innocence and the obligation for humane treatment; guarantee that detention is used only as a last resort, for the shortest period, and that children are not held incommunicado;
- (f) Ensure incidents involving children are adjudicated exclusively by specialized civilian courts – not military courts – with expertise in juvenile justice, in full compliance with international standards, and end labelling Palestinian children as “terrorists” or security threats;
- (g) Immediately release accurate data of children detainees, including those detained from Gaza, and inform child detainees’ families regularly about their place of detention and their condition;
- (h) Immediately return the bodies of all deceased children to their family members and end the practice of withholding bodies of children and other Palestinian victims;
- (i) End the practice of targeting healthcare facilities, educational facilities and other facilities for children such as orphanages, and ensure the urgent reconstruction of damaged facilities;
- (j) Guarantee safe medical evacuation for injured children and family members and guarantee their return;
- (k) Facilitate the safe, unrestricted and immediate entry of humanitarian organisations and delivery of humanitarian assistance to children, including medical care, food, and water;

<sup>477</sup> [https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CRC\\_C\\_ISR\\_CO\\_5-6\\_59808\\_E-1.pdf](https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CRC_C_ISR_CO_5-6_59808_E-1.pdf).

- (l) Take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of Palestinians including children from settler violence, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and the CRC, including through the issuance and enforcement of clear orders to the Israeli security forces to protect the Palestinian population, and immediately dismantle all outposts and ensure that they are not re-established;
- (m) Engage and hold structured dialogue with the Palestinian authorities to establish joint protection mechanisms for Palestinian children in Israeli-occupied areas, ensuring that the security operations of Israeli and Palestinian authorities prioritize the physical safety, mental and physical wellbeing and basic rights of Palestinian children in line with international child protection and child rights laws and standards;
- (n) Urgently develop an Action Plan in accordance with Israel's listing by the UN Secretary-General in relation to children and armed conflict, under A/78/842-S/2024/384, in coordination with the UN, to end grave violations against Palestinian children;
- (o) Incorporate IHL and IHRL, including the special obligations towards children under international law, into training, strategy and military operations of the Israeli security forces and Israeli prison services;
- (p) Cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other international mechanisms investigating international crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

**B. To all the Member States and those involved in ceasefire negotiations:**

- (a) Arrest any Israeli officials against whom arrest warrants have been issued by the ICC and extradite them into the custody of the ICC;
- (b) Employ all means reasonably available to them to prevent the commission of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and to ensure full compliance with the Geneva Conventions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
- (c) Cease the transfer of arms and other equipment or items, including jet fuel, to the State of Israel or third States where there is reason to suspect their use in military trade or operations that have involved or could involve the commission of genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity or other violations of the Geneva Conventions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
- (d) Conduct investigations under domestic or universal jurisdiction of Israeli individuals or organisations suspected of having participated in unlawful acts of violence against Palestinian children, including Israeli suspects holding dual or multiple nationalities;
- (e) Impose targeted sanctions, including prohibiting financial dealings and revoking or denying visas of individual Israeli ministers and officials and Israeli military personnel who may be responsible for inciting or committing violence relating to the abuse, killing or maiming of children;
- (f) Impose targeted sanctions on extremist settlers, including a ban on financial transactions and travel, as well as on private entities, including charities, that support the settlement enterprise;
- (g) Exhort Israel to end the siege of Gaza immediately, completely and permanently and allow unhindered humanitarian access to deliver aid and other support tailored to children's needs in Gaza;
- (h) Support political solutions and processes aimed at achieving lasting peace in Palestine, based on the right of Palestinians to self-determination and rooted in the principle of inclusivity and ownership, engaging and listening to Palestinians, including children;

- (i) **Support and facilitate access to justice for victims of crimes against children as a key component of any political solutions and process.**

### **C. To the UN Security Council:**

- (a) **Prohibit all two-way military-related trade with Israel and impose immediate, comprehensive sanctions, including travel bans, asset freezes and financial restrictions, on Israeli officials in positions of command responsibility, the leadership of the Israeli security forces and those in military command positions, and soldiers serving in Gaza on or since October 2023 who have or may have committed international crimes;**
- (b) **Hold a dedicated debate on the situation of children in Palestine, taking stock of Israel's compliance with ICJ's Provisional Measures of January, March and May 2024, and authorize enforcement measures on Israel if it is found non-compliant.**

