

Annual Report 2024

The State of Human Rights in Palestine Under Occupation

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Executive Summary

This report highlights the devastating impacts of the violations and atrocities committed by the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Jerusalem, alongside the catastrophic consequences of the war on the Gaza Strip. It examines the humanitarian, legal, social, and economic repercussions resulting from the war on Gaza and the ongoing assaults on the West Bank and Jerusalem. The report emphasizes the systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, particularly the direct targeting of civilians and infrastructure, which has precipitated an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

In this context, the report provides a comprehensive analysis of the human toll, which has exceeded tens of thousands of casualties, focusing particularly on the disproportionately high number of women and children among the victims. Additionally, it addresses the targeting of educational and medical personnel, as well as international organizations operating in Palestine, leading to the near-total paralysis of critical sectors. Furthermore, the report sheds light on the widespread destruction of homes, public facilities, and essential institutions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which has disrupted the educational process in the West Bank and completely paralyzed the education sector in Gaza, depriving tens of thousands of students of their fundamental right to education.

On another front, the report uncovers the crisis of forced displacement affecting more than two million people in Gaza due to the total collapse of the healthcare system and the exacerbation of food insecurity. It also underscores the severe psychological and social impacts, as instances of psychological trauma, mass displacement, and loss of livelihoods have surged.

From a legal perspective, the report offers a detailed analysis of grave breaches of international humanitarian law and international law. It documents the Israeli forces' use of internationally prohibited weapons, such as cluster munitions and "dumb bombs," alongside flagrant violations of the Geneva Conventions and related international agreements. These include collective starvation, the imposition of a suffocating blockade, and the deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian institutions, as well as the withholding of bodies—acts that constitute war crimes under international law.

In light of the foregoing, this report aims to meticulously and comprehensively document these crimes and violations, shedding light on their humanitarian and legal dimensions. Furthermore, it seeks to support efforts to safeguard human rights and dignity in Palestine and to raise international awareness of the extent of the suffering endured by the Palestinian people due to these ongoing violations.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
AP I	Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
UN	United Nations
CAT	Convention Against Torture
GCPEA	Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack
HRW	Human Rights Watch
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICC	International Criminal Court
MOH	Palestinian Ministry of Health
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Source: abbreviations website (<https://www.abbreviations.com>)

Introduction

Palestine today represents one of the most prominent arenas of humanitarian and legal conflict in the world, as its complex situation reflects the repercussions of Israeli occupation attacks and their impact on human rights and international humanitarian law. Despite this, Palestine has remained under a strict siege for many years, accompanied by a series of wars and conflicts that have cast their shadow over all aspects of life. However, the most recent war launched by the Israeli occupation on the Gaza Strip in October 2023 was the most devastating in terms of human and material losses. Its catastrophic effects touched every aspect of life in Gaza, turning the Strip into a stage for humanitarian crises that require in-depth study and comprehensive analysis.

The Israeli attacks on Palestinian areas, including the West Bank, Jerusalem, and especially the war on Gaza, have had multifaceted impacts. Military operations have targeted civilian infrastructure and vital institutions, such as schools, universities, hospitals, and places of worship. These practices constitute severe violations of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions, exacerbating the challenges faced by civilian populations, including forced displacement, food insecurity, and the near-total collapse of the healthcare system.

The human losses resulting from the war are not limited to the staggering numbers of martyrs and wounded but also encompass long-term psychological and social consequences. The psychological trauma inflicted on children, women, and survivors of the bombings will affect future generations, deepening social and economic crises in Gaza. Additionally, the destruction of educational infrastructure has deprived thousands of students of their fundamental right to education and disrupted scientific research, threatening the intellectual and cultural development of Palestinian society.

From a legal perspective, the use of internationally prohibited weapons, such as cluster and thermobaric bombs, and the direct targeting of civilian and humanitarian facilities indicate the use of force as a tool of starvation and collective punishment, constituting a blatant violation of international laws. On the humanitarian side, the war has created a massive displacement crisis, with residents living in catastrophic conditions, without shelter or sufficient food. With the collapse of the healthcare sector and the worsening poverty and unemployment, the population faces an existential crisis that threatens their fundamental right to life and dignity. Meanwhile, the international community has shown weak responsiveness in meeting the sector's needs, whether by providing humanitarian aid or exerting pressure to hold those responsible for these crimes accountable.

In light of the above, this report aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the repercussions of Israeli attacks on the West Bank and Jerusalem, as well as the impact of the war on Gaza. It includes precise documentation of Israeli violations and the damages and losses resulting from these attacks. The report also focuses on the humanitarian and legal implications. It should be noted that the violations in the West Bank and Jerusalem, along with the ongoing war in Gaza, pose a serious threat to international peace and security. If immediate and comprehensive steps are not taken to address the root causes of the crisis and alleviate the suffering of the population, the consequences will not be confined to Gaza alone but will extend to destabilize the region as a whole.

Legal Framework

This framework aims to clarify the legal foundations governing the protection of civilians during armed conflicts and wars by comparing the provisions of international and regional conventions and treaties that safeguard individuals' rights and ensure respect for humanity during wartime with the practices of Israeli occupation against Palestinians. This framework includes the Geneva Conventions, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, which focuses on protecting civilians during armed conflicts. It outlines the restrictions imposed on warring parties concerning targeting civilians and destroying vital properties.

Human rights during war are a key focus of international law, particularly regarding education and healthcare. Laws emphasize the necessity of respecting these rights even in times of conflict. In this context, international and local organizations play a pivotal role in reinforcing such protections. Notably, the First Additional Protocol (1977) enhances protections for victims of international armed conflicts, adding a layer of guarantees to safeguard civilian rights. This includes occupied territories that have witnessed escalating violations against civilians, necessitating strengthened international protections.

Additionally, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) affirms the protection of individuals, guaranteeing the right to life and liberty while prohibiting torture and cruel, inhuman treatment, and providing a legal framework for civilian protection during conflicts. Furthermore, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) complements this framework, offering special protection for children during conflicts and ensuring their rights to education and healthcare.

In addition to these conventions, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide emphasizes the international community's commitment to preventing genocide and holding perpetrators accountable. Genocide is considered a grave violation of human rights, requiring appropriate international measures for its prevention. The United Nations (UN) serves as a cornerstone in ensuring the implementation of human rights in occupied territories through various committees, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which monitors the human rights situation and documents violations. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also participates in delivering humanitarian aid and protecting civilians.

Other organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW), monitor and document human rights violations in Palestinian territories, calling on the international community to intervene to protect civilians. Among the significant international declarations emphasizing the protection of human rights in armed conflicts is the Safe Schools Declaration (2015), which obligates states to protect educational institutions from military use during conflicts, thereby reinforcing children's right to education even in times of war. Additionally, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child strengthens the protection of children in armed conflicts.

From a judicial perspective, the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutes individuals responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) contributes to resolving legal disputes between states, including those concerning human rights violations in occupied territories.

In conclusion, these laws and international treaties will serve as the legal basis for analyzing Israel's violations against Palestinian civilians. By closely examining the evidence and facts related to such violations, the aim is to draw legal conclusions confirming its breaches of international law. Additionally, this analysis will highlight how Israel's actions contradict the legal provisions ensuring human rights protection, particularly within the framework of its obligations under the relevant international treaties and conventions.

Inadequacy of Criminal Justice in Addressing Occupation Crimes

The international system, with its structures and judicial bodies, remains incapable of deterring the crimes of the occupation and prosecuting the perpetrators. This raises recurring questions whenever such crimes occur about whether the international criminal justice policy for prosecuting war criminals truly adheres to fair ethical standards that do not discriminate between victims and perpetrators based on religion or ethnicity. Alternatively, it may merely reflect the logic of power imposed by the victorious powers of World War II, selectively used as a tool for pressure and domination in international relations.

The Israeli occupation has violated all the crimes defined by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the four Geneva Conventions, and both ancient and modern international customs. It has committed genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and forced displacement. Additionally, it has targeted hospitals, healthcare facilities, and places of worship, cut off water and electricity supplies, and even bombed areas it had itself designated as "safe zones." Journalists, paramedics, and relief trucks have also been targeted.

Evidence of these crimes does not require complex investigations or lengthy documentation processes. They are blatantly present in daily recurring scenes in Gaza for more than 450 days and are documented through photos and videos that clearly illustrate the scale of grave violations against the civilian population. As this report is being prepared, the war continues, with a persistent rise in the number of victims and violations.

This report aims to provide a detailed presentation of the documented violations by compiling comprehensive evidence of crimes based on official local and international sources that confirm these violations. Furthermore, it will shed light on the ongoing suffering of the civilian population in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Accordingly, these crimes will be analyzed from a legal perspective, relying on international and humanitarian laws, with a focus on identifying legal responsibilities and highlighting the crimes committed within a comprehensive legal framework.

Human Rights Violations in Palestinian Territories

The occupied Palestinian territories, including the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, suffer from continuous human rights violations due to Israeli policies and practices that starkly challenge international laws. These violations encompass targeting civilians, essential infrastructure, and suppressing fundamental freedoms, aggravating the Palestinian people's suffering, and threatening their security and stability.

The human and material toll of these policies includes excessive force, arbitrary arrests, and the targeting of civilians and humanitarian institutions. Justice mechanisms face significant challenges in holding perpetrators accountable, reinforcing a state of impunity.

This report examines several issues, including the failure of international justice systems to address occupation crimes, human losses, attacks on educational and civil institutions, violations against journalists and press freedom, restrictions on freedom of movement, and systematic assaults on Palestinian culture and identity.

Human Losses from Israeli Military Operations

The continuous conflict in Gaza and the West Bank has resulted in severe human losses and widespread violations affecting all societal segments, particularly vulnerable groups such as children, women, and the elderly. Data from the Ministry of Health (MOH, 2024) highlights the ongoing humanitarian tragedy and the blatant disregard for international laws. These statistics necessitate urgent international action to halt these crimes and hold perpetrators accountable.

Total Casualties

Gaza Strip: 45,717 martyrs

West Bank: 835 martyrs

Age and Gender Distribution

Children in Gaza: 17,818 martyrs

Women in Gaza: 12,287 martyrs

Child martyrs in the West Bank: 171 martyrs

Targeted Groups

Educational staff martyrs: 756

Medical staff martyrs: 1,068

Civil defense staff martyrs: 94

UNRWA employees: 203 martyrs

Journalists: 201 martyrs

Vulnerable Groups

Elderly martyrs in Gaza: 2,421

Missing Persons

Total missing: 11,200

Children and women among the missing: 4,700

Figure 1 (Martyrs)



(Ministry of Health, 2024)

Injured in the Gaza Strip:

A total of 108,856 were injured.

Injured in the West Bank:

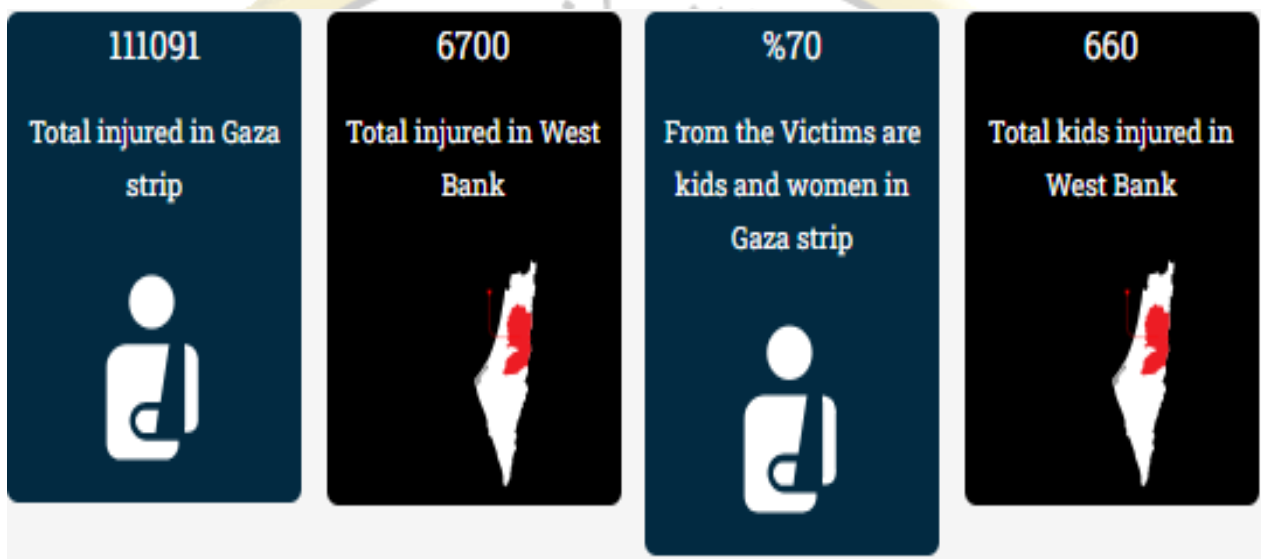
Total 6,450 injured.

Among them are children: 660 children.

Percentage of children and women among the total victims:

70% of the victims are children and women.

Figure 2(Injured as a result of Israeli military operations)



(Ministry of Health, 2024)

The statistics and available data indicate grave violations against civilians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. These violations disproportionately target vulnerable groups such as children and women, representing a blatant breach of international humanitarian law. The substantial number of fatalities among medical, educational, and civil defense personnel underscores the deliberate targeting of essential humanitarian infrastructure, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. Additionally, the high numbers of missing persons, especially women and children, signal an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe. These figures highlight the ongoing violations against civilians and humanitarian facilities, necessitating urgent international intervention to halt these crimes, hold the perpetrators accountable, and safeguard civilian rights in the region.

Violations of International Law The aforementioned acts constitute severe violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. These laws aim to protect individuals and groups during armed conflicts. This section assesses the extent to which Israeli practices align with legal standards under international agreements, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966).

1. Targeting Civilians The high civilian death toll, particularly among vulnerable groups such as children, women, and the elderly in Gaza and the West Bank, violates the common Article

3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. This article mandates the protection of civilian lives during armed conflicts. Additionally, Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits attacks on civilians (ICRC, 1949).

2. Targeting Children and Women The significant casualties among children and women directly contravene international law provisions for civilian protection. According to Article 24 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, children must be protected from violence during armed conflicts. Similarly, Article 76 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions forbids attacks on pregnant and nursing women (AP I, 1977).

3. Targeting Humanitarian and Press Personnel Attacks on medical, educational, and civil defense workers, along with UNRWA staff and journalists, breach international law. The Geneva Conventions and their protocols explicitly protect humanitarian personnel and journalists. Article 19 of Additional Protocol I protect journalists during armed conflicts, while Article 18 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits attacks on UNRWA personnel (AP I, 1977).

4. The Missing The disappearance of large numbers of individuals, particularly children and women, constitutes a violation of human rights related to personal safety. Such disappearances, often resulting from coercion or forced abductions, violate Article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) and Article 5 of the ICCPR, which ensures freedom from arbitrary detention or arrest (ICCPR, 1966).

Conclusion Israeli forces have committed severe violations of international humanitarian law and human rights by targeting civilians, vulnerable groups, and humanitarian workers. These actions contravene legal mandates requiring the protection of such individuals. The international community must act urgently to halt these violations, implement humanitarian measures to safeguard civilians, and ensure accountability for the perpetrators under international law.

Violations Against Education Institutions

Education is one of the fundamental rights that enjoys special protection due to its critical importance in promoting and spreading human rights values widely. It is also a prerequisite for societal progress as a whole, shaping the society's identity and place on the civilizational ladder. Education is not only a tool for awareness but also a genuine guarantee for establishing the principles of human rights and enabling individuals to know and defend their rights. However, the impact of wars and conflicts can destroy this right, hindering development efforts and undermining stability.

The Israeli war on the Gaza Strip constitutes collective punishment affecting all aspects of life. This war represents a serious violation of human rights laws, including higher education. The war restricts educational institutions' ability to provide education and prevents the movement of individuals and essential materials. Furthermore, the recent war in the Gaza Strip caused extensive destruction to higher education institutions. Thousands of students are unable to attend educational institutions outside the Strip due to imposed restrictions.

The Gaza Strip hosts a variety of public and private universities and colleges that offer diverse educational services. Despite achieving some successes, these institutions face significant challenges, particularly under the current Israeli war on the Strip. Universities and colleges suffer from severe shortages of resources and equipment and a lack of sufficient international support (Palestinian Solidarity Project, 2023), exacerbating the situation. In addition, security restrictions impose obstacles that hinder the freedom of movement for students and academics, further compounding the difficulties facing the educational process. With severe funding shortages and weak infrastructure, maintaining effective and sustainable education becomes a significant challenge (PCBS, 2020), threatening the future of higher education in Gaza and undermining its ability to meet the needs of future generations.

The systematic targeting of the Gaza Strip can be analysed through several frameworks, most notably the theory of "spacio-cide" proposed by Sari Hanafi. This theory highlights the close connection between Israel's destruction of higher education institutions in Gaza and its systematic plan to annihilate space on both material and symbolic levels. This targeting is evident in the destruction of educational infrastructure, including universities, laboratories, and libraries, aiming to erase the cultural and scientific identity of Palestinian society, undermining its ability to develop and preserve its intellectual and scientific heritage.

In this context, the systematic targeting of the Gaza Strip can also be analysed through several frameworks, particularly the theory of "spacio-cide" proposed by Sari Hanafi. This theory illustrates how Israel's destruction of higher education institutions is part of a systematic plan to annihilate space on both material and symbolic levels. The destruction goes beyond infrastructure like universities, laboratories, and libraries to target the cultural and scientific identity of Palestinian society, weakening its ability to evolve, preserve its intellectual and scientific heritage, and reinforce efforts to dismantle its social fabric and undermine its national identity.

Higher Education Institutions

Available reports indicate that the educational situation in Gaza was relatively stable before the outbreak of the current war, with notable infrastructure development reflected in the increase in the number of universities and higher enrolment rates. These developments highlight the efforts made to strengthen the educational system and improve the quality of higher education, contributing to broader educational opportunities to meet the needs of future generations (World Bank, 2022). According to available data, there are 19 universities and colleges operating in Gaza, enrolling approximately 88,000 students and employing over 5,100 staff members (MOHE, Palestine, 2024 A). These figures underscore the size of the educational sector its significant role in providing higher education to Palestinian youth and its pivotal role in societal development.

Figure 3(Higher Education Institutions, Students, and Staff)



(MOHE, 2023-2024)

However, during the recent war, most of these institutions ceased operations, significantly impacting students' ability to continue their academic and technical education. Below is a table outlining the higher education institutions in the Gaza Strip, including universities and colleges operating in the sector and the number of enrolled students:

Table 1 (Higher Education Institutions in Gaza)

Higher Education Institutions in Gaza	Number of students
Islamic University	20,204
Al-Azhar University	21,324
Al-Aqsa University	22290
Gaza University	1,400
Gaza University for Women	80
Al-Quds Open University	14,841
Al-Ummah University	1,268
College of Applied and Vocational Sciences	1,615
Palestine College of Nursing	934
Palestine Technical University	1,615
College for Vocational Sciences	980
University of Science and Technology	1,454
Total	88,005

(Ibid, MOHE, 2023-2024)

The table above illustrates the details of higher education institutions in the Gaza Strip, including the number of students enrolled in each educational institution. It also highlights the significant diversity among these institutions, ranging from major universities to specialized colleges and institutes, reflecting their crucial role in advancing higher education in the region. Additionally, the table shows the total number of students enrolled across these institutions,

demonstrating the large scale of the higher education sector in Gaza and its importance in fostering local community development.

For instance, Al-Azhar University tops the list with 19,324 students, followed closely by the Islamic University with 19,204 students, making them the two largest universities by enrolment. Al-Aqsa University ranks third with 14,339 students. On the other hand, institutions such as Gaza Women's University and Palestine College of Nursing report the lowest numbers, with 80 and 857 students, respectively, underscoring their relatively smaller size compared to others. In total, the number of students across all listed institutions amounts to 86,146, representing 44.3% of the population aged 18 to 24. This emphasizes the scale of the higher education sector in Gaza and its role in providing education to a significant segment of the population. These statistics reflect the size of Gaza's educational institutions and their enrolments before being disrupted by the war, highlighting the substantial impact of current crises on higher education in the region.