### **D. To the UN General Assembly:**

- (a) **Taking into account the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 19 July 2024, adopt a resolution calling on Member States to prohibit all two-way military-related trade with Israel and impose sanctions against Israel for its violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;**
- (b) **Hold a stock-taking session on Israel's compliance with General Assembly resolution A/RES/ES-10/24 on implementation of the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of 19 July 2024 in respect of the Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.**

### **E. To the UN Secretary General:**

- (a) **Expand the existing listing of the Israeli Security and Armed Forces in the annexes of the annual report on children and armed conflict to also include abduction<sup>478</sup> of Palestinian children, in line with the findings of this report;**
- (b) **List Israeli settlers, as an extension of the State of Israel, in the annexes of the next annual report on children and armed conflict as "persistent perpetrators"<sup>479</sup> for child killing, maiming and sexual violence;<sup>480</sup>**
- (c) **Issue dedicated, standalone country specific reports on the situation of children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel;**
- (d) **Prioritize monitoring and reporting of sexual violence against Palestinian children by Israeli security and armed forces, given the alarming increase in incidents and patterns of such grave abuses;**

<sup>478</sup> CAAC Guidance Note on Abduction, 3.1. Key elements of the working definition of "abduction", pages 15 – 17, [https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/sites/default/files/2022/05/22-00040\\_Abduction-Guidance-for-CAAC\\_FINAL\\_WEB-1.pdf](https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/sites/default/files/2022/05/22-00040_Abduction-Guidance-for-CAAC_FINAL_WEB-1.pdf).

<sup>479</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/secretary-general-issued-list-shame-his-report-children-and-armed-conflict-security>; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-179229/>; <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/en/52-parties-on-secretary-generals-list-of-shame-on-children-and-armed-conflict>; <https://watchlist.org/publications/secretary-generals-11th-annual-report-on-children-and-armed-conflict/>.

<sup>480</sup> <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/247> (2025); <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2024/384> (2024); <https://docs.un.org/en/A/77/895> (2023); <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2022/493> (2022); <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2021/437> (2021).

- (e) Incorporate ‘denial of humanitarian assistance’ in the future UN Action Plan with Israel, given that the siege of Gaza by Israel has caused severe malnutrition and preventable deaths of children;<sup>481</sup>
- (f) Closely monitor and report Israel’s deliberate ‘denial of humanitarian assistance’ to Gaza which has had a profound, continued and life-threatening impact on children, noting that the humanitarian situation in Gaza meets all five primary categories of ‘denial of humanitarian assistance’ under the CAAC agenda.<sup>482</sup>

**F. To the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court:**

- (a) Within the continuing investigation in the Situation in the State of Palestine, give particular attention to crimes against and affecting children, taking into account the principles outlined in its Policy on Children;
- (b) Examine the involvement of officials mentioned in this report and others involved in crimes against and affecting children for inclusion as those most responsible for international crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

---

<sup>481</sup> Denial of Humanitarian Access to Children: A Guidance Note for the Children and Armed Conflict Agenda, “Shall I include DHA in my action plan?”, Page 50, <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/75347639-c524-44e2-b3c9-1f9f86ee6c57/Guidance-Note-on-the-Denial-of-Humanitarian-Access-to-Children-WEB.pdf>.

<sup>482</sup> Denial of Humanitarian Access to Children: A Guidance Note for the Children and Armed Conflict Agenda, Annex 3: Categories of DHA, page 62 onwards <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/75347639-c524-44e2-b3c9-1f9f86ee6c57/Guidance-Note-on-the-Denial-of-Humanitarian-Access-to-Children-WEB.pdf>.