Impact of the War on Higher Education Institutions

The higher education sector in Gaza is among the most severely affected by the ongoing war. The conflict has impacted not only the physical infrastructure of universities and colleges but also the academic, psychological, social, and economic dimensions. Since October 7, 2023, Israeli officials and media rhetoric have increasingly targeted Palestinian educational institutions, labeling them as hubs for teaching and producing terrorism. This rhetoric has been used to justify military attacks on universities and colleges in Gaza, with the Israeli perspective on combating terrorism providing a pretext for these assaults. In this context, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced in a speech his intention to establish a new authority in Gaza that does not "teach terrorism" (Human Rights Monitor, 2024).

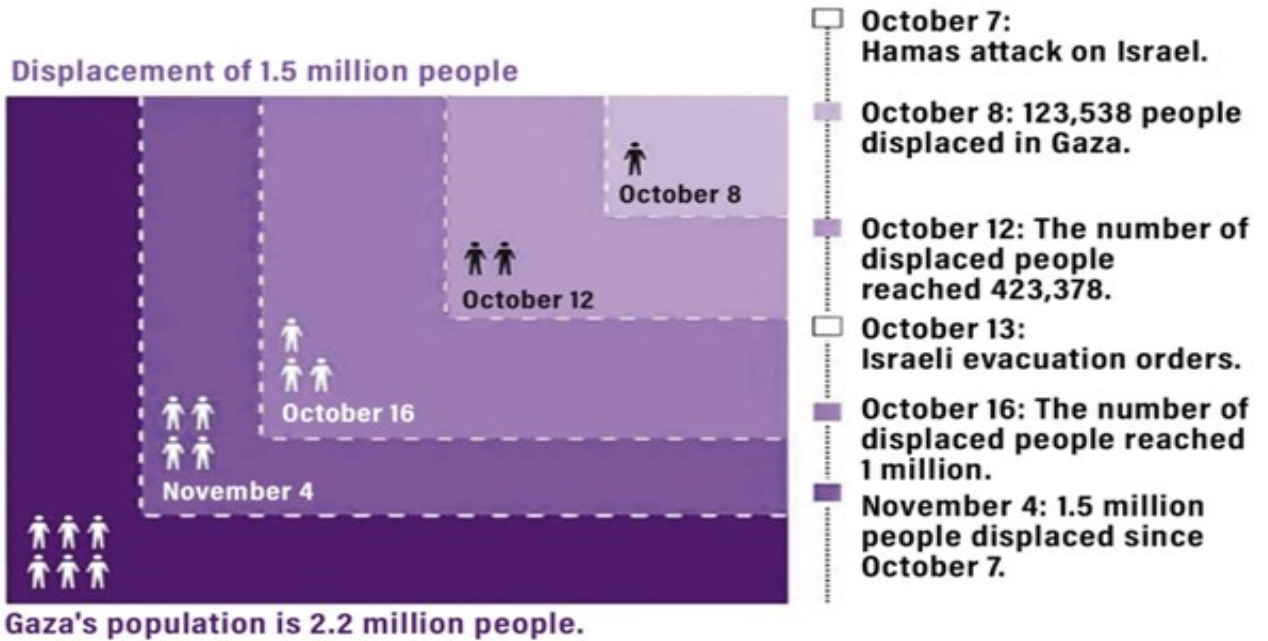
This section of the report provides a comprehensive analysis of the academic, psychological, and economic impacts of the war on the higher education sector in Gaza. It builds on the earlier discussion about the suspension of most educational institutions and the challenges faced by students and faculty members. Accordingly, it examines how the war has posed unprecedented challenges to this vital sector, from the destruction of educational infrastructure and the resulting disruption of academic processes to the profound psychological effects on students suffering from war trauma. Furthermore, it explores the war's implications for employment opportunities and economic development within Palestinian society.

Through this analysis, we aim to demonstrate the complexity of the situation and its far-reaching effects on the future of higher education and the Palestinian community's ability to recover and progress under these harsh conditions.

As shown in the table below, the ongoing conflict in Gaza has led to the internal displacement of many families, hindering students' ability to commute to universities or even continue their education. Students forced to relocate to new areas face challenges adapting to unfamiliar environments, negatively affecting their academic stability. Additionally, many students have lost the ability to enroll in universities due to security concerns and displacement, leading to prolonged educational interruptions and adversely impacting their academic and professional futures (UNRWA, 2024).

The figure below illustrates the number of displaced individuals during previous periods, highlighting the severity of the crisis and its impact on higher education in the region.

Figure 4(Forced Displacement of Gaza Residents)

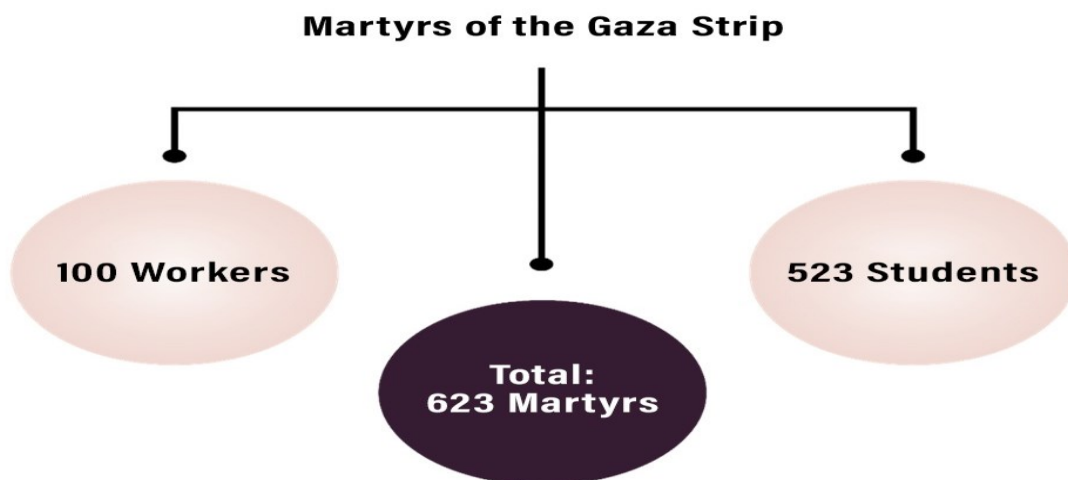


(UNRWA, 2024)

On the other hand, the martyrdom of university students and academics in educational institutions stands as one of the tragic aspects of the ongoing war in Gaza. According to reports, as illustrated in the figure below, the number of university students martyred in the region has reached 523, along with 100 university staff members as of May 16, 2024.

This situation underscores the devastating impact of the conflict on the new generation of academics and intellectuals in Palestine. It also reflects the significant human losses suffered by educational institutions and the profound effect these losses have on the future of higher education in the region.

Figure 5 (Martyrs of Higher Education Institutions in the Gaza Strip)



(Teacher Creativity Center, 2024)

In detail, Infographic No. (6) below highlights the devastating impact of the war on universities and academic institutions in the Gaza Strip. A total of 12 universities and colleges suffered partial or complete destruction, over 100 academics were martyred, and 19 universities and colleges ceased operations. Additionally, 3 university presidents were assassinated.

Furthermore, more than 500 students lost their lives, including 17 individuals holding professorships, 59 with doctoral degrees, and 18 with master's degrees. This infographic vividly illustrates the severe toll of the conflict on educational infrastructure, academic staff, and students in Gaza. The crisis has deprived approximately 88,000 students of access to education, reflecting the profound challenges facing the higher education sector in the region.

Figure 6(Higher Education Institutions in the Gaza Strip)



(Birzeit University Gaza Support Campaign, 2024)

The academic impact of the ongoing conflict in Gaza has been profound, as the cessation of educational activities in many universities and colleges has led to delays in students' graduation, as well as the loss of an entire academic year. This has significantly disrupted their academic and professional trajectories. Additionally, the destruction of infrastructure and educational equipment, including buildings, laboratories, and libraries, has resulted in a shortage of essential resources, hindering scientific research and practical education, and severely affecting the quality of education (MOHE, Palestine, 2024 B). This is in line with UNESCO reports indicating that “the absence of infrastructure disrupts the learning process and reduces the effectiveness of academic programs” (United Nations, 2024). Despite some universities resorting to remote education, the destruction of basic infrastructure has limited the effectiveness of these methods, making the learning process less efficient.

In this context, Gaza faces significant technological challenges that directly affect higher education. One of the primary obstacles is the frequent power outages and weak internet connections, which hinder students and faculty from accessing the internet and using the necessary electronic devices for remote education. Even when electricity is available, the quality of internet services remains weak and unstable due to outdated infrastructure. These challenges make it difficult for students to attend virtual lectures or download course materials,

leading to a decline in the quality of education and widening the educational gap. Moreover, many students and faculty lack the necessary technical skills, which further complicates their ability to benefit from online education opportunities (Younis & Tunç, 2023). Restrictions imposed on the Gaza Strip also limit access to academic platforms and essential resources, negatively impacting the quality of research and academic innovation.

On the psychological front, the effects of the war on students and faculty represent another significant concern. The psychological trauma caused by war and destruction has a profound impact on academic performance, aligning with reports from mental health organizations indicating that individuals affected by war suffer from disorders such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), (Hussein, 2024). These psychological disorders lead to anxiety and depression, diminishing individuals' ability to concentrate and perform academically. Moreover, young people who experience such trauma may face long-term mental health consequences, which can negatively affect their future professional and social lives. Additionally, social factors such as increased poverty and unemployment rates among youth, resulting from disrupted education, exacerbate the impact of these psychological traumas, making the challenges even more complex and difficult to address.

Furthermore, Gaza suffers from extremely high poverty and unemployment rates, with the majority of the population living below the poverty line (Reuters, 2024). These economic conditions make it difficult for many families to afford the costs of higher education, such as tuition fees, transportation, books, and other educational materials. Opportunities provided by the government or international organizations are limited, and when available, they often do not cover all expenses. As a result, many students are forced to drop out of their studies and seek employment to support their families, leading to a decrease in university enrollment rates and negatively impacting the future of these young people. This, in turn, expands the cycle of poverty and unemployment, further complicating their efforts to achieve academic and professional aspirations (MUSTAFA, 2024).

Moreover, forced migration presents another challenge, as many students and faculty are considering leaving Gaza in search of educational and professional opportunities abroad. This contributes to the "brain drain," further complicating the educational and social crisis and making the reconstruction of the educational system even more difficult. These combined factors threaten the future of an entire generation of Palestinian youth, highlighting the urgent need for interventions to support higher education in Gaza and enhance its ability to continue under these difficult circumstances.

Effects of Destruction on Higher Education Institutions

The infrastructure of universities and colleges in Gaza has been severely affected by the wars and Israeli attacks, especially during the recent conflict, where numerous educational buildings, laboratories, libraries, and research facilities were destroyed. This destruction not only disrupted the ability of universities to offer education but also halted scientific research, which relies heavily on having a well-equipped educational environment. According to international organizations such as "Human Rights Watch" and "Amnesty International," many students have lost entire academic years due to the destruction of universities and the inability to access them. The severe damage to these institutions may take years to rebuild and will require substantial financial support (Human Rights Watch, 2024).

According to the Ministry of Higher Education statistics, around 88,000 students have been deprived of continuing their university education, and 555 students have been unable to access scholarships abroad (This Week in Palestine, 2024). Before the war, the rate of university enrollment in Gaza for the 2022/2023 academic year was about 44.3% of the population aged 18-24, a rate close to the national average of 46% for the same age group, and relatively high compared to the Arab region and neighboring countries, where the global average is between 25%-50% (World Bank, 2023).

International organizations such as the United Nations and aid agencies estimate that rebuilding the universities and damaged educational facilities will cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Reports indicate that about 70-80% of university infrastructure has sustained partial to complete damage, requiring enormous efforts to restore it to its previous condition. These estimates underscore the magnitude of the challenges facing higher education in Gaza, calling for concerted international and local efforts to provide the necessary financial and technical support to rebuild damaged educational institutions and ensure the continuity of the educational process (Protecting Education, 2024).

In this context, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor confirmed that ongoing Israeli military attacks on Gaza have disrupted the entire educational process in all universities and colleges. In its mid-February report, the monitor highlighted those three university presidents had been martyred as a result of Israeli airstrikes, along with more than 95 deans and university professors, including 68 with a professorial title (Arab Report, 2024). The report also noted that five out of six universities in Gaza were either completely or partially destroyed by Israeli attacks, with three universities destroyed. Affected universities include Al-Aqsa University, Al-Israa University, Al-Azhar University, and the Open University of Jerusalem, as well as the Islamic University, which was targeted based on allegations that its laboratories were used to manufacture and develop rockets and that its halls were used for Hamas leadership meetings. These accusations intensified after the university gained a seat at UNESCO in 2012 (Islamic University of Gaza, 2024), with the Israeli Foreign Ministry accusing the university of supporting the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades through its chemical engineering department, despite the university's clarification that it had no such department (Al-Wahidi, 2023).

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates, losses in Gaza's education sector due to destruction and the damage to 70% of universities exceed \$720 million, while the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor estimated that the material losses sustained by universities alone from this destruction surpass \$200 million. These figures highlight the significant economic impact of the attacks on Gaza's educational infrastructure, underscoring the need for substantial international efforts to rebuild this vital sector (Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, 2024).

The destruction of university infrastructure in Gaza due to Israeli attacks can be described as widespread and severe, with airstrikes leading to the extensive destruction of university buildings, including lecture halls, libraries, and laboratories. For instance, Al-Azhar University in Gaza suffered heavy bombing, destroying large sections of its buildings, including the central library and science and engineering laboratories. Similarly, Al-Aqsa University's buildings were severely damaged, disrupting the educational process for more than 14,000 students, further exacerbating the higher education crisis in the region (Palestinian Information Center, 2024).

These damages range from partial to destruction, and the table below outlines the extent of the damage to several universities and colleges in Gaza, detailing the number of partially and fully destroyed buildings for each educational institution. This table reflects the scale of these institutions' challenges in restoring their full operational capacity and the impact this has on the future of higher education in the region.

Table 2 (Destroyed Universities and Colleges)

Higher Education Institutions in Gaza	Destroyed Universities and Colleges	
	Partially	Totally
Islamic University	7	10
Al-Azhar University	18	5
Al-Isra University	0	1
Al-Aqsa University	0	3
Palestine University	4	4
Gaza University	4	1
Al-Quds Open University	3	2
Palestine Technical College – Deir Al-Balah	4	0

(MOHE, 2024 C)

Table number (2) reflects the extent of the damage inflicted on higher education institutions in Gaza as a result of the war, with varying levels of partial and total destruction across institutions. For instance, the Islamic University suffered partial destruction of 59%, hindering its ability to resume educational activities. In contrast, Al-Azhar University experienced partial destruction of most of its buildings, amounting to 78%. Meanwhile, Al-Isra University and Al-Aqsa University faced destruction of 100%, completely hindering any immediate rebuilding efforts. On the other hand, the Palestine Technical College in Deir al-Balah did not experience destruction, with damages limited to partial destruction in some buildings and facilities, indicating relatively fewer challenges in rehabilitation. Overall, there is a significant need for universities to receive substantial support for reconstruction, with varying challenges depending on the extent of the destruction they experienced.

The ongoing blockade on Gaza has led to a severe shortage of financial and technical resources necessary to operate universities, making it difficult for these institutions to meet student's needs and provide quality educational services. Universities heavily rely on external support, but political and economic circumstances have hindered the ability to obtain such assistance. This situation negatively affected universities' ability to provide essential educational tools, including access to the Internet and digital resources. (Thawabteh, 2024)

In addition to the destruction of buildings, universities, and colleges lost a significant portion of the scientific and technical equipment essential for teaching and research. Laboratories, particularly in the faculties of medicine, engineering, and science, were among the most damaged buildings, leading to the loss of essential tools for student's and academics' research

and practical experiments. The attacks also resulted in the loss of thousands of books and educational materials stored in university libraries, making it difficult to replace them. Recovering these resources requires significant efforts and sustained international support. (Human Rights Watch, 2024)

From a legal perspective, targeting educational institutions and students during armed conflicts constitutes a serious violation of international laws and conventions that guarantee the right to education and protect educational facilities from any attack. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, in Article 13, affirms the right of every individual to education, with states being obligated to protect it and ensure its continuity without discrimination (ICCPR, 1966). Meanwhile, Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes the necessity of ensuring free and compulsory education for children, even during armed conflicts (CRC, 1989).

Additionally, the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, particularly Articles 52, 53, and 58, explicitly prohibits targeting educational institutions as long as they are not used for military purposes and stresses the need to take measures to protect civilian objects, including schools and universities (AP I, 1977). Furthermore, the Safe Schools Declaration of 2015 calls on states to commit to protecting educational facilities and students from military use or direct targeting due to the catastrophic effects it has on education and human development (GCPEA, 2015). Therefore, the documented attacks on educational institutions and teaching staff, along with the martyrdom of hundreds of students in Palestine, constitute a flagrant violation of these provisions, requiring urgent international intervention to ensure respect for international law and accountability for those responsible for these violations, along with effective measures to protect the right to education and ensure its continuity amid conflicts.

Violations Against Basic Education

Regarding the basic education sector, the number of schools in the Gaza Strip at the beginning of the 2023/2024 academic year was approximately 803 schools, distributed across 550 school buildings. This number is divided into 448 government schools, 288 schools belonging to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), and 67 private schools. These figures reflect the magnitude of the challenges faced by the education sector in Gaza, where the region suffers from difficult and complex conditions, including the total and partial destruction of schools due to the Israeli war. A total of 448 government schools in Gaza have sustained various forms of damage, with 285 schools completely destroyed by the occupying forces, resulting in the martyrdom of 9,000 students and the injury of approximately 14,000 others, of whom around 3,000 students have become disabled (Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, 2024).

As for the number of students in Gaza's schools at the beginning of the 2023/2024 academic year, it reached about 625,000 students. These students were distributed among the different schools, with approximately 305,000 students in government schools, about 300,000 students in UNRWA schools, and around 21,000 students in private schools. These numbers reflect the scale of the challenges faced by the education sector, despite the efforts made to provide education to a large number of students (MOHE, 2024 D).

Regarding early childhood education, there are approximately 620 kindergartens in the Gaza Strip, with around 68,392 children enrolled. These kindergartens employ 3,427 teachers, and

the number of classes in these institutions has reached 2,765, which is a significant number relative to the size of the area. In this context, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education opened preparatory grade classes in government schools, with 14 such classes in the 2022-2023 academic year, and 403 children enrolled. As for the educational staff, the number of teachers in Gaza's schools is about 22,000, including 12,000 in government schools, 9,300 in UNRWA schools, and 1,300 in private schools. This large number reflects the significant efforts made by teachers to provide education under challenging circumstances (PCBS, 2024).

In the same context, UNRWA manages 188 educational buildings, which accommodate approximately 300,000 students, including 298,363 in basic education stages and 1,865 in vocational training programs. However, many of the schools under UNRWA have sustained severe damage due to the ongoing war. Many martyrs, injured, and missing students and educational staff have been reported, with the most recent reports indicating the martyrdom of 197 UNRWA employees, while two-thirds of UNRWA schools in Gaza have been bombed since the beginning of the war.

As for the teachers, about 400 teachers have been martyred in government schools in the sector. These numbers confirm the scale of the massive destruction that has affected the education sector in Gaza, and its profound impact on both students and educational staff. These substantial human and material losses reflect the immense challenges facing the education sector under the current conditions (UNRWA, 2024).

In general, it can be said that the education sector in Gaza faces immense challenges on all fronts. From the destruction of educational facilities to the significant human losses among students and teachers, this sector remains one of the most affected in Gaza. However, there is still much hope and determination to confront these challenges, and the efforts of teachers, students, civil society, and international institutions help to provide a safe and stable educational environment despite the difficulties the sector faces.

Regarding the level of destruction of educational buildings, reports indicate that 76 buildings were directly targeted, while 42 buildings suffered severe damage, 34 buildings sustained moderate damage, and 12 buildings suffered minor damage. The damages to 24 buildings remain unknown (UNRWA, 2024).

Education is a fundamental right for children under international law; however, the education sector in Gaza faces blatant violations of this right due to the ongoing conflict. Below, we examine these violations:

Violation 1: Destruction of Educational Facilities The war waged by the Israeli occupation on the Gaza Strip has led to the destruction of numerous educational facilities. Government schools and schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) have been partially or completely destroyed, disrupting the educational process. This destruction constitutes a gross violation of several international laws, including the Fourth Geneva Convention (ICRC, 1949), which prohibits the targeting of civilian facilities, including educational institutions. This act also violates Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees the right to education for everyone (UDHR, 1948).

Violation 2: Human Losses Among Students and Teachers Military attacks have resulted in the loss of lives of numerous students and teachers, in addition to many others suffering severe injuries. These human losses represent a violation of the right to life and education. According

to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966), every person has the right to life, and this treaty emphasizes the protection of children from exposure to harm. This destruction also violates the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which guarantees children's right to education in a safe environment.

Violation 3: Denial of Education to Children Due to the Destruction of Schools and Kindergartens Early education is a crucial part of the educational system, as kindergartens offer children an opportunity to develop basic skills. With the destruction or severe damage to many kindergartens and schools, children's opportunities to access early education have diminished. This constitutes a violation of the right to education as stipulated in Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1966), which guarantees children's right to free and compulsory primary education. Denying children the opportunity to receive education also violates Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966), which guarantees every individual's right to education.

Violation 4: Hindrance in Accessing Education Amidst the War Military attacks have obstructed children's ability to access education. Many schools that were providing education to children have been destroyed or rendered unfit for use, leading to an interruption in education for many children. According to Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), children must be granted continuous access to education, regardless of the surrounding circumstances. This also constitutes a violation of Article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which ensures the right to education without discrimination, including in situations of conflict.

Violation 5: Impact of the war on Teachers and Educational Staff The ongoing conflict has led to the martyrdom of numerous teachers, diminishing the capacity of the education system to continue. Teachers in Gaza face continuous threats due to the security situation, affecting their ability to provide education. This represents a violation of the rights protected under the Convention for the Protection of Teachers' Rights, which ensures the protection of teachers and educational facilities during armed conflicts. This also breaches the prohibition outlined in Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions (AP I, 1977), which prohibits the targeting of teachers as legitimate military objectives during armed conflicts.

In conclusion, the education sector in Gaza faces severe violations of children's rights to education under various international laws. From the destruction of educational facilities to human losses among students and teachers, the right to education continues to be violated. This constitutes a breach of numerous international agreements such as the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

Issues of Arrests and Violations of Personal Freedoms

The issue of Palestinian detainees represents one of the most significant humanitarian and legal matters, reflecting the ongoing violations against the Palestinian people. As shown in the chart below, the number of detainees from the West Bank is 12,100, while the number of detainees from Gaza is 6,600, with detainees from Gaza representing a large segment, reflecting the continued targeting of the population in the Gaza Strip (PCBS, 2024). Israeli arrests, whether

collective or individual, are characterized by a blatant violation of international and humanitarian laws, involving administrative detention, mistreatment, and targeting of vulnerable groups such as children and women. These violations breach individual rights and challenge the framework of international humanitarian law and human rights.

Figure 7(Detainees in Occupation Prisons)



(PCBS, 2024)

Mass arrests and the transfer of Palestinian detainees outside the occupied territories constitute a blatant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention (ICRC, 1949), which prohibits the transfer of civilians or detainees from occupied territories to the territory of the occupying power. Article 76 of the convention emphasizes that the detention of individuals should take place within the occupied territory, ensuring the provision of humane conditions and fair treatment. Furthermore, many Palestinian detainees, including women and children, are held in inhumane conditions, violating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article 5, which prohibits torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

Detainees are often denied fair and transparent trials, violating the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966), particularly Article 14. The detention of children constitutes a clear violation of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, which asserts in Article 37 that the detention of children should be a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period, ensuring their treatment with dignity. Additionally, Israel practices administrative detention, which allows the detention of Palestinians without charges or trial for extended periods, contradicting international law, which regards this procedure as an exceptional measure that should only be used in rare and necessary cases (CRC, 1989). Furthermore, frequent human rights reports document the torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees, which constitutes a breach of the 1984 Convention Against Torture, which prohibits all forms of torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment (CAT, 1984).

Violations Targeting Civilian and Humanitarian Institutions

Violations Targeting Civilian and Humanitarian Institutions The statistics shown in the chart below reflect the extent of the massive destruction that has affected the infrastructure and vital facilities in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. A total of 245,123 housing units were damaged to varying degrees, with 60,368 buildings destroyed, indicating a wide-scale targeting of residential areas. Health services were significantly impacted, with 17 hospitals operating partially due to the damage. Regarding places of worship, 819 mosques and 3 churches were

destroyed, along with the targeting of educational facilities, where 132 schools and universities were fully destroyed, and 248 others were partially damaged, severely affecting education. Additionally, 211 government offices were destroyed, leading to paralysis in the functioning of government institutions, along with the damage of 139 ambulances, which reduced the ability of medical teams to respond to emergencies. These numbers reflect the magnitude of the humanitarian disaster and the extent of systematic targeting of infrastructure and vital facilities.

Residential buildings, educational institutions, health centers, and places of worship were heavily targeted. These assaults were not limited to the destruction of property but had a direct impact on the lives of Palestinian citizens, hindering their access to basic services such as education and healthcare, and undermining social stability, necessitating urgent international intervention.

Figure 8(Destroyed Buildings)



(PCBS, 2024)

Based on the provided statistics, the damage to Palestinian infrastructure indicates a comprehensive targeting of Palestinian infrastructure, including vital and civilian facilities, which leaves deep impacts on various aspects of life, from health and education to worship and housing. These actions represent clear violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. A total of (245,123) housing units were targeted, which is a clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention (ICRC, 1949), where Article (53) prohibits the destruction of private property in occupied territories. The targeting of this large number of homes directly violates this legal provision. Additionally, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms in Article (25) the right of every individual to an adequate standard of living,

including shelter. The destruction of homes deprives thousands of Palestinians of this right. (UDHR, 1948)

Most educational institutions in the Gaza Strip (380 schools and universities) were destroyed, where the Fourth Geneva Convention in Article (50) calls for the protection of educational establishments and ensuring the continuity of the educational process for children during the occupation (ICRC, 1949). Moreover, Article (28) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) affirms the right of children to education, and therefore, the destruction of schools violates this fundamental right, disrupts education, and constitutes a clear breach of this convention.

As part of the infrastructure destruction, Israeli occupation forces targeted places of worship, destroying (819 mosques and 3 churches), which constitutes a violation of Article (18) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulates freedom of religion, belief, and the practice of religious rites (UDHR, 1948). It also violates Article (53) of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions (1977), which calls for the protection of places of worship as part of cultural and religious heritage (AP I, 1977).

Targeting health facilities, including the damage to 17 partially functioning hospitals, represents a flagrant violation of international obligations concerning the protection of healthcare during armed conflicts. Article (18) of the First Geneva Convention of 1949 mandates the protection of hospitals and healthcare facilities from any attack, and damage to them obstructs the provision of essential healthcare to civilians and the wounded, which is a clear breach of international law. Furthermore, Article (25) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the right of individuals to access adequate healthcare, and the destruction of these facilities constitutes an infringement of this fundamental right, which is protected by international humanitarian law. (UDHR, 1948)

Similarly, the destruction of 211 government buildings violates international obligations imposed by the Fourth Geneva Convention (ICRC, 1949), where Article (56) requires the occupying power to ensure the continued functioning of public institutions to serve the local population and meet their basic needs. Destroying these facilities disrupts the delivery of essential services to the population, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis and directly affecting civilian lives, which constitutes a clear breach of international humanitarian law.

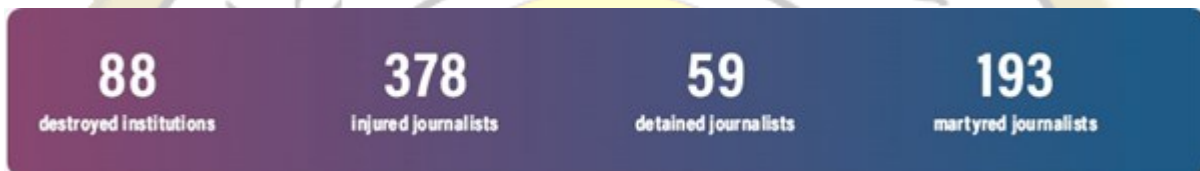
Targeting 139 ambulances damaged during the war constitutes a serious violation of international humanitarian law, as Article (19) of the First Geneva Convention of 1949 mandates the protection of medical units and ambulances designated for transporting the sick and wounded, ensuring their safety during armed conflicts (UDHR, 1948). Damaging these vehicles is a direct obstruction to emergency medical services, which are essential for saving lives. This targeting constitutes a war crime under international law, warranting accountability for those responsible and ensuring non-repetition.

In summary, the practices involving the targeting of Palestinian infrastructure and civilians constitute serious violations of the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law, amounting to war crimes as defined in Article (8) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC, 1998). Furthermore, these violations breach numerous provisions related to basic human rights, as indicated, necessitating legal accountability to ensure justice and protect the rights of the Palestinian people.

Israeli Violations Against Journalists and Press Freedoms

The statistics provided below highlight serious violations against journalists and media institutions, with 193 journalists martyred, 378 journalists injured, 59 journalists arrested, and 88 media institutions destroyed. These violations represent a grave assault on press freedom and human rights. The figures document the challenges faced by journalists in carrying out their duties, including killing and direct targeting, arbitrary arrest, physical injuries, and the destruction of media infrastructure. These events reflect blatant violations of international agreements, especially those related to freedom of expression and the legal protection of civilians during armed conflicts, requiring urgent legal and humanitarian action to ensure accountability and justice.

Figure 9(Targeted Journalists)



(Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, 2024).

The recorded statistics reflect unprecedented violations of human rights and call for deep reflections on the long-term impact of these violations. The martyrdom of 193 journalists is a blatant breach of the right to life guaranteed by Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), and it stands as a challenge to international conventions that prohibit targeting journalists while performing their duties. This requires international accountability. According to Article 9 of the UDHR, the arbitrary detention of 59 journalists represents a direct violation of the right to liberty and personal security, posing a serious threat to civil rights.

Additionally, the physical injuries sustained by 378 journalists while performing their professional duties contradict Article 19 of the UDHR, which ensures freedom of expression and opinion, making attacks on journalists a clear violation of this right. On the other hand, it is evident that the destruction of 88 media institutions constitutes a direct breach of the Geneva Conventions concerning the protection of civilian property, and is among the most severe violations affecting the media environment and limiting journalists' ability to perform their duties.

These violations represent a threat to the principles of human rights in general and to press freedom in particular. Many international human rights organizations have affirmed that attacks on journalists, whether physical, legal, or through the destruction of their property, not only represent violations of their personal rights but also pose a threat to the entire society's right to access information and participate in freedom of opinion and expression.

Moreover, these violations constitute a breach of several international standards, foremost among them the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, which

obliges state parties to protect freedom of expression and not subject journalists to threats, acts of violence, or illegal detention. Article 19 of the Covenant states that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which includes the right of journalists to carry out their work freely and safely.

The systematic targeting of journalists is a clear violation of international agreements, especially those regarding the protection of journalists in conflict areas. This includes provisions related to protection during armed conflicts. According to paragraph 4 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, attacks on journalists carrying out their duties during wars and conflicts are prohibited. Furthermore, the killing of journalists constitutes a violation of international humanitarian law and is considered a war crime under the Rome Statute of 1998.

Arbitrary detention is one of the worst violations faced by journalists in conflict zones. Journalists often face illegal charges or baseless allegations used as tools of repression and intimidation. In Palestine, many journalists are detained without being afforded a fair trial, violating their right to a fair trial, which is guaranteed under Article 9 of the ICCPR. In many cases, detained journalists suffer from inhuman conditions, including physical and psychological torture.

On the other hand, the destruction of media infrastructure directly impacts journalists' ability to carry out their work freely. The destruction of media institutions is not only a violation of civil rights but also a distortion of the truth in conflict zones. Additionally, this destruction limits local communities' ability to access independent information, increasing the impact of media manipulation and negatively affecting the quality of available information.

The destruction of media institutions is not merely a material harm but has serious moral consequences, as it affects independent media coverage in conflict zones. Media institutions play a critical role in ensuring the transparent flow of information, and by destroying these institutions, the public is deprived of their right to know the facts about ongoing events. This contradicts fundamental human rights, especially the right to access information, which is considered a cornerstone of democracy.

The violations against journalists and media institutions constitute a flagrant violation of human rights and severe encroachments on press freedom in Palestine. The targeting of journalists, whether through killing, detention, injury, or the destruction of media infrastructure, is a clear breach of international laws, particularly those related to freedom of expression, the right to life, and the legal protection of journalists in conflict zones.

Damage to Archaeological and Historical Sites

In 2024, Gaza witnessed the systematic destruction of many archaeological and historical sites due to Israeli airstrikes, leading to the loss of a significant portion of Palestinian cultural heritage. Reports indicate the destruction of more than 200 archaeological and historical sites in Gaza, out of 325 such sites in the sector (Palestinian National Library). Notable sites affected include:

- The Great Omari Mosque: One of the oldest mosques in Gaza, severely damaged by airstrikes.
- St. Porphyrius Church: The third oldest church in the world, heavily damaged due to direct targeting.
- The Byzantine Church: A significant archaeological site destroyed during the bombing.
- The Deir al-Balah Cemetery: Over 2000 years old, destroyed.
- The Blakhiya Port: Dating back to 800 BC, one of Gaza's most important archaeological landmarks, was destroyed.

The destruction of churches, mosques, and archaeological sites in Gaza constitutes a serious violation of international humanitarian law and laws related to the protection of cultural property in armed conflicts. It is a legal violation of the 1954 Hague Convention on the protection of cultural property, which mandates the safeguarding of cultural assets from attacks during armed conflicts. Destruction of sites such as the Great Omari Mosque and St. Porphyrius Church violates Articles (1) and (4) of the Convention, which prohibits hostile acts against cultural property. These actions are also considered war crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, particularly Articles (2, 8, 9) (ICC, 1998).

Targeting archaeological sites constitutes an attempt to erase the Palestinian people's cultural identity. Violating this cultural right contradicts the right to cultural identity and human rights, as outlined in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) and Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICCPR, 1966).

Targeting non-military civilian and cultural sites is a gross violation of the principles of proportionality and distinction in international humanitarian law, which call for the protection of civilian objects and avoiding harm to them (ICERD, 1965). The bombing of cultural and archaeological sites with no direct military value violates these principles and constitutes a systematic crime aimed at erasing the Palestinian cultural and historical identity.

This behavior constitutes a war crime under international humanitarian law and requires urgent global action to protect human heritage in the region. It also necessitates the intervention of the International Criminal Court to ensure accountability for those responsible for these crimes and to preserve Palestinian cultural heritage as part of global human heritage.

Genocide and Its Legal Consequences

Considering the situation in Gaza, the siege imposed for more than seventeen years represents a form of genocide and persecution, as well as a crime against humanity. According to the Genocide Convention, genocide does not require direct killing but involves creating conditions that lead to the total or partial destruction of a group. Article 2 of the Convention states that the following acts constitute genocide: killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm, subjecting the group to living conditions aimed at its physical destruction, or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. The Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza has carried out these violations. In Gaza, tight restrictions have been imposed on the entry of food and medical supplies, leading to widespread famine and malnutrition, especially among children. The siege has also led to the destruction of critical infrastructure, worsening the humanitarian situation.

Evidence and facts suggest a clear intent for genocide through a series of crimes committed against the Palestinian people, manifested in the following aspects (PCBS, 2024):

1. **Mass Killing:** The number of martyrs has exceeded 45,717 as of the preparation of this report, 65.7% of them women and children, reflecting a systematic targeting of the most vulnerable groups.
2. **Cruel Treatment:** The crimes included the arrest of children, blindfolding them, forcing them to undress, and leaving them in harsh weather conditions, a gross violation of international humanitarian law.
3. **Reneging on Safety Promises:** The Israeli army bombed areas previously declared safe, leading to the death and injury of many civilians who sought refuge there.
4. **Preventing Access to Water and Food:** The tight siege has pushed Gaza to the brink of famine, reflecting a deliberate starvation policy against the population.
5. **Targeting the Health Sector:** Bombing led to the destruction of most hospitals and health centers, 139 ambulances, and the martyrdom of over 1,086 medical staff, causing the collapse of the healthcare system in Gaza.
6. **Destruction of Infrastructure:** Systematic destruction included residential buildings, schools, universities, and cultural institutions, displacing thousands of families and disrupting daily life.

Statements from Israeli officials in 2024 further support the genocidal intent, revealing incitement against Palestinians that may escalate to genocide:

- Nissim Vatouri, Deputy Speaker of the Knesset, posted a tweet in November 2024 saying, "Burn Gaza immediately, nothing else!" and called for "erasing Gaza from the face of the earth."

- Itamar Ben-Gvir, Minister of National Security, proposed policies encouraging Palestinians to leave Gaza voluntarily, to resettle Israelis in their place.
- Avigdor Lieberman, a Knesset member, called for halting the supply of food and goods to Gaza, criticizing the sale of Israeli products to its residents.
- Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, used religious texts to motivate Israeli soldiers, referring to texts calling for the destruction of enemies, describing the conflict as a "war between the children of light and the children of darkness."

Video clips also circulated showing Israeli soldiers chanting phrases like "Occupy, Expel, Settle," celebrating the destruction of Gaza, reflecting the impact of official rhetoric on their behavior.

These practices and statements constitute a clear violation of international humanitarian law and human rights charters, amounting to crimes against humanity and genocide. Therefore, the situation demands urgent international intervention to ensure accountability for those responsible for these crimes and halt the ongoing humanitarian decline in the region, including through the legal mechanisms of the International Criminal Court.

In the same context, the violations against civilians in Gaza are among the most severe crimes threatening basic human rights, including the right to life, security, and dignity. These violations include intentional killing, indiscriminate attacks, and starvation as a tool of war, in addition to the destruction of civilian property and essential facilities, all of which constitute gross violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Through these practices, fundamental principles outlined in international agreements like the Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols, as well as treaties on human rights, which aim to protect civilians during conflicts, are ignored.

Thus, the violations committed against civilians in Gaza are based on a set of international legal provisions that prohibit such actions, including Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998) defines indiscriminate attacks and intentional killing of civilians during armed conflicts as crimes against humanity (ICC, 1998). Moreover, the 1949 Geneva Conventions, under Article 3, prohibit attacks targeting individuals who do not directly participate in hostilities, including civilians, the wounded, and detainees. Additionally, the Fourth Geneva Convention emphasizes in Articles (27) and (33) the prohibition of attacks targeting civilians and civilian facilities, with special protection for women and children during armed conflicts (ICRC, 1949).

Furthermore, Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions (AP I, 1977), in Article (51), prohibits targeting civilians, stressing that attacks should be limited to military objectives. Article (57) requires all necessary precautions to minimize harm to civilians during armed conflicts.

The 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, under Article (6), prohibits any form of arbitrary execution or extrajudicial killing, strengthening the protection of the right to life under international humanitarian law. According to the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, Article (11) obligates states to protect the right of civilians to live in dignity, including ensuring a safe environment free from illegal military attacks. In this context, Article (33) of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits collective

punishment and using starvation as a tool of war (ICRC, 1949), while Article (54) of Additional Protocol I stresses the prevention of attacks on essential materials such as food, agriculture, livestock, and water sources, considering their destruction a war crime (AP I, 1977).