## X. Annex

### Chronology/timeline

#### Key events in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 7 October 2023

367. The Commission has noted previously that both the 7 October 2023 attacks by Hamas and other PAGs on Israel and Israel's subsequent operations in Gaza did not occur in isolation,<sup>483</sup> but rather within the context of a long-standing, decades-old conflict, rooted in the 1947-1948 Nakba when over 700,000 Palestinians were displaced and hundreds of villages destroyed during Israel's establishment.<sup>484</sup> In 1967, Israel captured Gaza and the West Bank in the Six-Day War, initiating a military occupation marked by land confiscations and settlement expansion.<sup>485</sup> The 1990s saw intensified violence during the First Intifada (1987-1993), Hamas' rise, and failed Oslo peace efforts while occupation continued.<sup>486</sup> After Hamas' June 2007 military takeover of Gaza, Israel intensified movement restrictions into a comprehensive land, sea, and air blockade of Gaza, isolating Gaza from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the world.<sup>487</sup> Since then, Gaza endured a rigid continuing blockade while in the West Bank settlements and settler attacks surged, fuelling the escalation of violence.<sup>488</sup> Between 2006 and 2021, the Israeli security forces carried out at least five large-scale military operations in Gaza and at least two major military operations in the West Bank, alongside several smaller-scale operations, including nightly raids and search-and-arrest operations.<sup>489</sup>

368. The nature and extent of child rights violations in Gaza and the West Bank have varied significantly with evolving Israeli military tactics, as indicated in the chronology of the key events highlighted below. Early phases of the post-October 2023 escalation featured intense airstrikes and total sieges in Gaza, causing mass child casualties from explosive weapons and malnutrition risks, while the West Bank military operations, raids and settler violence escalated detentions and live-fire killings and injuries to hundreds of Palestinian children. The investigated and documented incidents in this report demonstrate that these strategic military shifts have produced differentiated direct violations and impacts on children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with Gaza bearing acute, mass-scale effects from siege tactics and bombardment, while the West Bank has seen targeted, chronic incursions.

<sup>483</sup> A/HRC/56/26, para 89.

<sup>484</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/05/1136662>.

<sup>485</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/history/#:~:text=After%20looking%20at%20alternatives%2C%20the,claims%20or%20states%20of%20belligerency;https://icj-web.leman.un-icc.cloud/sites/default/files/case-related/196/196-20250130-req-03-01-en.pdf#:~:text=Reaffirms%20that%20Israeli%20settlements%20in%20the%20Palestinian,other%20Arab%20territories%20occupied%20since%201967%2C%20are.https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Israeli-settlements-in-gaza-and-the-west-bank-Part-II-english.pdf>.

<sup>486</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/history/#:~:text=In%20the%201967%20war%2C%20Israel,negotiations%20between%20the%20parties%20concerned.;https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-205221/#:~:text=The%20first%20official%20support%20to,Israeli%20fishermen%20and%20farmers%20below>.

<sup>487</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/mena/documents/gaza-strip-humanitarian-impact-15-years-blockade-june-2022>.

<sup>488</sup> <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/757806?v=pdf>; <https://www.unognewsroom.org/story/en/3059/un-report-israel-s-settlement-expansion-drives-mass-displacement-in-west-bank>; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ocha-settler-violence-displaces-more-palestinians-in-2026-than-in-all-of-2025/>.

<sup>489</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 18. See also <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-200614/>; <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/wars-and-operations/operation-brothers-keeper/operation-brothers-keeper/>.

## Timeline

Date	Location	Events
7 October 2023	Southern Israel	Hamas armed wing, called the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, and other PAGs, accompanied by Palestinian civilians, carried out attacks on Israeli civilian communities and military bases in southern Israel. <sup>490</sup>
7 October 2023	Gaza	In response to the attacks by Hamas and other PAGs, the commenced massive aerial bombardment of the Gaza Strip. <sup>491</sup>
7 to 20 October 2023	Gaza	All crossings between Israel and Gaza were sealed totally, disrupting humanitarian aid deliveries, and no aid trucks entered Gaza. <sup>492</sup>
8 October 2023	Gaza	Israel announced the commencement of military operation “Swords of Iron”, with an intense air campaign on Gaza. <sup>493</sup>
9 October 2023	Gaza	Israel imposed a complete siege on Gaza, cutting off essential resources and the movement of goods, heavily restricting the population’s access to water, fuel, electricity and food. <sup>494</sup>
12 October 2023	Gaza	First evacuation order by the Israeli security forces for 1.1 million Gazans to leave northern Gaza within 24 hours and go to the south. <sup>495</sup>
October 2023	West Bank	Intensified Israeli military raids in the West Bank, including Tulkarm, Jenin and Nablus. <sup>496</sup>
27 October 2023	Gaza	Ground operations by the Israeli security forces started in Gaza, cutting the northern half of Gaza from the south. <sup>497</sup>
Early November 2023	Gaza	Al-Rantisi and Al-Nasr children’s hospitals attacked by the Israeli security forces and shut down. <sup>498</sup>
24 – 30 November 2023	Gaza	Pause in fighting; some aid entered Gaza, and Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, including children, were exchanged <sup>499</sup>
1 December 2023	Gaza	Hostilities resumed, with resumption of total siege. <sup>500</sup> In December 2023, the IPC Global Review Committee (IPC) for the first time indicated a risk of famine in Gaza. <sup>501</sup>