Regarding ethnic cleansing, the Rome Statute defines this practice, under Article (7), as a crime against humanity involving the forcible removal of populations to eliminate their cultural identity (ICC, 1998). Moreover, the siege is prohibited as collective punishment, as Article (33) of the Fourth Geneva Convention forbids imposing collective sanctions such as cutting off essential supplies to civilian populations, a severe violation of international humanitarian law (ICRC, 1949).

Regarding occupation and settlement, Article (49) of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the transfer of the occupying power's civilian population to occupied territories, while Article (53) prohibits the destruction of public and private property in these territories unless required by absolute military necessity (ICRC, 1949). Furthermore, crimes committed against civilians, such as indiscriminate attacks, intentional killing, and the widespread destruction of civilian property, are considered crimes against humanity under Article (7) of the Rome Statute (ICC, 1998).

Based on these violations, these acts require an international investigation to hold those responsible accountable and ensure they face justice under international law. Furthermore, the Palestinian people's right to self-defense is a legitimate right that should be supported by the international community, with concrete steps taken to address these ongoing violations and promote compliance with international humanitarian law.

Forced Displacement of Civilian Populations

The Gaza War of 2024 witnessed an unprecedented wave of forced displacement of Palestinians, as Israeli military operations led to the displacement of over two million civilians, who were forced to leave their homes in search of safety in other areas within the Gaza Strip or along its borders. These movements were a direct result of evacuation orders issued by the Israeli occupation forces, which covered vast areas in northern and southern Gaza, under immense pressure caused by intense air and artillery bombardments, as well as the near-total disruption of essential services such as food and water (ESCWA, 2024).

This forced displacement constitutes a blatant violation of international humanitarian law, which prohibits the forced transfer of civilian populations as part of systematic military attacks targeting them. Forced displacement also constitutes a form of illegal collective punishment against civilians.

Furthermore, the displacement crisis was exacerbated by the widespread destruction of infrastructure, health, and educational facilities, which hindered relief efforts and weakened the ability of humanitarian organizations to provide protection and assistance to the affected populations. These violations require an urgent international investigation to hold those responsible accountable and ensure protection for the affected civilians.

In light of these circumstances, international forces face serious challenges in holding accountable those responsible for the extensive forced displacement witnessed in Gaza during the 2024 war, as the international community has not taken effective steps to provide adequate protection to Palestinian civilians. This inaction raises genuine concerns about the effectiveness of international legal mechanisms in preventing such violations in the context of armed conflicts.

Overall, the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians represents one of the most horrific forms of human suffering, requiring urgent intervention from the international community to end these violations and ensure the safe return of the displaced, in line with international humanitarian and legal standards.

In the context of forced displacement, reports indicated that August 2024 saw the displacement of approximately 250,000 Palestinians from the Khan Yunis area following evacuation orders issued by the Israeli military. This displacement represents a new phase of suffering, as vast areas of the Strip were subjected to waves of systematic displacement, clearly reflected in the escalating humanitarian disaster (UNRWA, 2024).

Human Rights Watch also made clear accusations against Israel of committing war crimes related to the forced displacement of Palestinians in Gaza. The organization confirmed that this displacement is part of a systematic policy aimed at forcibly transferring populations, which constitutes a serious violation of the Geneva Conventions, which prohibit the forced transfer of civilian populations and oblige the parties in conflict to protect them. These facts require decisive legal action and accountability for those responsible for these crimes before international courts (Human Rights Watch, 2024).

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) issued a report in October 2024, detailing the impact of military operations on its facilities, where its schools and facilities were damaged, resulting in the deaths and injuries of many displaced persons who sought refuge there (UNRWA, 2024).

In the context of the forced displacement of Palestinians during the Gaza War of 2024, and light of international legal references, the international legal basis for forced displacement can be defined as follows:

1. The Geneva Conventions of 1949: The Geneva Conventions protect civilians in armed conflicts, particularly in the Fourth Geneva Convention concerning the protection of civilians during war. According to Article 49 of the Convention, it is prohibited for an occupying power to forcibly transfer civilians from the territories it controls. Article 33 of the same Convention also prohibits collective punishments, including forced displacement (ICRC, 1949).
2. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court: The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court recognizes that forced displacement can be considered a crime against humanity if carried out as part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilians. According to this statute, forced displacement is considered a war crime if carried out in the context of an armed conflict (ICC, 1998).
3. International Definition of Forced Displacement: According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), forced displacement refers to the involuntary removal of individuals or groups from their habitual residences due to military attack,

repression, or emergencies, and it constitutes a violation of human rights, including the right to housing and the right to life.

4. **Forced Displacement in Gaza as a Crime Against Humanity:** The forced displacement that occurred in Gaza in 2024 can be classified as a crime against humanity under Article 7 of the Rome Statute. The Israeli military attack that resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians in Gaza could be considered a widespread attack against civilians, thus making it a crime against humanity under the standards of the International Criminal Court (ICC, 1998).
5. **Forced Displacement as a War Crime:** When military force or the threat of it is used to carry out forced displacement operations, as occurred in Gaza, it falls within the scope of war crimes. Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, forced displacement is strictly prohibited except in emergency situations dictated by security circumstances, which were not observed in many cases in Gaza (ICRC, 1949).
6. **Collective Punishments:** Israeli practices of imposing a blockade, destroying infrastructure, and cutting off essential supplies such as food and water are considered collective punishments against civilians, violating Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits collective punishment. These policies aim to force civilians to leave, thus contributing to the process of forced displacement (ICRC, 1949).

Through the legal references and international obligations in the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute, it is clear that the forced displacement in Gaza represents a gross violation of international humanitarian law and human rights. However, international accountability mechanisms remain weak, and efforts must be strengthened to enforce international law and hold those responsible for these crimes accountable. This requires considering the commitment of states to protect human rights, uphold the principle of non-acceptance of collective punishments, and reduce the use of force against civilians. Despite the existence of strict international laws, many of these violations continue due to the lack of effective accountability. Therefore, international efforts must be intensified to compel the parties involved to comply with international law and bring the perpetrators to justice, ensuring the protection and rights of civilians and preventing future forced displacement.

The Use of Banned Weapons and Their Legal Implications

During the war on Gaza in 2024, credible human rights and journalistic reports accused Israel of using internationally banned weapons, leading to devastating humanitarian impacts on Palestinian civilians. According to a report published by the British "Independent" newspaper, based on local and international sources, including the Palestinian Ministry of Health and international organizations, the nature of the weapons used caused severe injuries, deep burns, and amputations, with many victims suffering large burns. Israel used internationally banned weapons (Mayadeen News, 2024), such as:

1. **Cluster bombs:** Investigations by Human Rights Watch revealed that Israeli shelling, especially in areas bordering Lebanon, resulted in injuries similar to those caused by cluster bombs. These weapons are notorious for their danger to civilians due to their indiscriminate nature and long-lasting impact after use.

2. DIME bombs (Dense Inert Metal Explosives): The Palestinian Ministry of Health reported injuries caused by bombs containing tungsten metal, known for causing limb amputations and increasing cancer risks.
3. Penetration bombs and American bombs: The weapons used included bunker-busting bombs and American bombs like "APAM" and "Halper" missiles, in addition to GPS-guided bombs used to destroy infrastructure.
4. Unmanned bombs: A report by "The Guardian" newspaper stated that the Israeli military heavily relied on unguided bombs, also known as "dumb bombs," with low accuracy, making up around 40% to 45% of the munitions used in the war. The use of this type of munition generally causes widespread random damage, endangering civilian lives and infrastructure.

The use of these weapons resulted in widespread destruction of infrastructure, alongside severe injuries among civilians, raising international concerns about violations of the laws of war. The use of banned or inaccurate weapons in densely populated areas violates international humanitarian law, including the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, which prohibits weapons causing excessive suffering or disproportionate damage to civilians (API, 1977). Furthermore, "The Washington Post" reported that Israel dropped bombs on Gaza in less than a week, equivalent to what the U.S. dropped on Afghanistan in a full year. This information suggests Israel's use of internationally banned weapons in its war on Gaza, raising questions about its compliance with international humanitarian law.

The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor documented cases of victims' bodies disappearing or turning to ashes, raising questions about the nature of the weapons used. The monitor pointed to the possibility that Israel used thermal bombs, also known as vacuum bombs, which generate intense heat of up to 2500°C, causing the victims' bodies to vaporize or melt. These weapons are banned under international humanitarian law, and their use constitutes a war crime.

The monitor also called for the formation of an international commission of experts to determine the type of weapons used and document the violations committed, noting that such weapons cause severe harm to civilians, including amputations and cancer injuries. International reports also indicate that Israel used bombs with massive destructive power, with each individual in Gaza receiving more than 10 kilograms of explosives, an excessive use of weapons that constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, requiring an independent international investigation to ensure accountability and bring perpetrators to justice (Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, 2024).

The Escalating Food Insecurity Crisis in the Occupied Territories

During the ongoing war launched by Israel on the Gaza Strip, the hunger crisis among more than two million displaced persons has worsened, with international organizations warning of an imminent famine threatening the population as the conflict enters its second year. In this context, UN Secretary-General António Guterres confirmed that Gaza's residents face the risk of famine, alongside the spread of diseases and malnutrition, as the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate on multiple levels (United Nations, 2024), including:

The escalating food crisis

According to a report published by the "Financial Times," the suffering of displaced persons is highlighted through the testimony of a woman named Amal Mohammad, who confirmed her inability to provide food for her children due to rising food and cooking tool prices. Amal explained that meat had become an unattainable dream, and adults often reduce their daily meals to ensure their children get at least the minimum amount of food.

Disruption of humanitarian aid access

Gaza's residents rely almost entirely on humanitarian aid coming through two main entry points. However, ongoing Israeli shelling has disrupted food distribution and closed essential facilities. This situation has made it difficult to access supplies, prompting United Nations agencies to issue warnings about the escalating humanitarian disaster.

The Gaza Strip faces an acute and unprecedented food crisis, with World Food Programme reports showing that all residents of the area are suffering from food insecurity, with over 500,000 people categorized at catastrophic levels of food shortage. In the markets, store shelves appear almost empty of essential items, except for goods like canned meat and beans, while prices for fresh goods, such as milk and eggs, have skyrocketed to unaffordable levels (FAO, 2024).

Reports from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) indicated that the ongoing conflict in Gaza has placed all of the region's 2.2 million inhabitants in food crisis levels, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. Over a million people are expected to reach a state of famine and starvation if urgent action is not taken. In a statement by FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu, he noted that "the alarming projections presented in the report should serve as a warning to the international community to act before it's too late" (FAO, 2024).

The United Nations confirmed significant difficulties in obtaining the necessary permits from Israel to deliver aid to the most affected areas in northern Gaza, exacerbating the humanitarian situation. Despite the daily entry of around 100 aid trucks, the actual needs require at least 600 trucks to meet the basic needs of displaced populations (United Nations, 2024).

In this context, Cindy McCain, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, stated that Gaza's residents face the risk of starving to death despite being near aid trucks. She emphasized that famine could be avoided if supplies were adequately provided and safe access to the needy was ensured (United Nations, 2024).

Violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

International humanitarian law, particularly the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocol I of 1977 imposes clear obligations to protect civilians during armed conflicts, including ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid and prohibiting the use of starvation as a weapon of war. Article 54 of Additional Protocol I explicitly prohibit the use of starvation as a war tactic or targeting essential civilian resources, and any blockade that leads to civilian

starvation and prevents aid could be considered a serious violation of this prohibition (API, 1977).

Similarly, Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights affirms the fundamental right of every individual to access adequate food, making practices that lead to widespread famine or deprivation of sufficient food a direct violation of this right, especially if done intentionally or due to restrictive policies. Article 12 of the same covenant requires states to ensure the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, which is at odds with the reality in Gaza, where malnutrition and diseases are widespread due to restrictions on humanitarian aid and medical supplies (ICCPR, 1966).

Article 23 of the Fourth Geneva Convention requires the facilitation of unhindered humanitarian aid access, so the restrictions placed on aid access to northern Gaza and the ongoing disruption of distribution through only two entry points constitute a violation of this commitment. These actions represent a direct violation of fundamental rights guaranteed under international law, worsening the suffering of civilian populations and placing legal responsibility on the occupying power (ICRC, 1949).

Legal Implications of the Humanitarian Crisis

This crisis goes beyond humanitarian dimensions to become a severe violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. These violations are evident in the following:

1. Deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid access: According to Article 54 of Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions, using starvation as a war tactic or targeting basic civilian resources is prohibited (API, 1977).
2. Targeting civilians and infrastructure: Attacks on vital facilities and civilians clearly violate Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (ICRC, 1949).
3. Using starvation as a weapon of war: These practices are classified as war crimes under the Rome Statute when systematically used to weaken civilian populations (ICC, 1998).

Israel's Responsibility as an Occupying Power under International Law

According to international humanitarian law, Israel is considered an occupying power, which imposes clear legal obligations towards the population of Gaza, as outlined in:

1. Ensuring the provision of civilian needs: Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention mandates that the occupying power is responsible for ensuring the provision of food and medical supplies to civilians under its control and must not obstruct such supplies in any form (ICRC, 1949).
2. Prohibition of collective punishment: Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits imposing collective punishments on civilian populations, including comprehensive blockades that deprive civilians of food, water, and medicine, which constitutes a serious violation of international law (ICRC, 1949).

Israeli Attacks on Palestinian Women

According to a report by UN Women, more than 177,000 women in the Gaza Strip are facing catastrophic health repercussions due to the ongoing war, with data indicating that 84% of healthcare facilities have been destroyed, while the remaining facilities suffer from severe shortages in medicine, ambulances, and electricity supplies. In addition, statistics show that more than 162,000 women are suffering from non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and cancer, while 15,000 pregnant women face serious health risks due to food shortages, increasing the likelihood of complications such as infections and anemia.

In these circumstances, the Gaza Strip is experiencing a severe shortage of sexual and reproductive health services, exacerbating the suffering of women, especially since they are the primary caregivers in families during a severe food crisis. According to the United Nations, urgent solutions to prevent further health deterioration include an immediate ceasefire and ensuring the safe and unconditional delivery of humanitarian aid.

Moreover, UN Women emphasizes the importance of providing healthcare services that address the needs of women and ensure gender equality, as well as protecting healthcare workers from the dangers of war. Statistical data shows that among the affected women, 30,841 are at risk of diabetes, 107,443 are at risk of hypertension, 18,583 are at risk of cardiovascular diseases, and 5,201 are suffering from cancer. (UN Women, 2024)

Among 155,000 pregnant women in Gaza, 15,000 are at risk of starvation. The war has also had a significant impact on the mental health of the population, with 75% of women reporting feelings of depression, 62% suffering from sleep difficulties, and 65% experiencing stress and nightmares. Moreover, 68% of pregnant women have faced serious complications such as urinary tract infections and anemia, as well as issues with blood pressure and premature birth. More than 5,000 cancer patients urgently need treatment. (UN Women, 2024)

Regarding public health, overcrowded shelters and a lack of proper water and sanitation have led to the spread of respiratory diseases, jaundice, and diarrhea, with more than two-thirds of gastrointestinal and hepatitis A cases recorded among women.

Figure 10(Risks Threatening Women's Lives)



(UN Women, 2024)

Violations of Palestinian Children's Rights

International reports issued by UNICEF have warned of the worsening malnutrition crisis in Gaza, posing a significant threat to the health of children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers. As the conflict in Gaza continues, access to food and clean drinking water has become scarce, leading to the spread of diseases and an alarming increase in acute malnutrition rates, particularly in northern Gaza. According to the reports, one in six children under the age of two in northern Gaza suffers from acute malnutrition, with 3% experiencing severe wasting, putting their lives at risk. In southern Gaza, where aid is more accessible, 5% of children face acute malnutrition. Additionally, data shows that 90% of children under the age of five suffer from at least one infectious disease, with diarrhea cases increasing 23 times compared to 2022. Children face hunger and thirst, making them more vulnerable to diseases, especially those with diarrhea, who struggle to absorb essential nutrients. (UNICEF, 2024)

The ongoing war in Gaza continues to devastate children and families, with the region witnessing alarming mortality rates. According to the latest estimates from the Palestinian Ministry of Health, around 14,000 children have been killed, thousands injured, and approximately 1.9 million people displaced—90% of Gaza's population, over half of whom are children. These displaced individuals face severe shortages of food, water, fuel, and medicine. In this context, more than 600,000 children in Rafah have lost their homes and families, exacerbating their plight. (UNICEF, 2024)

Many children have experienced repeated displacement, lost loved ones, and desperately needed protection, healthcare, and shelter. They have endured unimaginable trauma and suffering, urgently requiring an immediate ceasefire to give them a chance to rebuild a safe and peaceful future. Furthermore, the escalating conflict in Gaza has deepened the humanitarian crisis, threatening the lives of over 1.1 million children. As health conditions deteriorate, diarrhea cases have risen by 50% in just one week, further worsening children's suffering. (MOH, 2024)

Meanwhile, 90% of children under the age of two suffer from "severe food poverty," reflecting the magnitude of the food and humanitarian crisis in the region. The conflict has created a deadly triple threat for children: increased diseases, worsening malnutrition, and rising food poverty. Since the conflict began, thousands of children have died, and living conditions have rapidly deteriorated. For instance, diarrhea cases among children under five have surged from 48,000 to 71,000 in one week. Additionally, 90% of children under two suffer from "severe food poverty," while food diversity within households has significantly diminished, exacerbating malnutrition. (ActionAid, 2024)

The absence of vaccines in Gaza poses a deadly risk to children, akin to the threat of bullets in armed conflicts. With the escalation of the war and the destruction of hospitals and healthcare infrastructure, accessing essential vaccines to protect children from infectious diseases has become increasingly difficult. This situation worsens their suffering and exposes them to severe health risks. Amid rapidly deteriorating health conditions, children are vulnerable to preventable diseases under normal circumstances.

International reports have also highlighted the worsening crises in Gaza due to the ongoing Israeli war, reflecting severe violations of children's rights under international law, particularly given the harsh humanitarian conditions faced by children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers. The violations of children's rights by the Israeli occupation can be summarized as follows:

1. **Killing and Physical Injuries of Children:** According to the latest estimates from the Palestinian Ministry of Health, around 14,000 children have been killed in the ongoing conflict, and thousands injured. This violates Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which guarantees the child's right to life, survival, and development, as well as the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which restricts targeting children in armed conflicts. (CRC, 1989)
2. **Forced Displacement:** Approximately 1.9 million people, or 90% of Gaza's population, have been displaced, over half of whom are children. These displaced individuals face severe shortages of food, water, and medicine, directly threatening their rights and violating Article 22 of the CRC, which ensures the rights of children in cases of forced displacement, including access to basic needs. (CRC, 1989)
3. **Denial of Food and Water:** Acute shortages of food and clean drinking water have led to malnutrition and rising rates of infectious diseases among children, including intestinal diseases and diarrhea. This violates Article 24 of the CRC, which guarantees children the right to proper nutrition and healthcare, including access to food and clean water. (CRC, 1989)

4. **Disease Outbreaks and Malnutrition:** Approximately 90% of children under five suffer from at least one infectious disease, with diarrhea cases increasing 23 times compared to 2022. This poses a serious threat to children's rights to health and survival. Article 24 of the CRC emphasizes the need for healthcare and treatment for infectious diseases in children, and Article 27 guarantees an adequate standard of living, including food. (CRC, 1989)
5. **Direct Targeting of Children:** Children are endangered by bombings and military attacks targeting densely populated areas. This directly violates international child-related laws, particularly Article 38 of the CRC, which prohibits targeting children in armed conflicts or using them in warfare. (CRC, 1989)
6. **Denial of Education:** Schools have been destroyed or repurposed as shelters for displaced persons, depriving children of their right to education. Article 28 of the CRC ensures children's right to education, while Article 29 promotes education for developing the child's personality. (CRC, 1989)
7. **Psychological Trauma:** Children in Gaza suffer severe psychological trauma due to the ongoing conflict, including the loss of parents, homes, and friends, putting them at risk of long-term psychological harm. Article 39 of the CRC emphasizes providing psychological support for children harmed by armed conflicts. (CRC, 1989)
8. **Deteriorating Health Conditions:** The collapse of Gaza's water and sanitation infrastructure exposes children to severe health risks such as acute diarrhea and food poisoning. International humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions, mandates protecting civilians, especially children, and ensuring humanitarian aid, including healthcare, in armed conflicts.
9. **Discrimination:** Discrimination based on social and economic status worsens children's suffering and limits their access to essential aid, violating Article 2 of the CRC, which prohibits all forms of discrimination. (CRC, 1989)

Double Standards in International Responses to Israeli Violations

Westerners often adopt certain standards when dealing with international conflicts, fabricating contradictory justifications. Despite Western officials' initial statements condemning the killing of civilians in some regions, they do not hesitate to support military operations that involve similar violations in other areas. While officials express their sorrow over civilian casualties in certain conflicts, they feel no qualms about supporting the perpetrator in others.