<sup>490</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.3, para 20.

<sup>491</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 17.

<sup>492</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 21.

<sup>493</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 17.

<sup>494</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 21.

<sup>495</sup> [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa\\_timeline\\_2\\_years\\_war\\_-\\_final\\_h.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_timeline_2_years_war_-_final_h.pdf) ;  
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142282>.

<sup>496</sup> <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-230-west-bank>; <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/palestine/2023-12-27-Flash-Report.pdf>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2023/11/alarmed-urgent-situation-occupied-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>.

<sup>497</sup> A/HRC/56/CRP.4, para 19.

<sup>498</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/lives-one-million-children-hanging-thread-child-health-services-almost-collapse> ; <https://www.emro.who.int/media/news/unfpa-unicef-and-who-regional-directors-call-for-immediate-action-to-halt-attacks-on-health-care-in-gaza.html> ;  
<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-40>.

<sup>499</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unocha-hostilities-in-the-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-62-dec8-2023/>.

<sup>500</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-56>.

<sup>501</sup> [https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Famine\\_Committee\\_Review\\_Report\\_Gaza\\_Strip\\_Acute\\_Food\\_Insecurity\\_Feb\\_Jul](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Famine_Committee_Review_Report_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Feb_Jul)

2 December 2023	Gaza	Over 15,000 people, including 6,150 children, reported killed since 7 October 2023 <sup>502</sup>
17 December 2023	Gaza	Opening of Kerem Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom) border crossing; some humanitarian aid entered Gaza through the crossing for the first time since October 2023 <sup>503</sup>
2 February 2024	Gaza	At least 17,000 children are unaccompanied or separated. <sup>504</sup>
Early March 2024	Gaza	At least ten children reportedly died because of dehydration and malnutrition in Kamal Adwan Hospital. <sup>505</sup>
March 2024	Gaza	IPC indicated that Gaza had far exceeded the famine threshold, with evidence pointing towards a major acceleration of death and malnutrition. <sup>506</sup>
1 <sup>st</sup> January – 7 May 2024	Gaza	296 children were medically evacuated abroad <sup>507</sup>
May 2024	Gaza	Invasion of Rafah, closure of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt, and blocking of humanitarian aid, supplies and fuel through that crossing. 800,000 people forced to flee Rafah. <sup>508</sup>
1 July 2024	Gaza	Israel issued second largest evacuation order, impacting around 250,000 people in Khan Younis and Rafah areas <sup>509</sup>
5 July 2024	Gaza	Up to 1.9 million internally displaced people, some of them displaced up to ten times. <sup>510</sup>
19 July 2024	Gaza	WHO announced poliovirus type 2 detected in wastewater samples. <sup>511</sup>
22 July 2024	West Bank	One child killed in the West Bank every second day on average since October 2023. <sup>512</sup>
2 August 2024	Gaza	85 per cent of school buildings hit or damaged. <sup>513</sup>
23 August 2024	Gaza	WHO confirmed first polio case in over 25 years: a ten-month-old baby. <sup>514</sup>
25 August 2024	Gaza	88.5 per cent of Gaza under evacuation orders, with almost two million people concentrated in the

y2024\_Special\_Brief.pdf#:~:text=The%20Famine%20threshold%20for%20acute%20food%20insecurity,steeply%20increasing%20trend%20in%20malnutrition%20data%20indicates.

<sup>502</sup> [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa\\_timeline\\_2\\_years\\_war\\_-\\_final\\_h.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_timeline_2_years_war_-_final_h.pdf).

<sup>503</sup> [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa\\_timeline\\_2\\_years\\_war\\_-\\_final\\_h.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_timeline_2_years_war_-_final_h.pdf).

<sup>504</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/stories-loss-and-grief-least-17000-children-are-estimated-be-unaccompanied-or#:~:text=GENEVA%2C%202%20February%202024%20%E2%80%93%2022,displaced%20population%20%2D%201.7%20million%20people>.

<sup>505</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/statement-adele-khodr-unicef-regional-director-middle-east-and-north-africa-0>.

<sup>506</sup>

[https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Famine\\_Committee\\_Review\\_Report\\_Gaza\\_Strip\\_Acute\\_Food\\_Insecurity\\_Feb\\_July2024\\_Special\\_Brief.pdf#:~:text=The%20Famine%20threshold%20for%20acute%20food%20insecurity,steeply%20increasing%20trend%20in%20malnutrition%20data%20indicates](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Famine_Committee_Review_Report_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Feb_July2024_Special_Brief.pdf#:~:text=The%20Famine%20threshold%20for%20acute%20food%20insecurity,steeply%20increasing%20trend%20in%20malnutrition%20data%20indicates).

<sup>507</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-233-gaza-strip>.

<sup>508</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/once-again-nearly-half-population-rafah-or-800000-people-are-road>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/israels-rafah-invasion-must-stop-now-say-un-experts>.

<sup>509</sup> [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa\\_timeline\\_2\\_years\\_war\\_-\\_final\\_h.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_timeline_2_years_war_-_final_h.pdf).

<sup>510</sup> [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa\\_timeline\\_2\\_years\\_war\\_-\\_final\\_h.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_timeline_2_years_war_-_final_h.pdf).

<sup>511</sup> <https://www.emro.who.int/opt/news/variant-type-2-poliovirus-isolated-from-sewage-samples-in-gaza.html>.

<sup>512</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/child-casualties-in-the-west-bank-unicef-22jul24/>.

<sup>513</sup> <https://x.com/UNRWA/status/1819265180599033974?s=20>.

<sup>514</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/08/1153486>.

		designated zone in Al Mawasi, spanning only roughly 11 per cent of Gaza's total area. <sup>515</sup>
28 August-6 September 2024	West Bank	Operation Summer Camps – largest since 2002 with air support - targeting suspected Palestinian militants in Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarm and Qalqiliya governorates and Al-Farah refugee camp. <sup>516</sup>
30 September 2024	Gaza	1.4 million people did not receive food rations in September, in addition to over 1 million people in August. <sup>517</sup>
October 2024	Gaza	North Gaza under tightened siege, with severe shortages of food, water and medical supplies. At least 31 incidents affecting schools by airstrikes, forced evacuations, shelling and arson: education infrastructure damaged, and large number of child casualties. Attacks on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) personnel and facilities, worsening water scarcity and hygiene conditions. <sup>518</sup>
October 2024	Gaza	Only 127 children had been medically evacuated since the Rafah crossing closed on 7 May, leaving many critically ill children without lifesaving care. <sup>519</sup>
28 October 2024	Gaza	Israeli Parliament (Knesset) passes laws against UNRWA. <sup>520</sup>
31 October 2024	West Bank	Israeli security forces severely damage the UNRWA office in the Nur Shams Camp. <sup>521</sup>
4 November 2024	Gaza	100,000 people displaced over four weeks in northern Gaza. <sup>522</sup>
8 November 2024	Gaza	About 70 per cent of people killed in Gaza since 7 October 2023 are children and women. <sup>523</sup>
26 December 2024 – 12 January 2025	Gaza	Eight newborns died from hypothermia in less than three weeks. <sup>524</sup>
1 – 7 January 2025	Gaza	In the first week of the new year, at least 74 children were killed in just seven days. <sup>525</sup>
19 January 2025	Gaza	Start of a six-week ceasefire deal between Hamas and Israel. <sup>526</sup>
21 January 2025 (ongoing)	West Bank	Start of Operation Iron Wall (in Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams) with helicopter gunfire, airstrikes, ground force operations and the deployment of tanks for the first time since the early 2000s, resulting in what has

<sup>515</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ocha-humanitarian-situation-update-209-gaza-26aug24/>.