Earlier, Josh Paul, a U.S. State Department official, resigned in protest of President Joe Biden's administration's handling of the conflict in Gaza, describing Washington's behaviors as a "reckless reaction" stemming from "intellectual bankruptcy." Similarly, Tom Porteous, deputy program director at Human Rights Watch, called on Western nations to apply the same principles they advocate for regarding human values and rights when addressing Israel's violations of civilian lives in Gaza, just as they do with Russia (Human Rights, 2024). Below are some examples of Western double standards:

Blinken's Contradictory Positions

On August 20, 2023, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken condemned Russia's bombing of Ukraine, describing it as a "horrific attack" on civilians. However, on October 12 of the same year, he visited Israel in support of its military operations, which killed thousands of civilians in Gaza, expressing his solidarity with Israel without addressing the crimes committed against innocents (RT, 2024).

American Double Standards

In April 2022, U.S. President Joe Biden described Russian attacks in Ukraine as "genocide" and called for the prosecution of Russian President Putin. Yet, when Israel launched its aggression on Gaza in October 2023, Biden did not recall such terminology, instead defending Israel's actions as "self-defense" against Palestinian attacks, ignoring the atrocities committed by the Israeli army against civilians (france24, 2022).

Macron's Contradictory Position

In April 2022, French President Emmanuel Macron strongly condemned the killing of civilians in Bucha, Ukraine, by Russian forces. However, regarding Gaza in October 2023, Macron showed no similar stance toward the killing of Palestinian civilians. Instead, he labeled Hamas as a terrorist organization without mentioning Israeli crimes in Gaza (Al-Arabiya, 2024).

Scholz and Self-Defines Contradictions

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called in April 2022 to hold Russian forces accountable for crimes committed in Ukraine. Yet, in October 2023, when Gaza faced brutal Israeli aggression, Scholz described the Israeli attack as "self-defense" without condemning the crimes committed by the Israeli occupation against Palestinian civilians (RT, 2024).

Rishi Sunak and Western Double Standards

In November 2022, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak described Russia as a "pariah state" due to crimes committed in Ukraine. However, in October 2023, during his visit to Israel amid its war on Gaza, he did not condemn Israeli attacks on hospitals and homes. Instead, he affirmed his full support for Israel, ignoring the suffering of civilians in Gaza (Al Mashhad).

These examples demonstrate how Western officials use double standards in assessing conflicts, applying different criteria depending on the country involved. While attacks by certain parties are condemned, others are allowed to carry out similar military operations without accountability or condemnation. This double standard reflects a failure to adhere to universal principles of human rights and international justice.

Based on the above, Western double standards in addressing international conflicts remain a critical issue in international relations. Western powers adopt selective standards in their approach to wars, reflecting a disregard for the fundamental legal principles of human rights and international law. Despite initial statements condemning the killing of civilians in some places, the West does not hesitate to support governments or parties committing similar violations elsewhere.

One of the most prominent manifestations of this double standard is the contradiction in Western officials' stances toward military violations. While attacks on civilians in certain regions are condemned, similar attacks in other areas are viewed as "self-defense." For example, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken condemned Russian attacks on civilians in

Ukraine but supported Israeli attacks on Gaza that killed thousands of civilians, without addressing Israeli crimes.

Similarly, French President Emmanuel Macron condemned attacks on civilians in Ukraine but took no similar position on attacks on Gaza, labeling Hamas as a terrorist organization without addressing Israeli violations. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also exhibited double standards by condemning Russian attacks on civilians in Bucha, Ukraine, while describing Israeli attacks on Gaza as "self-defense" without condemning Israeli crimes (Al-Arabiya, 2024).

These examples reveal the legal challenges facing the international system in applying human values and legal principles equally among all parties. They underscore the need to unify legal standards to ensure justice and protect human rights, free from political and economic biases.

Targeting Humanitarian Efforts and International Organizations

The teams of international humanitarian organizations in the Gaza Strip have faced numerous Israeli violations that have significantly hindered their ability to provide aid. According to the World Health Organization, more than 111 attacks on healthcare facilities have been documented, including 48 attacks in Gaza, resulting in the deaths of 12 healthcare workers. Additionally, 24 health facilities have been damaged, including Al-Durra Children's Hospital, which was bombed with white phosphorus shells, and Abu Yousef Al-Najjar Hospital in Rafah. Ambulances and healthcare workers were also targeted, leading to the deaths of 28 workers and injuries to 23 others. In the West Bank, 24 health workers were detained while responding to emergencies. These violations underscore the major challenges faced by humanitarian organizations and call for urgent international action to ensure the protection of workers and healthcare facilities (MOH, 2024).

From an international law perspective, the Israeli violations against international humanitarian organizations' teams in Gaza constitute blatant breaches of the fundamental principles outlined in international humanitarian law, particularly the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which include provisions to protect civilians and humanitarian workers during armed conflicts. According to the additional protocols to the Geneva Conventions, warring parties must take all possible measures to protect healthcare facilities and medical personnel and prevent their targeting.

The targeting of healthcare facilities and medical staff violates the basic rule prohibiting attacks on hospitals and ambulances, as stipulated in Article 18 of the First Protocol to the Geneva Conventions (AP I, 1977). Such attacks undermine the ability of humanitarian organizations to provide essential aid to civilians affected by conflict, exacerbating human suffering.

Moreover, the use of explosive weapons against medical facilities, as in the cases of Al-Durra Children's Hospital and Abu Yousef Al-Najjar Hospital, violates the principle of proportionality in international humanitarian law, which prohibits attacks causing excessive harm to civilians or civilian infrastructure.

The targeting of medical workers and the attacks on ambulances also constitute direct violations of the Geneva Conventions, which mandate full protection for medical personnel

and guarantee their freedom of movement. These violations necessitate legal accountability, including independent investigations and international prosecution. Impunity further complicates the humanitarian situation in Gaza and undermines the international community's ability to protect human rights in conflict zones.

Attacks on Cultural Rights and Cultural Expression

In Gaza, massacres committed by the Israeli military against Palestinian civilians have continued, including journalists, photographers, and their families. In August 2024, freelance photographers Mohammed Issa Abu Sa'da and Hossam Al-Dabbaka, "Voice of Palestine" editor Tamim Abu Muammar, freelance journalists Abdullah Al-Sousi, Ibrahim Muhareb, Ali Tumaima, Sumaya Abd Rabbo, writer and researcher Youssef Al-Kahlout, journalist and writer Arafat Abu Zayed, "Social Happiness" magazine journalist Ra'eda Al-Safadi, and calligrapher Ibrahim Abu Nada were killed. Freelance journalist Salma Al-Qudumi, TRT Turkish correspondent Sami Barhoum, his cameraman Mohammed Al-Za'anin, and assistant Mohammed Karaja were injured in Israeli shelling (Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, 2024).

In the West Bank, Israeli forces escalated their assaults on Palestinian journalists and photographers in August 2024. They targeted TRT Turkish correspondent Musab Al-Khatib, "Al-Araby" TV reporter Rabee' Muneer, photographer Ameer Shahada, reporters Laith Ja'ar, Mohammed Al-Atrash, photographers Louay Al-Saeed and Fadi Yassin, "Quds News Network" correspondents Hamza Hamdan, Abdullah Bahsh, Mohammed Abed, "Quds Feed" reporters Ayoub Yamak, Nagham Zayt, and Jarrah Khalaf, "Palestine TV" correspondent Amna Bilalou, photographer Tarek Al-Hourani, "Palestine Today" reporter Mujahed Al-Sa'di, photographer Hamza Zioud, "CIPA" American Agency photographer Nasser Shtayeh, journalist Reem Daraghme, "Palestine Post" reporter Mujahed Hamayel, "Al-Ghad" TV reporter Khaled Bdeir, photographer Shadi Jarrarah, "Reuters" photographer Raneen Sawafteh, "Al-Arabiya" TV correspondent Tharwat Shaqra, photographer Wissam Abd Rabbo, freelance journalists Masha'el Abu Al-Rub, Ubada Tahaneh, Amr Manasreh, Abed Al-Rahman Al-Domidi, Mohammed Al-Younis, and Raghed Salama during their coverage of military operations and raids across West Bank cities (Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, 2024).

Israeli forces also detained numerous journalists and photographers, including Ihab and Ahmed Al-Allami, Khaled Bdeir, Hamza Zioud, Ramez Awad, Amer Al-Shaloudi, and Ashwaq Mohammed Awad, and obstructed the work of many journalists during military incursions into Tulkarm camp in the northern West Bank. Meanwhile, Ofer Court renewed the administrative detention of journalist Bushra Al-Tawil, and Salem Court postponed the case of journalist and "Wafa" agency editor Rasha Ahmed Herzallah on charges of "incitement" (MADA, 2024).

In the territories of 1948, Israeli violations against Palestinian journalists and artists persisted throughout August 2024. Police banned the screening of short films by Palestinian director Rashid Mashharawi after raiding the Yabous Cultural Center in Jerusalem, as well as the film "Jenin-Jenin" by director Mohammed Bakri at the headquarters of the "Front Party" in Haifa. The Israeli government extended its ban on "Al-Mayadeen" TV, preventing its teams from working and covering events in the 1948 territories for 45 days, subject to renewal. The Central

Court postponed the case of freelance journalist Lama Ghosheh on charges of "incitement" to a later date (PCBS, 2024).

The ongoing violations committed by the Israeli military against Palestinian journalists and photographers in Gaza, the West Bank, and the 1948 territories represent a grave breach of international law, including human rights laws and international humanitarian law.

1. **Legal Aspects: Deliberate Killing and Assassinations:** Targeted killings of journalists, such as the case of Ismail Al-Ghoul and others, violate international humanitarian law, which prohibits targeting civilians, including journalists who are afforded special protection during their media duties. According to the Fourth Geneva Convention, warring parties must respect and protect journalists in conflict zones (ICRC, 1949).
2. **Assaults on Press Freedom:** Palestinian journalists face clear violations of their right to freedom of expression, a fundamental right protected by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966). Attacks on journalists with live ammunition, gas, or torture constitute violations of this right and threaten the free practice of media.
3. **Arbitrary Arrests:** Arbitrary arrests of numerous Palestinian journalists and photographers violate international law, particularly in the absence of due process such as fair and transparent trials. Administrative detention, as in the case of journalist Bushra Al-Tawil, violates human rights, especially without a fair trial, denying detainees the right to defend themselves.
4. **Restriction of Media Freedom:** The banning of Palestinian documentaries, such as "Jenin-Jenin," and the arrest of journalists like Lama Ghosheh highlight restrictions on media freedom, prohibited under international agreements ensuring freedom of expression and the rights of media personnel to disseminate information freely.
5. **Attacks on Media Institutions:** Bombing media institutions and destroying journalistic equipment, as occurred in Gaza, also breach international law. These institutions are protected under international agreements prohibiting attacks on civilian targets unless they are legitimate military objectives.

All the aforementioned violations conflict with international laws. Article 3 of the Fourth Geneva Convention guarantees the protection of civilians, including journalists, during armed conflicts, mandating respect for their lives and safety (ICRC, 1949). Additionally, Article 19 of the ICCPR ensures journalists' freedom of expression, allowing them to report events without threat or harassment (ICCPR, 1966). Furthermore, Article 12 of the Journalists' Protection Convention prohibits targeting journalists or media institutions, reinforcing the protection of journalistic work in conflict zones.

Restrictions on Movement and Freedom of Mobility

The right to movement and mobility is one of the fundamental rights enshrined in international legitimacy across several conventions. It includes the freedom of individuals to leave their country, return to it, and choose their place of residence within the state's borders. This right is guaranteed by various international treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966), and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD,

1965). However, Israel violates this right in numerous ways in the occupied Palestinian territories through its racist policies and systematic practices aimed at restricting Palestinian movement.

In 2024, the Gaza Strip continued to suffer severe restrictions on freedom of movement and mobility due to the ongoing Israeli blockade and violations associated with continuous warfare. These restrictions pose a significant challenge to residents, including journalists, workers, students, and patients, who struggle to move between Gaza and other Palestinian territories or beyond.

Key Restrictions on Freedom of Movement in Gaza (ICHR, 2024):

1. **Crossing Closures:** The border crossings between Gaza and Israel, such as the Erez Crossing, remain closed or subject to extreme security restrictions. This system allows only a limited number of Palestinians to leave or enter based on restricted permits granted to individuals with humanitarian or medical needs, significantly reducing the number of people permitted to travel.
2. **Military Restrictions:** Israel has tightened military restrictions on Palestinian movement within the Strip by deploying forces along the border, exposing any attempts to move or escape to risks. These restrictions, including continuous bombings of infrastructure, hinder the movement of citizens and vital services.
3. **Humanitarian Restrictions:** Restrictions on the movement of patients requiring treatment in hospitals outside Gaza exacerbate the suffering of residents. Medical permits are limited to specific categories, depriving many patients of timely essential treatment.
4. **Continuous Violence:** Ongoing military operations, including Israeli airstrikes on the Strip, have caused widespread destruction of infrastructure, further complicating mobility within and beyond Gaza. Journalists and photographers have also been injured or killed while covering military escalations.
5. **Economic Impact of the Blockade:** The continued Israeli blockade on Gaza has paralyzed the economy, hindering the movement of essential goods from outside to inside and directly impacting residents' access to food and medicine.

Freedom of movement in Gaza faces significant violations of international law, including the right to mobility stipulated by international conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Israel disregards these international obligations, further isolating Palestinians economically, socially, and humanely. Amid these restrictions, Gaza residents face enormous challenges in their daily lives, particularly during the continued military escalations in 2024, making freedom of movement one of the core issues impacting human rights in the Strip.

In the West Bank, the large number of military checkpoints, including 156 iron gates installed after October 7, 2023, represents part of Israel's complex system to restrict freedom of movement in Palestinian territories. These checkpoints are among the primary tools used by the occupation to consolidate its control over the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They contribute to fragmenting Palestinian territories into isolated areas, obstructing the movement of individuals and goods, and significantly affecting residents' daily lives (Wall and Settlement Resistance Commission, 2024).

Despite these ongoing violations of fundamental mobility rights, Israel continues to expand this network of checkpoints and restrictions, further tightening the grip on Palestinians across various domains. Concurrently, the escalation of Israeli military operations in the West Bank has coincided with increased settler violence against Palestinians, resulting in the killing of 783 individuals and injuring more than 6,300 others. Arrests have also surged dramatically, reaching 11,700 cases since the beginning of events in October 2023, reflecting ongoing repression and systematic violations of human rights (Palestinian Detainees' Society, 2024).

This escalation is part of an Israeli systematic policy aimed at controlling Palestinians by reducing the areas available for their free movement, contrary to Israel's obligations under international law as follows:

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 13): It stipulates that "Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state, and everyone has the right to leave any country, including their own, and to return to their country." This article ensures the right to free movement for all individuals without discrimination (UDHR, 1948).
2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 12): It guarantees individuals the right to freedom of movement within and outside the state and ensures that no person is denied entry into their country. Attempts to deprive Palestinians of these rights constitute a violation of this covenant (ICCPR, 1966).
3. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Article 5): It affirms the right of individuals to freedom of movement and choice of residence inside and outside the state, including leaving and returning to their country. Despite these rights, Israeli policies contradict its international obligations in this regard.

Racism in Mobility

Israel enforces racist policies aimed at curtailing Palestinians' freedom of movement through various arbitrary mechanisms and measures (Badil, 2024), including:

1. The Annexation and Separation Wall: The separation wall is one of the most prominent examples of restrictions on mobility. It traverses occupied Palestinian territories, isolating Palestinians from vast areas of their agricultural land and cities. Although the International Court of Justice deemed the wall illegal in 2004 (ICC, 2024), Israel has not adhered to this ruling.
2. Military Checkpoints: The numerous military checkpoints across the West Bank are a major barrier to Palestinians' freedom of movement. These checkpoints divide Palestinian cities and restrict travel between towns and villages.
3. Permit System: Palestinians are required to obtain permits from Israeli authorities to move between areas in the West Bank or enter Jerusalem. This system includes permits for work, healthcare, and education, fundamentally restricting mobility.
4. Closure Policy: Israel employs repeated closures of Palestinian areas during Jewish holidays or emergencies, denying Palestinians freedom of movement within their territories or travel abroad. These policies constitute collective punishment and violate human rights.

5. Physical Barriers: Israel places numerous physical barriers, such as checkpoints and dirt mounds on roads, hindering Palestinians' movement during emergencies and making access to basic services challenging.
6. Restricted Roads: Israel bans Palestinians from using many roads in the West Bank, complicating their mobility and forcing them to find alternative, often longer, routes.
7. Curfews: During blockades or incursions, Israel enforces curfews in many Palestinian areas as collective punishment, disrupting daily life and preventing movement.

These policies blatantly contradict international standards guaranteeing freedom of movement. Through a series of arbitrary measures, Israel deprives Palestinians of their right to move freely within and outside their territories, violating treaties that protect this right. These practices are part of a broader policy of segregation and racial discrimination aimed at displacing Palestinians and reducing their presence in the occupied territories.

Colonial Settlers' Attacks in the West Bank

Israel continued implementing settlement and racist policies that escalated its attacks against Palestinians in various regions in 2024. Below are the documented violations against Palestinian citizens according to the Wall and Settlement Resistance Commission report (Wall and Settlement Resistance Commission, 2024). As shown in Table No. (3), a total of 16,612 attacks by Israeli forces and settlers were recorded against Palestinians and their properties. These included 2,934 attacks carried out by the Israeli military and 13,641 attacks by settlers. These acts resulted in the death of 522 Palestinians by the Israeli military and 10 additional deaths due to settler attacks.

Additionally, 2,971 attacks by settlers targeted agricultural lands and trees, with the most affected governorates being Nablus, Hebron, and Ramallah. These attacks included the deliberate setting of 373 fires, along with uprooting trees, leading to the destruction of 14,212 trees, including 10,459 olive trees. Hebron and Nablus were the most targeted, with 3,980 trees destroyed in Hebron and 2,737 trees in Nablus, representing a severe violation of environmental and human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories.

In 2024, the occupation authorities seized over 46,597 dunams of Palestinian land through military orders and settlement expansions. The agricultural lands cultivated by settlers now cover an area of 144,000 dunams, with the expansion resulting in the construction of 8,800 new settlement units across the West Bank and Jerusalem. Notably, Israeli authorities approved 111 new zoning plans for settlements in the West Bank and 62 plans in Jerusalem during 2024, reflecting a significant escalation in settlement expansion. In parallel, the Israeli forces conducted widespread demolitions targeting 903 Palestinian structures and issued 939 demolition notices under the pretext of lacking permits, displacing hundreds of families.