<sup>516</sup> <https://www.unocha.org/news/todays-top-news-occupied-palestinian-territory-ukraine-south-sudan-madagascar#:~:text=West%20Bank,since%20November%20of%20last%20year;>

[https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ohchr-press-release-west-bank-attacks-06sep24/;](https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ohchr-press-release-west-bank-attacks-06sep24/)  
[https://www.btselem.org/html/216402?destination=/gaza\\_doctrine\\_west\\_bank\\_under\\_fire](https://www.btselem.org/html/216402?destination=/gaza_doctrine_west_bank_under_fire).

<sup>517</sup> [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa\\_timeline\\_2\\_years\\_war\\_-\\_final\\_h.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_timeline_2_years_war_-_final_h.pdf).

<sup>518</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-233-gaza-strip>.

<sup>519</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-233-gaza-strip>.

<sup>520</sup> [https://x.com/UNLazarini/status/1850989621401837855;](https://x.com/UNLazarini/status/1850989621401837855)

[https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa\\_timeline\\_2\\_years\\_war\\_-\\_final\\_h.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_timeline_2_years_war_-_final_h.pdf).

<sup>521</sup> [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa\\_timeline\\_2\\_years\\_war\\_-\\_final\\_h.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_timeline_2_years_war_-_final_h.pdf).

<sup>522</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-235-gaza-strip>.

<sup>523</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/there-must-be-due-reckoning-horrific-violations-possible-atrocity-crimes>.

<sup>524</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-154-humanitarian-crisis-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including>.

<sup>525</sup> <https://www.unicef.ch/en/current/news/2025-01-08/tragic-start-year-gaza-74-children-already-killed>.

<sup>526</sup> [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa\\_timeline\\_2\\_years\\_war\\_-\\_final\\_h.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_timeline_2_years_war_-_final_h.pdf).

		become the longest and largest displacement crisis in the West Bank since 1967. <sup>527</sup>
26 January 2025	West Bank (East Jerusalem)	Israel ordered UNRWA to vacate all premises in East Jerusalem and cease operations by 30 January 2025. <sup>528</sup>
30 January 2025	Gaza and West Bank	Israeli legislation banned UNRWA from operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. <sup>529</sup>
10 February 2025	West Bank	At least 40,000 Palestinians forcibly displaced due to Israeli military operations, including 38 airstrikes. <sup>530</sup>
12 February 2025	West Bank	Israeli Security Forces forcibly used the UNRWA Arroub Camp Health Centre (near Bethlehem) as a temporary detention and interrogation centre of tens of Palestinian residents rounded up in the camp. <sup>531</sup>
18 February 2025	West Bank (East Jerusalem)	Israeli officials, accompanied by Israeli Security Forces, forcibly entered and ordered closure of UNRWA schools and training centre, impacting 250 children in three UNRWA schools and 350 young trainees in the Kalandia Training Centre. <sup>532</sup>
2 March 2025	Gaza	Total siege on supplies entering Gaza. Children faced worsening risks of malnutrition, disease, lack of safe water, and inability to obtain medicines <sup>533</sup>
18 March 2025	Gaza	Israeli airstrikes break the temporary pause in hostilities, killing around 500 people, including more than 170 children, in 12 hours, marking one of the largest single-day child death tolls. Between 18 and 31 March 2025, at least 322 children were killed and 609 injured. <sup>534</sup>
6 April 2025	Gaza	Over 390,000 people estimated to have been displaced in three weeks, following 15 displacement orders, with two-thirds of Gaza designated as “no-go” zones. <sup>535</sup>
8 April 2025	West Bank (East Jerusalem)	Israeli officials forcibly entered six UNRWA schools in East Jerusalem and ordered their closure, effective in 30 days, impacting some 800 boys and girls. <sup>536</sup>
21 April – 21 May 2025	Gaza	Total siege continued for 50 days, acute malnutrition for children increased, at least 50 children died from hunger. <sup>537</sup>
8 May 2025	West Bank (East Jerusalem)	Israeli security forces raided three UNRWA schools in Shu’fat Camp, expelling more than 550 children and

<sup>527</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/northern-west-bank-humanitarian-response-update-21-january-30-april-2025>.