In its continuous pursuit to bolster settlements, the Israeli government allocated substantial budgets, including 77.6 million shekels for supporting agricultural and pastoral outposts, 3.6 billion shekels for developing settlement roads in the West Bank, and 409 million shekels for restoring archaeological sites and protecting settlements. Additionally, tenders were issued for constructing 23,461 housing units through 173 new structural plans. Administratively, a special

unit named the "Settlement Administration" was established within the Israeli Civil Administration to accelerate the process of legalizing settlement outposts. This unit aims to regularize the status of 160–180 outposts within one year, showcasing a clear intent to strengthen Israeli control over the occupied Palestinian territories in violation of international humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Moreover, Israel continued its restrictive policies in 2024, significantly affecting the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, particularly in Jerusalem and the West Bank. The area designated for isolation due to the construction of the wall and settlement expansion reached 714 km², while the actual area isolated by the wall amounted to 295 km², further restricting Palestinians' freedom of movement. Israeli authorities also carried out 684 demolition operations, targeting 903 Palestinian structures in the West Bank, including Jerusalem. These actions led to the forced displacement of over 4,300 people, including 2,320 children, in blatant violation of international humanitarian law, which prohibits the destruction of property in occupied territories.

Regarding settlement outposts, their total number in the West Bank reached 256, including 136 agricultural outposts covering an area of 489,000 dunams. In 2024, 51 new outposts were established, with Israel beginning to regularize the status of 13 outposts, converting them into standalone settlements. These outposts were primarily concentrated in the areas of Ramallah, Hebron, and Nablus, reflecting the continuation of settlement expansion policies.

The settler population in the West Bank and Jerusalem surpassed 770,000 settlers, a figure highlighting the escalating pace of settlement activities. This underscores Israel's policy aimed at reinforcing control over the occupied Palestinian territories, paving the way for further violations and the forced displacement of Palestinians.

Table 3 (Table of Indicators / Colonial Actions in 2024)

Indicator / Colonial Action	Value
Number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Jerusalem	770,420
Number of Israeli settlements	180
Number of colonial outposts	256
Number of outposts established in 2024	51
Number of agricultural outposts within the colonial framework	136
Area of land controlled by colonial expansion (spatial comparison)	489,000 dunams
Area of land seized by the occupation authorities in 2024	46,597 dunams
Number of structures demolished by the occupation authorities in 2024	903
Number of plans prepared and approved in 2024	936
Number of structural colonial plans studied for West Bank settlements	111

Number of structural colonial plans studied in 2024	36
Area of settlers' residences (settlement buildings and outposts)	2,400 km ²
Total area under Israeli colonial procedures: Note: This area does not include the entire planned area due to isolation by the annexation and expansion wall. It constitutes 70% of the settlement blocs (Area C).	2,400 km ²
Number of Palestinian martyrs by occupation forces in 2024	522
Number of Palestinian injured by settlers in 2024	10
Number of kiosks closed or attacked by settlers	12,412
Number of schools threatened with total or partial demolition	45
Area of Palestinian land bulldozed for Jewish settlers	144,000 dunams
Number of colonial tourist, heritage, and other sites	30
Number of military sites in Palestinian territories	94
Number of permanent military checkpoints (gates, military, or earth barriers)	890
Total length of the apartheid wall upon completion	714 km
Completed length of the separation wall	489 km
Completed length of the ground wall	225 km
The planned length of the wall upon completion	560 km
Total area fully confiscated under the pretext of the wall	295 km ²

(Wall and Settlement Resistance Commission Report, 2024)

From a legal perspective and based on international legal standards, we see that many Israeli policies and practices in the West Bank and Gaza constitute violations of basic human rights established in international conventions. These include attacks and killings perpetrated by occupation forces and settlers against Palestinians and their properties. Such actions violate Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966), which states that "the right to life is inherent to every human being." Furthermore, systematic acts targeting civilians are classified as war crimes under Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC, 1998).

Israel's forcible seizure of land and approval of expansionist zoning plans in the West Bank and Jerusalem directly violates Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the transfer of the population of the occupying power to the occupied territories (ICRC, 1949). These actions also contradict UN Security Council Resolution 242 (United Nations, 1967) and Resolution 2334 (United Nations, 2016).

Additionally, Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits any destruction of property in occupied territories, including homes and civilian properties protected under international humanitarian law (ICRC, 1949). The systematic destruction of such properties constitutes a grave breach of the convention. Forced displacement resulting from home demolitions is also considered a war crime under Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the ICC, which specifies that the forcible transfer of civilian populations, directly or indirectly, violates international humanitarian law and falls under the ICC's criminal jurisdiction (ICC, 1998).

Targeting agricultural lands and trees represents a blatant violation of environmental and human rights. Article 54 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions (1977) explicitly prohibits the use of methods or means of warfare intended to destroy the natural environment or food sources on which civilian populations depend. This prohibition forms part of international efforts to protect civilians from the impacts of armed conflicts that threaten their food security and environmental safety (AP I, 1977).

Furthermore, the systematic destruction of trees and agricultural lands to impoverish or forcibly displace Palestinians is classified as a crime against humanity under Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the ICC (1998). This article states that systematic or widespread acts committed against civilian populations, including the destruction of their properties or livelihoods, constitute a serious violation of international law (ICC, 1998). Funding expansionist settlement policies also violates international law, as such funding reinforces the illegal annexation of land, contravening international legitimacy resolutions, including Resolution 2334, which calls for a halt to settlement activities (United Nations, 2016).

Restricting the population violates Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), which guarantees freedom of movement and residence within the borders of every state. These restrictions also violate Article 12 of the ICCPR (1966). Systematic demolition of Palestinian structures breaches Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949), which prohibits property destruction in occupied territories (ICRC, 1949). Moreover, collective demolition policies constitute war crimes under Article 8 of the Rome Statute (ICC, 1998).

The establishment of settlement outposts in occupied territories is a clear violation of international law, breaching Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the forcible transfer of populations to occupied territories and altering the geographical and demographic status (ICRC, 1949). These activities also conflict with UN Security Council resolutions, such as Resolution 465 (United Nations, 1980) and Resolution 2334 (United Nations, 2016), which consider settlements in occupied territories illegal and call for their cessation. Constructing new settlements or expanding existing ones seeks to change the area's demographic nature, further violating Palestinians' rights and exacerbating the humanitarian and political situation in the occupied territories.

Systematic Killings as a Tool of Israeli Control

Statistics from Israel's Ministry of Defense indicate that settlers in the West Bank received 130,000 permits to carry weapons out of 320,000 applications submitted following October 7, 2023. On September 28, 2023, the Israeli army announced the deployment of three reserve battalions to the West Bank for "operational" missions and "defensive" goals, based on a security assessment conducted by the Central Command of the Israeli army. This step was part of a broader escalation, with the West Bank classified in August 2023 as a "second theater of combat" after Gaza. This followed the largest offensive on West Bank cities, towns, and camps since 2002's Operation Defensive Shield, which involved a ground invasion of various West Bank governorates (WAFA, 2024).

Beginning October 7, 2023, the Israeli army launched over 110 airstrikes in the West Bank, resulting in 188 Palestinian deaths, including 32 children and four women, according to the Shireen Abu Akleh Documentation Observatory. These attacks, notably during the so-called "summer camps," caused extensive destruction of infrastructure, including homes, shops, roads, and public utilities such as water and electricity networks, in addition to public squares and vehicles. The attacks also included hospital sieges, hospital invasions, ambulance targeting, and the arrest of injured individuals. They forced citizens to flee their homes and deliberately fired on journalists (Palestinian Studies Institute, 2024).

Approximately 13,000 home invasions have been recorded in the West Bank and East Jerusalem since October 7, 2023, resulting in the deaths of 742 Palestinians, including 163 children and 12 women. Over 6,250 injuries have been documented during this period, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health (WAFA, 2024).

Israeli settlers, acting as part of the occupation's machinery, have also committed numerous terrorist crimes, resulting in the deaths of 19 Palestinians, as reported by the Wall and Settlement Resistance Commission. Between October 7, 2023, and September 30, 2024, the commission documented more than 2,700 attacks by settlers, including killings, beatings, shootings, establishing settlement outposts, seizing buildings, land bulldozing, property destruction through burning and vandalism, uprooting trees, sabotaging crops, and stealing livestock and equipment while inscribing racist slogans (WAFA, 2024).

The persistent violations by Israeli occupation forces and settlers in the West Bank fall under the framework of international law concerning the protection of human rights, especially given the ongoing escalation in attacks and assaults. Among the most prominent of these violations are:

1. ***Evading Legal Responsibility:*** The Geneva Conventions, particularly the Fourth Convention (ICRC, 1949), require the occupying power to respect the human rights of civilians in occupied territories. The aerial and ground attacks carried out by the Israeli army in the West Bank violate basic rights, including life, liberty, personal security, and property protection.

2. **Arming Settlers:** Granting settlers permits to carry weapons contravenes fundamental principles of international humanitarian law governing the use of force by occupying powers. Allowing settlers to bear arms against Palestinians violates Article 47 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits instigating or permitting settlers to commit acts of violence against civilians (ICRC, 1949).
3. **Aerial Attacks and Systematic Destruction:** The aerial assaults launched by the Israeli army in the West Bank, which resulted in 188 deaths, breach the principle of proportionality in international humanitarian law. Such military operations must align with legitimate military objectives. Destruction of infrastructure, including homes, shops, water, and electricity networks, contravenes the principle of "unnecessary destruction" enshrined in the Geneva Conventions (OCHA, 2024).
4. **Arrests and Raids:** The approximately 13,000 raids conducted since October 7, 2023, contradict basic human rights. These operations often occur under illegal circumstances, without sufficient evidence or fair trials, violating fundamental rights established in international conventions.
5. **Settler Violence:** Settlers have committed numerous terrorist crimes against Palestinians, including killings, shootings, and property destruction, representing clear violations of international law, particularly in the absence of accountability. Such violations include environmental damage through land bulldozing and crop destruction, highlighting the significant challenges to ensuring Palestinian rights in occupied territories.
6. **Absence of International Accountability:** These severe violations underscore the lack of effective international legal accountability for crimes committed by occupation forces and settlers. The absence of tangible measures by the international community to hold the occupation accountable exacerbates the suffering of the Palestinian people and complicates the humanitarian situation in the West Bank.

This international legal framework demonstrates that Israeli occupation forces and settlers continue to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in the absence of effective international accountability.

Human Rights Violations in Jerusalem Against Palestinians

Jerusalem is one of the most sensitive and religiously and politically significant cities in the world, holding a special place for followers of the three monotheistic religions. Nevertheless, its Palestinian residents, particularly those from Jerusalem, face increasingly challenging realities due to ongoing human rights violations. These violations reflect systematic policies aimed at undermining their presence in the city by targeting their lives, restricting their religious freedoms, and infringing upon their fundamental rights.

In this context, Jerusalemites face multiple violations of their right to life, evident through excessive use of force against them, continuous arrest campaigns, and policies of forced eviction. Moreover, Islamic and Christian religious sites, such as Al-Aqsa Mosque and the

Church of the Holy Sepulchre, are subject to repeated attacks and deliberate obstruction of religious practices. Notably, these practices not only represent flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law but also threaten the city's social and cultural fabric, exacerbating its humanitarian and political complexities.

This study will highlight the violations of the right to life faced by Jerusalemites and discuss the assaults on religious sites and the obstruction of religious practices to shed light on the dimensions of these violations and their impacts on Jerusalemite society.

Violations of the Right to Life of Jerusalemites

Various reports, most notably the one issued by the Arab Center for the Advancement of social media titled "Intensified Surveillance in East Jerusalem Since October 2023," have highlighted the escalation of Israeli digital surveillance policies. These policies reached unprecedented levels in 2024, including mass arrests related to digital activities and arbitrary dismissal from employment in educational institutions (Arab Center for the Advancement of social media, 2024).

Israel has relied on advanced technologies such as facial recognition systems, drones, and spyware. The report explores the significant impact of these policies on basic rights such as privacy, freedom of movement, and freedom of expression. Many Palestinians in East Jerusalem express distrust in the protection of digital privacy, feeling endangered when using social media. Some face significant difficulties traveling outside the city due to imposed restrictions. Additionally, many self-censor their content on social media out of fear of surveillance and retaliation. These restrictions are not limited to the digital sphere but extend to the economic and social life of Palestinians, with many forced to leave their jobs or educational institutions due to movement restrictions and surveillance (Amnesty International, 2024).

The systematic escalation in the use of digital surveillance technologies, such as facial recognition cameras, drones, and predictive "criminal" behavior algorithms, has been used to justify practices like home raids and arbitrary arrests without criminal offenses. The report noted that the number of Palestinian administrative detainees reached unprecedented levels since 1967, with increasing arrests based on social media posts (Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media, 2024).

These practices highlight a dangerous escalation in surveillance measures that have violated the basic human rights of Palestinians in East Jerusalem since October 2023. Surveillance technologies have been systematically employed to impose restrictions on freedom of movement, expression, privacy, and digital participation.

Analyzing the Situation in East Jerusalem in Light of International Law

Human rights violations arising from Israeli digital surveillance practices can be analyzed through the following legal frameworks:

1. The Right to Privacy (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - ICCPR): Privacy is a fundamental right protected by the ICCPR, which Israel has ratified. Article

17 states, "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy, family, home, or correspondence" (ICCPR, 1966).

- Using advanced surveillance technologies like facial recognition cameras, and drones, and monitoring Palestinians' digital activities constitutes a blatant violation of privacy, involving the unlawful classification of individuals without justified reasons or legal consent.
2. **The Right to Freedom of Expression:** Article 19 of the ICCPR stipulates that "everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression," including "the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers" (ICCPR, 1966).
 - Surveillance and tracking practices on social media leading to arbitrary arrests or dismissal from jobs or educational institutions due to digital activities violate this right by criminalizing legal activities or political opinions (Amnesty International, 2024).
 3. **The Right to Freedom of Movement:** Article 12 of the ICCPR guarantees the right to freedom of movement within the country, as well as the right to leave and return.
 - Imposing movement restrictions on Palestinians in East Jerusalem, whether through travel obstacles or restricted access to certain areas, constitutes a violation of this right (ICCPR, 1966).
 4. **The Right to a Fair Trial:** Under Article 9 of the ICCPR, everyone has the right to liberty and personal security and shall not be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention except by the law.
 - Mass arrests based on social media posts or other digital activities are arbitrary as they fail to adhere to due process and deny Palestinians the right to defense (ICCPR, 1966).
 5. **Repressive Practices and Discrimination (The Right to Protection from Discrimination):** Measures targeting Palestinians in East Jerusalem, including comprehensive surveillance and discrimination in employment, education, and movement, violate the right to equality and protection from discrimination enshrined in international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948).
 - Using surveillance technologies as a tool for racial discrimination, such as targeting Palestinians based on their identity, contradicts basic human rights principles.
 6. **The Right to Peaceful Assembly and Participation in Public Life:** According to Article 21 of the ICCPR, everyone has the right to peaceful assembly and participation in the affairs of their country.
 - Repressive and surveillance practices against Palestinians in East Jerusalem, particularly concerning their participation in digital or public activities, violate this right (ICCPR, 1966).
 7. **Israel's International Obligations:** As a state party to the ICCPR, Israel is obligated to uphold and protect individuals' rights within its territory and occupied territories, including guaranteeing the fundamental rights enshrined in the Covenant.
 - Excessive use of digital technologies for surveillance, arrests, and imposing restrictions on Palestinians' rights violates Israel's obligations under this Covenant and other international treaties (ICCPR, 1966).

Israeli policies related to digital surveillance in East Jerusalem contradict international laws and treaties that guarantee fundamental human rights. Urgent international intervention is

required to ensure adherence to international standards and protect the civil and political rights of Palestinians.

Attacks on Religious Sites and Hindrances to Religious Practices

In 2024, 53,605 Israeli settlers stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem, setting a record compared to previous years. According to an anonymous official from the Islamic Waqf Department in Jerusalem quoted by Anadolu Agency, this number marks the largest storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque since the incursions began in 2003. Compared to past years, 48,223 settlers stormed the mosque in 2023, surpassing 48,000 in 2022 and approximately 35,000 in 2021. These incursions, which began in 2003 with Israeli police approval, are opposed by the Islamic Waqf, which manages the mosque under the Jordanian Ministry of Waqf and Islamic Affairs (Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, 2024).

It is noteworthy that these incursions occur daily, except for Fridays and Saturdays, and their frequency increases during Jewish holidays. The year 2024 witnessed unprecedented escalation, with settlers performing Talmudic rituals and prayers inside the mosque during these incursions, highlighting increased Israeli violations of this sacred site.

Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, preacher of Al-Aqsa Mosque and head of the Supreme Islamic Council in Jerusalem, condemned the ongoing Israeli escalation in a statement on Wednesday. He described 2024 as "a year full of painful events," with a noticeable increase in repeated incursions into Al-Aqsa Mosque and the prevention of worshippers from performing their prayers. He added that Palestinians view these policies as part of Israel's plan to intensify measures to Judaize East Jerusalem, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and erase its Arab and Islamic identity.

Palestinians insist on East Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. Meanwhile, international resolutions do not recognize Israel's occupation of the city in 1967 or its annexation in 1981. In this context, Sheikh Sabri noted that 2024 also witnessed "crimes of killing and destruction" against Palestinian civilians in Gaza and the West Bank, emphasizing that these violations expose "the true face of the Israeli occupation" and the "falseness of international community claims regarding human rights," as the world has failed to protect the Palestinian people from ongoing Israeli aggression.

Israeli policies of forcibly evicting Palestinian families in the Silwan neighbourhood of occupied East Jerusalem constitute a grave violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Eighty Palestinian families, including the Shuhada family of 15 members, face the threat of forced eviction from their homes under discriminatory Israeli laws, such as the Absentee Property Law and the Legal and Administrative Matters Law of 1970 (United Nations, 2024).

These legal measures rely on a legislative system employed discriminately against Palestinians to facilitate settlers' control over Palestinian properties. This constitutes a direct violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (ICRC, 1949), which prohibits the forced transfer of protected persons or the seizure of their property without legitimate legal justification.

Moreover, imposing Israeli laws in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, violates the principle of prohibiting the application of the occupying power's laws on the occupied territory, as stipulated in Article 43 of the Hague Regulations of 1907. This action also constitutes systematic discrimination contrary to Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966), which obligates states to ensure non-discrimination and equality of rights for all individuals under their jurisdiction.

These practices, including issuing forced eviction orders based on discriminatory laws, violate the right to adequate housing enshrined in Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and contradict the legal protections granted to civilians under international humanitarian law. Articles 53 and 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention explicitly prohibit the destruction of private property except for absolute military necessity and consider forced population transfers a war crime (ICRC, 1949).

Accordingly, Israeli practices, including the rejection of appeals submitted by Palestinian families in Israeli courts, not only breach Israel's obligations as an occupying power but also amount to serious violations of international law. These violations necessitate international intervention to ensure legal accountability, hold perpetrators responsible, and provide effective protection for the Palestinian population, preventing further forced evictions and displacements.

Demolition, land clearing, and property confiscation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, are grave violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. Reports from the United Nations Office for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory indicate that these practices are facilitated by the application of discriminatory and unlawful Israeli laws against Palestinians.

By taking a close look at international laws and applying them to Israeli practices, we find a group of violations of international laws, which are as follows:

1. Violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949):
 - Article 49 prohibits the collective or individual forced transfer of protected persons from occupied territories to the occupying power's territory or any other state, regardless of justification. Forced evictions faced by Palestinian families in East Jerusalem directly violate this article (ICRC, 1949).
 - Article 53 prohibits the destruction of private property in occupied territories except for absolute military necessity. The demolition and clearing of Palestinian homes and properties without clear military necessity violate this article (ICRC, 1949).