<sup>528</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/government-israel-orders-unrwa-vacate-its-premises-occupied-east>; [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa\\_timeline\\_2\\_years\\_war\\_-\\_final\\_h.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_timeline_2_years_war_-_final_h.pdf).

<sup>529</sup> <https://www.unognewsroom.org/story/en/2497/opt-update-unrwa-who-31-january-2025>; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/01/1159586>.

<sup>530</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/large-scale-forced-displacement-west-bank-impacts-40000-people>.

<sup>531</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/west-bank-israeli-security-forces-use-unrwa-health-centre-temporary-detention-site-southern-West-Bank>.

<sup>532</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/children-and-young-people-east-jerusalem-denied-their-right-education>.

<sup>533</sup> <https://www.unicef.ch/en/current/news/2025-04-01/gaza-322-children-killed-end-ceasefire>.

<sup>534</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-164-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>; <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/least-322-children-reportedly-killed-gaza-strip-following-breakdown-ceasefire>; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/03/1161196>.

<sup>535</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-278-gaza-strip>.

<sup>536</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-commissioner-general-israeli-officials-jerusalem-municipality>.

<sup>537</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ocha-aid-blockade-drives-hunger-needs-across-gaza/>; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/un-child-rights-committee-press-release-21may25/>.

		forcing evacuation of six schools, traumatizing nearly 800 children as young as 6 years. <sup>538</sup>
May 2025	Gaza	Israel's reported plans to forcibly transfer Gaza's population to a small southern area while dismantling the UN-led aid system, replacing it with the Israeli military-controlled Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), with reports of killing and injuring Palestinians, including children, at and near GHF aid sites. <sup>539</sup>
May 2025	Gaza	150 per cent increase since February 2025 in the number of acutely malnourished children between 6 months and 5 years of age. <sup>540</sup>
21 May 2025	Gaza	81 per cent of the strip controlled by Israeli Security Forces and/or under displacement orders. <sup>541</sup>
26 May 2025	West Bank (East Jerusalem)	UNRWA compound in Sheikh Jarrah stormed by a group of Israelis led by an Israeli Member of the Knesset. <sup>542</sup>
4 June 2025	Gaza	Three months since last safe and significant entry of aid allowed in the strip. <sup>543</sup>
16 - 17 June 2025	Gaza	Complete internet connection outage in southern and central Gaza. <sup>544</sup>
June – July 2025	Gaza	Killings and injuries of Palestinians, including children, seeking food continue at or near the GHF-run aid distribution sites. <sup>545</sup>
July 2025	Gaza	The deadliest month for child malnutrition deaths, with 24 children under five dying, representing 85 per cent of malnutrition deaths in 2025. <sup>546</sup>
4 July 2025	Gaza	No fuel entered the territory for over four months, causing waste buildup, clean water shortages, clinic closures, and patchy electricity and telecoms. <sup>547</sup>
12 July 2025	Gaza	For the first time in 130 days, a small amount of fuel entered, a fraction of what was needed every day. <sup>548</sup>
29 July 2025	Gaza	IPC issued alert that Gaza on famine brink (2/3 thresholds breached), with food/nutrition indicators worst ever. <sup>549</sup>
18 August 2025	Gaza	Over 540 children reportedly killed on average each month, since March 2025 when the Israeli security forces resumed hostilities. <sup>550</sup>

<sup>538</sup> <https://x.com/UNLazarini/status/1920489659001422302>.

<sup>539</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-286-gaza-strip> ; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/stop-clock-madness-un-expert-appeals-states-after-gaza-aid-distribution>.

<sup>540</sup> <https://www.unicef.ch/en/current/news/2025-06-20/gaza-over-5-000-children-treated-malnutrition-may>.

<sup>541</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-21-may-2025>.