Violation of International Human Rights Law:

2. Right to Adequate Housing: Forced demolitions and evictions violate the right to adequate housing as stipulated in Article 11 of the ICESCR.
 - Right to Non-Discrimination: Discriminatory application of Israeli laws against Palestinians violates Article 2 of the ICCPR (ICCPR, 1966).
 - Based on the above, Israeli authorities' demolition, land clearing, and property confiscation practices in East Jerusalem are severe international law violations that demand urgent international intervention to protect Palestinians' human rights in the occupied territories.

The Impact of War on the Mental Health of Gaza's Residents

Residents of Gaza, including students, teachers, and Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons, are subject to grave human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law. Field reports and testimonies from released detainees, such as those by the Muwatin Center at Birzeit University, reveal practices that violate detainees' human dignity and basic rights, including psychological and physical torture. Below are some violations affecting Palestinians' mental health:

First: Psychological Effects on Students and Teachers

In December, school counsellors addressed 1,511 individual and family consultations in Rafah and Khan Yunis, alongside 1,149 group psychosocial support sessions. These efforts benefited 21,450 displaced persons, contributing to a cumulative total of 57,460 psychosocial support sessions since October 7, 2023. During the same period, school counselors provided psychological support to 400 UNRWA staff members through in-person and remote consultations, with a total of 5,399 staff members receiving psychological support since the onset of hostilities (ICHR, 2024).

Second: Psychological Effects on Female Palestinian Detainees

Human rights documents reveal systematic psychological and physical abuses against female detainees in Israeli detention, including:

- Threats of rape and sexual harassment, constituting prohibited psychological torture under the Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and the 1984 Convention Against Torture (CAT, 1984).
- Strip and mass searches, violating the dignity of female detainees and prohibited under Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (ICRC, 1949).
- Deprivation of sanitary needs during menstrual periods, including denial of hygiene supplies and showers, constituting inhumane treatment under Article 16 of the CAT (CAT, 1984).
- Digital sexual exploitation, including forced photography without head coverings and unauthorized image sharing, violating privacy and dignity rights under Article 17 of the ICCPR (ICCPR, 1966).

Third: Psychological Effects on Released Detainees in Exchange Deals

Released Palestinian detainees from exchanges with Israeli forces exhibit clear psychological effects requiring intensive rehabilitation, including:

- Long-term psychological torture: Released detainees report psychological scars from years of solitary confinement, denial of family visits, and mistreatment during interrogations, prohibited under Article 7 of the ICCPR (ICCPR, 1966).
- Comparison between Palestinian and Israeli detainees reveals stark disparities in care and respect for fundamental rights, reflecting discriminatory policies that violate

Article 10 of the Third Geneva Convention, ensuring humane treatment of detainees (ICRC, 1949).

The ongoing military operations in Gaza severely impact civilians' mental health, particularly vulnerable groups such as children, women, and the elderly. These effects range from immediate psychological trauma to long-term impacts, requiring urgent intervention under international humanitarian law to safeguard the mental health of those under occupation.

Fourth: The Impact of Targeting Health Facilities

Targeting vital facilities, especially hospitals and field clinics, constitutes a severe breach of international humanitarian law with direct effects on the mental and physical health of civilians (ICHR, 2024), including:

- Denial of essential medical services, disrupting the population's ability to access treatment and psychological support.
- Increased psychological stress, escalating feelings of helplessness and insecurity.
- Exacerbation of children's suffering, leading to symptoms like night terrors, withdrawal, and persistent fear.

From a legal perspective, these actions contravene basic principles of international humanitarian law, including:

- The Fourth Geneva Convention (1949): Article 18 prohibits targeting medical facilities, while Article 27 emphasizes protecting civilians from psychological and physical harm (ICRC, 1949).
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989): Article 39 obliges states to protect children from the harmful effects of armed conflict and provide psychological support (CRC, 1989).
- ICESCR: Article 12 ensures the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (ICCPR, 1966).

Based on the above, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, including students, teachers, and prisoners—both male and female in Israeli occupation prisons, are subjected to systematic violations that infringe on human rights and international humanitarian law. Human rights and field reports have revealed the dimensions of these violations and their profound impact on the psychological and physical well-being of the targeted groups.

Moreover, through the psychological effects highlighted across various groups, the extent of the suffering endured by Palestinians becomes evident. This suffering ranges from psychological harm caused by targeting civilians and vital infrastructure to inhumane practices against prisoners, such as psychological torture, harassment, and violations of human dignity. These psychological effects are further exacerbated by the targeting of healthcare facilities and the disruption of essential medical services, which intensifies psychological and social crises among civilians, especially children, who display symptoms such as anxiety, persistent fear, and night terrors.

Legally, these violations constitute a flagrant breach of the Geneva Conventions and international laws, necessitating urgent international intervention to provide psychological and physical protection for victims and to ensure that those responsible for these violations are held accountable. In this context, achieving justice and equity for Palestinians requires

the implementation of international standards, alongside continuous efforts to promote respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

The Water Crisis in the Gaza Strip

The Gaza Strip faces a severe crisis in providing potable water for human use, which is exacerbated by the ongoing war that has now entered its 450th day. Data indicates that the average amount of water available per person daily in the Strip ranges from only 3 to 15 liters, far below the minimum required for survival, estimated at 15 liters per person per day (Palestinian Media Center, 2024).

Water availability varies according to geographical location, the extent of damage to infrastructure, and continued displacement. The average water consumption per person before the war was about 84.6 liters per day, but the current available amount is no more than 10-20% of the total water available before the war, and it heavily relies on the availability of fuel for desalination plants and pumping stations. The war has also caused catastrophic damage to the water infrastructure in Gaza, with 40% of the networks destroyed and major pumping stations disrupted due to bombings or fuel shortages. Data shows that only 4% of the population had access to safe and potable water before the war. Now, only one desalination plant operates at a low efficiency of 5%, while two other plants have completely stopped working (Shatat, 2024).

With the destruction of infrastructure, all wastewater treatment plants and systems in Gaza have ceased to function. Reports indicate that around 20 sewage pumps are completely out of order, and the two sewage treatment plants have completely stopped due to power cuts and fuel shortages. This situation has led to about 130,000 cubic meters of untreated sewage flowing daily into the Mediterranean Sea (PCBS, 2024).

Palestine primarily relies on groundwater, which constitutes 76% of the total available water, while surface water in the West Bank accounts for only 24%. Estimates suggest that the volume of extracted groundwater in the West Bank during 2022 was approximately 116.6 million cubic meters. However, due to Israeli control over water resources, particularly the Jordan River, Palestinians are deprived of fully exploiting surface water resources. Since 1967, the occupation has prevented Palestinians from accessing the Jordan River's waters, estimated at around 250 million cubic meters (UN, ESCWA, 2024).

Due to the restrictions on the use of water resources, Palestinians are forced to purchase water from the Israeli company "Mekorot." In 2022, the purchased water amounted to about 98.8 million cubic meters, representing approximately 22% of the total water available in Palestine, which is 445.7 million cubic meters (Shatat, 2024).

Reports show that about 211 million cubic meters of the total available water are classified as unsuitable for human use, most of which is in the Gaza Strip. In contrast, the amount of potable water is estimated at 234.7 million cubic meters, including purchased and desalinated water, with the average daily water consumption per Palestinian in 2022 being about 85.7 liters (86.4 liters in the West Bank and 84.6 liters in Gaza). Considering the high contamination rate, the per capita share in Gaza drops to only 20.5 liters per day, much lower than the recommended 100 liters per day by the World Health Organization (UN, ESCWA, 2024).

These figures reflect the magnitude of the water disaster faced by the Palestinians, especially in the Gaza Strip, due to the ongoing war, the destruction of infrastructure, and Israeli control over water resources. These practices violate Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which guarantees the right to health, including access to clean water and adequate sanitation (ICCPR, 1966).

These figures also highlight the water crisis Palestinians face, particularly in Gaza, due to the ongoing war, infrastructure destruction, and Israeli control over water resources. These practices violate Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which ensures the right to health and access to clean water and adequate sanitation (ICCPR, 1966). International humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention (ICRC, 1949), also guarantees civilians' right to access essential resources such as water and prohibits the occupying power from destroying or obstructing access to infrastructure.

In the context of international water law, the right of people to use shared water resources equitably is stated in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, 1997 (UN Watercourses Convention, 1997). Furthermore, under the Oslo II Agreement of 1995, limited rights to use groundwater were granted to Palestinians (Negotiations Affairs Department, 1995). However, Israeli restrictions have made the agreement nearly impossible, as Israel controls most of the Palestinian water resources, including groundwater and the Jordan River, depriving Palestinians of their basic water rights, in clear violation of international laws and human rights agreements.

Waste Accumulation and Environmental Damage in Gaza

Amid the ongoing Israeli war on Gaza, roads and streets suffer from the accumulation of waste, which has intensified due to the inability to transport it to designated dumps or dispose of it through incineration. This is due to fuel and energy shortages, in addition to the malfunctioning of waste management vehicles, further exacerbating the health and environmental situation in the Strip.

Sanitation workers face significant difficulties in waste collection due to imposed restrictions, leading to increased waste accumulation in the short and long term. Waste collection services have been severely disrupted, with the percentage of waste collected dropping to less than 20% compared to 98% before the war. Gaza's streets, along with many schools and vital centers, are filled with large amounts of waste, which has led to the use of temporary, unsuitable dumpsites where medical, environmental, and health waste accumulates in conditions that pose a significant public health risk. Waste collection services have also been directly impacted by fuel shortages and the ongoing war, resulting in a sharp decline in public cleanliness levels and an increase in environmental and health risks to the population (Palestinian Center for Human Rights, 2024).

The Israeli war on Gaza has caused widespread destruction to infrastructure and facilities, with debris from destroyed buildings and facilities amounting to about 1.8 million cubic meters. The situation worsened with the complete destruction of over 100 buildings during the last war on

the Strip, noting that these large amounts of debris continue to pose a serious environmental challenge since the Israeli war (ICHR, 2024).

Regarding waste management, waste collection services have declined sharply, with the rate dropping from 98% before the war to less than 20% currently. The shortage of fuel and the targeting of waste collection vehicles by the occupation contributed to this decline, leading to significant waste accumulation on streets and in vital areas, including temporary shelters (ActionAid, 2024).

This waste accumulation has caused foul odors, increased the risk of disease and epidemics, and directly impacted air quality and the health of residents. According to statistics, Gaza's residents produce around 2,230 tons of solid waste daily, which further complicates the crisis in the absence of effective waste management.

Based on the above, the environmental and health residues resulting from hazardous and solid waste in Gaza have caused serious and multifaceted effects (Palestinian Center for Human Rights, 2024), including:

Health Effects:

1. **Disease and Epidemic Spread:** The lack of clean water supplies and groundwater contamination has led to the spread of waterborne diseases, such as diarrhea and digestive system diseases, threatening residents' lives.
2. **Skin and Respiratory Diseases:** Since solid waste contains contaminated liquids, these substances may seep into the soil and groundwater, increasing the risk of skin diseases and the spread of respiratory diseases caused by inhaling toxic gases emitted from burning waste.
3. **Air Pollution:** The burning of waste that contains methane gases and chemicals like sulfur dioxide and phosphorus oxide leads to respiratory problems and heart diseases, posing an additional threat to air quality.

Environmental Effects:

1. **Water and Soil Pollution:** The interaction of water with phosphorus left in the soil leads to the deterioration of agricultural soil quality, making it unsuitable for farming, in addition to contaminating groundwater, which residents rely on.
2. **Increased Emissions of Toxic Gases:** Burning solid waste produces gases like carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide, negatively affecting the environment and exacerbating global warming.
3. **Degradation of Agricultural Crops:** The accumulation of phosphorus in the soil due to chemical waste reduces agricultural productivity and destroys arable land.

Phosphorus-Related Effects:

1. **Water Pollution:** Phosphorus from bombing dissolves in water, leading to its contamination, making it harder to obtain safe drinking water.
2. **Soil Degradation:** The chemical reaction between phosphorus and water destroys the soil, rendering it unsuitable for agricultural growth.

3. **Decreased Agricultural Production:** Increased phosphorus levels in the soil affect plant quality and reduce crop productivity.

General Risks

The foul odors and toxic gases emitted from the accumulated waste worsen the health and environmental problems, and the long-term impact of phosphorus bombs extends beyond direct health damage to affect the entire ecosystem, with the possibility of the damaged land never regaining its natural fertility.

When reviewing international law materials, several legal aspects violated by the occupying forces must be noted as follows:

1. **The Right to Health and the Environment:** The environmental and health impacts resulting from waste accumulation constitute a violation of human rights, particularly the right to health. According to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), people have the right to live in a healthy environment, which is a fundamental right that includes access to adequate health services, clean water, and an environment free from environmental hazards. The continued war and infrastructure destruction severely disrupt these rights and expose Gaza's residents to immediate and long-term health risks.
2. **Destruction of Infrastructure:** According to international humanitarian law, specifically the Fourth Geneva Convention (ICRC, 1949), occupying forces are prohibited from destroying civilian property and facilities unless necessary for military purposes. Destroying infrastructure such as water and sewage treatment plants, waste collection vehicles, and garbage facilities violates this principle, deepening the humanitarian suffering of civilians.
3. **Environmental Poisoning and the Use of Destructive Weapons:** The use of white phosphorus and dumb bombs during the war constitutes a violation of international law. These weapons leave dangerous environmental and health impacts, and the use of chemical weapons has been prohibited in several international conventions, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention. The contamination of water and soil resulting from these weapons represents a violation of the environment and human rights.
4. **Waste Management and Environmental Degradation:** The destruction of waste collection vehicles and the increasing accumulation of waste in streets and residential areas reflect a significant failure in crisis management and the provision of basic services to residents. This degradation goes beyond a local crisis, becoming a severe health and environmental threat, and the occupying force is responsible for these failures due to its targeting of infrastructure.

Cutting Electricity and Its Legal and Humanitarian Impact

On October 7th, Israel decided to cut electricity supplies to the Gaza Strip and issued instructions to prevent any fuel trucks from entering the area. This decision is considered a punitive measure, and as a result of these decisions, the Gaza Strip has suffered from an

increasing crisis in electricity supplies, with electricity coverage only meeting 50% of the sector's needs. Gaza's electricity needs range between 450-500 megawatts per day, and in winter, they reach up to 600 megawatts. This shortage is attributed to several factors, most notably the colonial policies imposed by Israel, through which it controls all basic Palestinian resources, including water and electricity (Palestinian Studies Foundation, 2024).

Gaza is supplied with electricity from three main sources: the local power station established in 1999, which relies on gas generators that use liquid fuel purchased from Israel and Egypt. Israel also provides the sector with 120 megawatts through ten electricity lines, though this amount has been reduced to 70 megawatts since 2017. Additionally, Egypt supplies the sector with 20 megawatts via electricity lines that are subject to frequent outages (Madar, 2023).

Israel has treated Gaza's electricity as a strategic tool in the context of settler colonialism, controlling most of the energy supplies in the sector. It has also used electricity as a tool for political pressure and extortion, reflected in the reduction of energy provided to the sector and the destruction of electricity networks, including bombing the only power plant during the last war. All electricity supplies to the sector were cut off, and the entry of fuel for the power plant and other generators was prevented, which led to the shutdown of hospitals and the loss of many lives. Hospitals were also bombed and unable to obtain the necessary fuel to operate their generators, resulting in the deaths of 39 children at Shifa Hospital, in addition to the death of many patients in intensive care (Al-Hurra, 2023).

Although the ceasefire announced in October allowed small amounts of fuel to enter, the health sector in Gaza did not benefit adequately, as the fuel shortage continued, leading to the disruption of many hospitals. Water and sewage treatment plants also stopped working, contributing to the spread of epidemics and diseases, such as respiratory illnesses, diarrhea, and an increase in skin infections. These conditions led to the deterioration of the environmental and health situation in the Gaza Strip, increasing the risks to the lives of the population (Palestinian Studies Foundation, 2024).

Israel's decision to cut electricity supplies to Gaza and prevent the entry of fuel on October 7th is a punitive measure consistent with the policy of collective punishment, which is prohibited under international law, specifically the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Article 33 of the Convention prohibits the imposition of collective penalties on protected individuals or groups and forbids any actions that harm the lives of civilians, including cutting off essential supplies like electricity and fuel, thus constituting a serious violation of human rights (ICRC, 1949).

From the perspective of international law, this constitutes a violation of the population's right to access healthcare and protect their lives, a right recognized under the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966, which includes the right to health and water.

Regarding Israel's control over Gaza's electricity sources, Israel's control over more than 90% of the electricity supplies in the sector reinforces electricity's role as a strategic tool, allowing Israel to use it within a political and military context to exert pressure on the Palestinian Authority and the civilian population. This violates the principle of proportionality under international humanitarian law, which requires that actions taken in the context of a conflict must be proportionate to the specific military objective and should not lead to the unjustifiable destruction of essential infrastructure (Palestinian Studies Foundation, 2024).

As for Israel's practices in destroying energy infrastructure, including bombing the power plant, this is a violation of international humanitarian law, which prohibits targeting essential civilian infrastructure. According to the Additional Protocol I of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions, attacking civilian facilities that do not participate in hostilities is prohibited (AP I, 1977).

Forced Displacement of Bedouin Communities

Around 7,000 Palestinians, including minors, live in 46 small communities in Area C, located in the central West Bank. Refugees who were displaced from their original homes in southern Israel during the first Arab-Israeli war make up more than 70% of the current population of these communities. The majority of the residents (over 90%) rely on herding as their primary source of income. However, 85% of homes in these communities lack basic infrastructure services such as electricity and water networks, which increases the vulnerability of living conditions. Most of these homes face demolition orders under the pretext of lacking the necessary permits, a situation that has significantly worsened over the past three years. (OCHA, 2024)

Data also indicate that more than 30% of Palestinians displaced forcibly since 2008, totaling around 6,000 individuals, belong to Bedouin/herding communities. Forced displacement often involves the destruction of their homes or parts of them under the pretext of unlicensed construction. On the other hand, Israeli authorities plan to build 540,000 housing units in West Bank settlements, despite this contradicting international law provisions. These settlements enjoy preferential treatment in land allocation, building plans, and the provision of basic services (Wall and Settlement Resistance Committee, 2024).

Israeli authorities continue to implement forced displacement policies against Palestinian populations in the West Bank, focusing on three main areas (Palestinian National Conference on Population, 2034):

1. South of Hebron Hills: Around 1,000 Palestinians, half of whom are children and young people, live under the threat of displacement and the demolition of their villages. Background: Since the 1980s, this area has been declared a "firing zone," despite this violating international humanitarian law. Current Situation: The army previously displaced the residents in 1999, but petitions to the High Court allowed them to return temporarily. However, their cases are still pending in court, and the threat of displacement remains.
2. Ma'ale Adumim Area: In the 1980s and 1990s, the Civil Administration displaced hundreds of Bedouins from the Jahalin tribe to establish and expand the Ma'ale Adumim settlement. Current Situation:
 - Around 3,000 Palestinians, including 1,400 in the "1E" area, live under the threat of displacement.
 - The area is part of a plan to create territorial continuity between the settlement and Jerusalem.

3. Jordan Valley Area: Around 2,700 people live in 20 herding communities, most of which are located in "firing zones." Israeli strategies include repeated home demolitions, evacuations under the pretext of military training, and the confiscation of water tanks, aiming to prevent residents from continuing to live in the area. Israeli Objectives:
 - Imposing facts on the ground: The authorities aim to control these areas and prepare them for official annexation to Israel in any future settlement.
 - Creating a population-displacing environment: Authorities use systematic pressures, such as deprivation of basic services and home demolitions, to force residents to leave their lands.

Violations of International Law These practices represent a blatant violation of international humanitarian law, which prohibits the forced transfer of protected populations except in exceptional circumstances, which do not apply here, including:

- Forced transfer: Involves the departure of residents due to indirect pressures, such as deteriorating living conditions caused by occupation policies.
- War crime: Forced transfer operations constitute a serious violation, holding the involved parties criminally accountable.