<sup>542</sup> [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa\\_timeline\\_2\\_years\\_war\\_-\\_final\\_h.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/unrwa_timeline_2_years_war_-_final_h.pdf).

<sup>543</sup> <https://x.com/UNLazarini/status/1930264028367991081>.

<sup>544</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-297-gaza-strip>.

<sup>545</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/06/opt-attacks-around-aid-distribution-site-gaza> ; <https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d342/d3422403>.

<sup>546</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unicef-sitrep-41-20aug25/> ; <https://www.who.int/news/item/27-07-2025-malnutrition-rates-reach-alarming-levels-in-gaza--who-warns>.

<sup>547</sup> <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-commissioner-general-gaza-no-fuel-allowed-enclave-more-four-months>.

<sup>548</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/joint-statement-12jul25/>.

<sup>549</sup> [https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_GazaStrip\\_Alert\\_July2025.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_GazaStrip_Alert_July2025.pdf) ; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/latest-ipc-alert-confirms-gaza-is-on-the-brink-of-famine-statement-by-the-secretary-general/> ; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/IPC-alert-un-agencies-warn-key-food-and-nutrition-indicators-exceed-famine-thresholds-in-gaza-en-fr-es/>.

<sup>550</sup> <https://x.com/UNICEF/status/1957441877914853600>.

20 August 2025	Gaza	Israeli Security Forces announce the first steps of military operations to take over Gaza City, forcing more people to flee south. <sup>551</sup>
22 August, 2025	Gaza	IPC Famine (Phase 5) confirmed in Gaza Governorate for the first time and projected to expand, with children being among the most vulnerable, while killing of civilians seeking food continued. <sup>552</sup>
10 October 2025	Gaza	Ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, and creation of the so-called 'yellow line'. Killings reduced but not ended. Famine spread in the south of Gaza, limited relief access, displacement and civilian casualties, including children, continued. <sup>553</sup>
26 November 2025	West Bank	Operation Five Stones launched in the Tubas Governorate, which ended on 30 November 2025, resulting in civilian casualties, including children. <sup>554</sup>
30 December 2025	Gaza and West Bank	A new regulation by Israel banning 37 international humanitarian NGOs from operating in Gaza and the West Bank. <sup>555</sup>
January 2026	Gaza	Israeli airstrikes, shelling and gunfire continued notwithstanding the ceasefire, resulting in civilian casualties, including children. Over 4,000 children suffering from heavy trauma wounds, cancer and chronic diseases remain in Gaza. <sup>556</sup>
March 2026	Gaza	With the commencement of the US/Israel attack in Iran, Israel closed all crossings, including Rafah, and suspended humanitarian movements and medical evacuations and the return of people suspended. <sup>557</sup>
March 2026	West Bank	Israeli settler violence has further escalated, with March recording the highest number of Palestinian injuries by Israeli settlers in the last 20 years. <sup>558</sup>

<sup>551</sup> <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/israel-at-war/briefings-by-idf-spokesperson-bg-effie-defrin/august-25-press-briefings/press-briefing-by-idf-spokesperson-bg-effie-defrin-august-20-2025/>;  
<https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-185-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem>.

<sup>552</sup> [https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload)

[/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Famine\\_Review\\_Committee\\_Report\\_Gaza\\_Aug2025.pdf](/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Famine_Review_Committee_Report_Gaza_Aug2025.pdf);

<https://www.who.int/news/item/22-08-2025-famine-confirmed-for-first-time-in-gaza>.

<sup>553</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/report-humanitarian-response-un-and-humanitarian-partners-during-first-month-october-2025-ceasefire> ; <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-humanitarian-response-situation-report-no-7> ;  
<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/letter-sop-18nov25/> ;  
<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unicef-humanitarian-situation-report-29oct25/>.

<sup>554</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/implementation-of-security-council-resolution-2334-2016-report-of-the-secretary-general/>.

<sup>555</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/01/israel-ban-37-aid-groups-makes-life-unbearable-genocide-survivors-palestine>.

<sup>556</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ocha-gaza-humanitarian-response-situation-report-no-66/>.

<sup>557</sup> <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ocha-humanitarian-movements-suspended-as-crossings-into-gaza-close/>.

<sup>558</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-report-10-april-2026>.