These policies represent a systematic violation of human rights, as Israel continues to marginalize Palestinian populations and impose a new settlement reality on the ground, exacerbating the humanitarian and political crisis in the region.

Risks and Challenges:

1. Forced displacement of Bedouin communities: Small Bedouin communities located in the hills east of Jerusalem and central West Bank areas are classified among the most vulnerable to forced displacement. Reports indicate the distribution of demolition or evacuation orders for residents who lack proof of land ownership, worsening living conditions without providing alternative solutions or consulting affected populations.
2. Road closures and access restrictions: Some Palestinian communities suffer from restrictive measures, where roads leading to their lands have been closed or restricted for Israeli settlers' use, increasing residents' isolation and difficulty accessing basic services.
3. Expansion of Israeli settlements: Israeli authorities allocate vast lands in Area C for settlement expansion. These plans threaten Palestinian urban expansion and intensify pressures on local Palestinian communities, as these challenges are part of Israeli policies aimed at reshaping the demographic and geographic makeup of Area C, which calls for urgent international action to ensure the protection of Palestinian residents' rights and halt ongoing violations.
4. Displacement of Wadi al-Siq residents: On October 12, 2023, 250 residents (40 families) from Wadi al-Siq, east of Ramallah, were forcibly displaced in a violent operation carried out by settlers under the threat of arms and with the protection of Israeli occupation forces. The settlers terrorized residents, fired in the air, detained men and youth, and threatened them while forcing them to leave within an hour without

allowing them to take their belongings. After displacement, the homes and tents were completely demolished, and occupation authorities prevented the residents from returning to their community. (Human Rights Watch, 2024)

5. The role of settlers in displacement: Settler violence, supported by occupation authorities, has escalated, with grazing outposts established near targeted communities, such as Wadi al-Siq, becoming bases for daily assaults on herders and the confiscation of natural resources like land and water. These assaults are part of a plan to create a coercive environment that forces residents to leave.
6. Dimensions of displacement in the West Bank: According to the Wall and Settlement Resistance Committee, 25 Bedouin communities were displaced in 2023, mostly in the eastern slopes, which are strategically important due to their proximity to the Jordan border and being a key food basket for Palestinians. Since the start of the Israeli war on Gaza in October 2023, 16,000 additional weapons were distributed to settlers, contributing to an increase in violence. A total of 1,208 people from 15 Bedouin communities were displaced in the last months of the year due to settler violence and imposed restrictions. (Wall and Settlement Resistance Committee, 2024)

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in 2023, more than 3,700 Palestinians in the West Bank, half of them children, were displaced due to settler violence (41%), access restrictions, demolitions, and Israeli military actions. The last quarter of the year saw a significant rise in displacement, with 198 families (1,208 people) affected, mainly due to settler violence. (OCHA, 2024)

The continued systematic displacement in the West Bank reflects a colonial plan aimed at total control over Palestinian lands. Occupation authorities rely on settler violence and colonial outposts to achieve these goals, which constitutes a blatant violation of international law and human rights. (WAFA, 2024) Many Palestinians across the West Bank face the risk of forced transfer due to the coercive environment generated by Israeli policies and practices, creating pressures on numerous residents to leave their communities in the central West Bank, where 46 Bedouin/herding communities are at risk of forced transfer due to Israel's "resettlement" plan in recent years. (OCHA, 2024)

Israeli Violations Against Palestinian Detainees Israel continues its systematic targeting of the Palestinian detainees' movement in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza. The following is a summary of key statistics and events related to detainees in 2024 (Al-Quds Newspaper, 2024):

1. Mass arrests: The number of detainees since October 2023 exceeds 25,000 citizens.
 - 14,300 detainees from the West Bank and Jerusalem..
2. In 2024, approximately 8,800 Palestinians were arrested, while administrative detention was used as a punitive measure against around 10,000 individuals. Many of those subjected to administrative detention faced transfers or had their detention orders renewed multiple times.
3. Women and children:
 - 450 women and girls have been arrested, 89 of whom are still detained.

- 1,065 children have been arrested, including around 700 children since the beginning of 2024.
4. Martyrs inside prisons: 54 martyrs have died in Israeli prisons, including 35 from Gaza, whose bodies are still being held by the occupation.

Israel's Systematic Targeting of the Palestinian Detainees

Israel continues its systematic targeting of the Palestinian prisoner movement in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Below is a summary of key statistics and events related to detainees during 2024 (Al-Quds Newspaper, 2024):

1. Widespread Arrests: Since October 2023, over 25,000 Palestinian citizens have been arrested.

- 14,300 arrests from the West Bank and Jerusalem and the remainder from the Gaza Strip.
 - In 2024, approximately 8,800 Palestinian citizens were arrested.
2. Administrative Detention
- Administrative detention has been used as a punitive policy against nearly 10,000 Palestinians, with detainees being transferred or having their detention renewed one or multiple times.

3. Women and Children

- 450 women and girls have been arrested, with 89 still in detention.
- 1,065 children have been arrested, including around 700 since the beginning of 2024.

4. Martyrs in Prisons

- 54 martyrs have died inside Israeli prisons, including 35 from Gaza, whose bodies are still withheld by the occupation.

Crimes Committed by the Occupation Against Detainees

1. Enforced Disappearance: The occupation deliberately withholds information about detainees from Gaza, exacerbating the suffering of their families.

Prison administrations respond negatively to inquiries from legal teams about detainees.

2. Systematic Torture: Detention camps like Sde Teiman are glaring examples of the occupation's violations (Amnesty International, 2024).

Such camps are sites of:

- Sexual harassment and rape.
- The use of police dogs to maul detainees.

3. Executions and Physical Liquidations

Deliberate executions of civilian detainees and doctors, especially within camps established in Gaza.

4. Medical Crimes

Israeli violations against Palestinian detainees represent a dangerous escalation violating international humanitarian law and require urgent local and international action.

The mass arrests of Palestinians represent a clear violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the mass arrest or transfer of protected populations. The policy of administrative detention, which is repeatedly renewed, also violates Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which affirms the right to a fair trial and prohibits arbitrary detention. Arbitrary detention is a clear breach of Article 9 of the ICCPR, while the transfer of detainees outside the occupied territories constitutes a violation of Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The detention of women and children violates Article 77 of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which provides special protection for women and children in armed conflicts. The detention of children without fair procedures breaches Article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and detaining women under inhumane conditions violates human rights conventions.

Regarding martyrs in prisons, the death of detainees and the holding of their bodies violate Article 130 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits extrajudicial executions and inhuman treatment. Extrajudicial execution also breaches Article 6 of the ICCPR, and holding the bodies is considered a form of collective punishment, violating international humanitarian law. Forced disappearance, in turn, violates the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, especially Article 17, and leads to psychological suffering for the detainees' families, which constitutes a form of psychological torture.

Systematic torture in camps such as "Sdeh Teyman," including sexual harassment, rape, and the use of police dogs, violates Article 1 of the Convention Against Torture, as well as Article 3 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Sexual assault is considered a war crime under the Rome Statute. Executions and extrajudicial killings violate Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, and extrajudicial executions are classified as war crimes under Article 8 of the Rome Statute.

Medical crimes against detainees are violations of Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which requires the provision of medical care to populations under occupation. Deliberate medical neglect constitutes a form of torture and inhuman treatment. Overall, Israeli violations against Palestinian detainees constitute a grave breach of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, necessitating urgent international action to ensure accountability and protect the rights of detainees.

The Status of Palestinian Refugees' Rights

The year 2024 witnessed a continuation and escalation of Israeli violations against Palestinian refugees, further complicating their humanitarian situation and worsening their daily lives. These violations included forced displacement, tightening of the blockade on Gaza, home

demolitions, and worsening economic and social conditions. Consequently, the year was marked by clear breaches of international treaties that safeguard refugee rights, particularly the right of return, as well as fundamental rights such as housing, health, and education.

The Right of Return Amid International Neglect

In 2024, Israel persisted in its refusal to acknowledge Palestinian refugees' right of return, despite repeated United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly Resolution 194. Meanwhile, new Israeli attempts to alter the facts on the ground emerged, such as the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. These policies reduced the areas available for refugee return, constituting a direct violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the transfer or forced displacement of civilian populations (ICRC, 1949).

Despite international calls to respect Palestinian refugees' rights, no tangible progress was made on the global stage. On the contrary, Israel continued its rejectionist policies against initiatives aimed at resolving the refugee issue, highlighting the significant challenges facing the enforcement of international law and the protection of Palestinian rights.

Forced Displacement and Home Demolitions

In 2024, Israel significantly escalated home demolition operations targeting Palestinian properties, particularly in East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank. According to reports from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2024), over 900 homes and Palestinian structures were destroyed during the year, displacing thousands of families, including women and children. These actions clearly violate Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the destruction of private property in occupied territories.

In Gaza, Israeli air and ground assaults continued targeting civilian infrastructure, causing the displacement of hundreds of families within the besieged territory. The year 2024 highlighted the growing suffering of Palestinians, as securing safe housing became a daily challenge in the absence of effective international intervention.

Humanitarian Conditions: A Crisis in Health and Education

The humanitarian situation for Palestinian refugees in 2024 deteriorated to unprecedented levels. In Gaza, the ongoing Israeli blockade led to severe shortages in medicines and medical supplies. Reports from the World Health Organization (WHO, 2024) indicated that more than 50% of essential drugs were unavailable in Gaza's hospitals, putting the lives of patients, especially children and the elderly, at risk.

In the education sector, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) reported significant disruptions to the educational process in 2024 due to Israeli military operations. In the West Bank, over 20% of Palestinian students faced difficulty reaching their schools due to checkpoints and roadblocks (UNRWA, 2024). Meanwhile, in Gaza, the educational process came to a halt following the destruction of numerous schools during Israeli attacks. These violations represent a breach of Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989), which guarantees the right to education without discrimination.

Economic Deterioration and Rising Poverty

Economically, 2024 saw a sharp increase in poverty and unemployment among Palestinian refugees. In Gaza, unemployment exceeded 80% due to the ongoing blockade and military conflicts (PCBS, 2024), driving greater reliance on humanitarian aid. In the West Bank, refugees faced severe restrictions on movement and construction, negatively impacting their ability to access livelihoods.

In refugee camps outside Palestine, the economic situation remained dire amid a decline in international funding for UNRWA. 2024 witnessed significant cuts to relief programs and food aid (UNRWA, 2024), exacerbating refugee suffering and deepening poverty levels.

The Absence of International Accountability

The year 2024 witnessed an unprecedented escalation in Israeli attempts to suppress freedom of expression and silence Palestinian voices. Many Palestinian journalists faced arbitrary arrests, physical assaults, and ongoing threats while covering field events. These violations were not limited to direct violence but also included systematic policies aimed at restricting Palestinian media work and imposing censorship on journalistic coverage exposing Israeli violations.

In addition, Israel intensified its efforts in media distortion by spreading misleading narratives and tarnishing the image of Palestinian refugees. These efforts specifically targeted undermining their legitimate rights and their right of return in an attempt to alter facts and weaken international support for their just cause. These practices did not solely target Palestinian journalists but also sought to disrupt the work of international and local media outlets highlighting the humanitarian conditions of refugees.

These systematic attempts are not only blatant violations of press freedom and the right to expression but also constitute a clear breach of international law, particularly Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees every individual the right to freedom of expression and opinion without fear of suppression or arrest.

Escalation of Media Suppression and Silencing Palestinian Voices

The year 2024 also saw a significant escalation in Israeli attempts to suppress freedom of expression and silence Palestinian voices. Many Palestinian journalists faced arbitrary arrests and violence while covering events. Furthermore, efforts to distort the narrative about Palestinian refugees and undermine their rights increased, aimed at reducing international support for their cause.

International Calls for Supporting Palestinian Refugees

Despite ongoing violations, 2024 witnessed growing calls from human rights and international organizations to provide greater support for Palestinian refugees. The United Nations and civil society organizations urged increased funding for UNRWA to ensure the continuation of its services amid dire conditions. Additionally, UN member states were called upon to exert more pressure on Israel to halt its violations and comply with international laws regarding refugee protection.

The year 2024 was a challenging year for Palestinian refugees, marked by escalated Israeli violations affecting all aspects of their lives. The continued occupation and expansionist

policies further deepened their suffering, depriving them of the right of return and destroying their homes while stripping them of basic rights. In the absence of international accountability, Palestinian refugees' rights remain at risk. This situation demands urgent action from the international community to ensure justice and protect refugee rights. Achieving peace in the region will not be possible without a fair and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian refugee issue, grounded in respect for their rights and dignity under international law.

The Detention of Martyrs' Bodies

The policy of detaining the bodies of martyrs by the Israeli occupation is considered one of the most prominent practices that violate human rights and international humanitarian law. The occupation is holding the bodies of 552 martyrs in numbered graves and refrigerators, including 256 martyrs in numbered graves and 296 martyrs since the policy of detention was reintroduced in 2015. These numbers include 9 female martyrs, 32 martyrs from the prisoner movement, 55 children under the age of 18, 5 martyrs from Palestinians inside the 1948 occupied territories, and 6 martyrs from Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. With the outbreak of the ongoing genocide against the Gaza Strip, the occupation escalated its detention of bodies, as 149 martyrs' bodies were detained, which constitutes more than half of the bodies detained since 2015. However, this number does not include the martyrs detained from Gaza precisely (ADDAMEER, 2024).

In the same context, estimates indicate that the number of detained martyrs' bodies from Gaza reaches the hundreds. The newspaper *Haaretz* revealed in July 2024 that the occupation is holding approximately 1,500 bodies of Palestinians whose identities are unknown. According to the newspaper, these bodies were stored in refrigerated containers inside the military base known as "Sde Teiman," and they were classified by numbers instead of names. The newspaper also indicated that some bodies were missing limbs or were so mutilated that their features could not be recognized (Institute for Palestine Studies, 2024).

It is worth noting that during the war, the Israeli occupation handed over 428 unidentified martyrs' bodies in several batches, and they were buried in mass graves in Khan Yunis and Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. In this context, the scene of delivering bodies in blue bags was one of the most painful images that reflected the brutality and degradation of human dignity (Palestinian Prisoners Society, 2024).

The occupation exploited the date of October 7 to carry out its brutal policies, as dozens of prisoners and detainees were killed inside prisons and detention camps. 54 martyrs from among the prisoners have fallen since the start of the war, including 35 martyrs from Gaza detainees in 2024. Human rights organizations have documented the martyrdom of 43 prisoners, making this year the deadliest for the prisoners' movement since 1967. The occupation also carried out field executions of detainees in the West Bank and Gaza, and it is still holding the bodies of 63 martyrs from the prisoners and detainees, including 52 martyrs (ADDAMEER, 2024).

From a legal perspective, the policy of detaining bodies constitutes a flagrant violation of international norms and treaties that guarantee the rights of victims after their death. International law imposes clear obligations to ensure the respect of the dignity of the deceased

and the rights of their families. The rules of international humanitarian law set out a set of principles aimed at regulating the treatment of the dead during armed conflicts, including the search for and collection of the dead, protection from looting and mutilation, the return of their remains and personal belongings, the proper disposal of the dead, and the identification of the deceased. These rules reflect the international community's commitment to protecting human dignity even in the most difficult circumstances, but their deliberate violation represents a challenge to the principles of humanity and justice. The following is an overview of these laws and principles as stipulated by international humanitarian law (ICRC,1949):

- Rule (112) concerns the search for and collection of the dead, stipulating that the parties to the conflict must take all possible measures to search for the dead in conflict areas and work to collect their remains. The goal is to ensure that bodies are not left on the battlefield or in abandoned areas while providing the necessary care to identify their locations and maintain their human dignity.
- Rule (113) concerns the protection of the dead from looting and mutilation, imposing an absolute ban on any violation of the bodies, including looting, mutilation, or any acts that harm their dignity after death. It emphasizes the respect for the bodies and their proper treatment, prohibiting their use as a means of pressure or humiliation against the opposing party.
- Rule (114) stipulates the necessity of returning the remains of the deceased to their families whenever possible, along with their personal belongings. This procedure aims to achieve humanitarian justice and alleviate the suffering of families, as well as respecting the right to bury the deceased according to their religious and cultural beliefs.
- Rule (115) emphasizes the need to ensure a decent and proper burial for the dead, in accordance with local customs and religious beliefs, and in designated, preserved locations where graves can be revisited later for identification purposes.
- Rule (116) focuses on the importance of making every effort to identify the deceased, requiring the parties to the conflict to record all available information about the bodies, such as physical features, personal belongings, or any data that can assist in their identification. This is to ensure that the deceased are identified and their families are informed of their fate.

In the same context, the Geneva Conventions require the parties to the conflict to adhere to specific rules for regulating the treatment of the dead. Article (17) of the First Geneva Convention of 1949 stipulates the necessity of providing a decent and respectful burial for the dead, with respect for their graves in accordance with their religious rituals. Article (120) of the Third Geneva Convention and Article (130) of the Fourth Geneva Convention obligate the parties to return the bodies and remains of the deceased to their families. Additionally, the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions emphasizes the importance of facilitating the return of the bodies of the deceased and ensuring their respect in accordance with the principles of international humanitarian law (ICRC,1949).

Based on the above, the policy of body detention implemented by the Israeli occupation is a blatant violation of human rights and a flagrant disregard for international humanitarian laws. It is not merely a tool for collective punishment affecting Palestinian families but also represents an ongoing form of humiliation of human dignity. Furthermore, these practices

contribute to undermining the principles of justice and fairness enshrined in international treaties, emphasizing the occupation's disregard for the rights of victims and their families to bury their deceased with dignity and to identify their bodies. This constitutes a breach of the humanitarian principles that must prevail under all circumstances.



Conclusions

The report highlighted the human losses and serious violations witnessed in the Palestinian territories, where the total number of martyrs in the Gaza Strip reached 45,717, and in the West Bank 835 martyrs, including 17,818 children and 12,287 women, The Israeli occupation has also detained 552 martyrs whose identities are known, along with hundreds of unidentified martyrs. reflecting a systematic targeting of the most vulnerable groups. Humanitarian teams also faced direct attacks, resulting in the martyrdom of 1,068 medical personnel, 756 educational staff, 201 journalists, and 203 UNRWA employees, constituting a gross violation of international humanitarian law.

Regarding infrastructure, the report documented the destruction of 245,123 housing units to varying degrees, with 60,368 buildings completely destroyed, leading to a complete paralysis in providing basic services. Educational institutions were also targeted, with 380 schools and universities being partially or completely destroyed, depriving 88,000 students from continuing their studies and causing the complete disruption of higher education.

Concerning forced displacement, more than 2 million civilians were forced to leave their homes within the Gaza Strip due to intensive shelling and widespread infrastructure destruction. These displaced people live in dire humanitarian conditions with severe shortages of food, water, and basic services, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

Regarding the use of internationally banned weapons, the report documented the use of weapons such as cluster bombs, vacuum bombs, and dumb bombs, in clear violation of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I, increasing the severity of the damage to civilians and infrastructure. As for the violation of human rights, 819 mosques and 3 churches were destroyed, in addition to 200 archaeological and historical sites, constituting an attack on Palestinian cultural and religious identity. These violations contradict Article (18) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees freedom of religion and belief.

The war also caused widespread psychological crises, with an increase in cases of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), particularly among children and women, due to the loss of loved ones and property, highlighting the devastating psychological effects of the conflict. Despite these serious violations, the report points to the international community's failure to take effective measures to stop the crimes or hold those responsible accountable, leading to the exacerbation of civilian suffering and the continuation of crimes without deterrence.

There is an urgent need for international intervention to protect more than 2 million displaced persons and hold perpetrators accountable, alongside the reconstruction of infrastructure, including 380 educational institutions and 60,368 buildings completely destroyed. Additionally, psychological and social support must be enhanced for 17,818 children and 12,287 women who have been physically and psychologically affected. Furthermore, it is essential to establish international legal mechanisms to activate accountability for those responsible, utilizing international laws such as the Rome Statute and the Geneva Conventions to ensure justice and strengthen civilian protection.

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