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ISRAEL/OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY: POST-CEASEFIRE: ISRAEL'S GENOCIDE IN THE OCCUPIED GAZA STRIP CONTINUES

More than one month after a ceasefire was announced in Gaza on 9 October, Israeli authorities are still committing genocide against Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip, by continuing to deliberately inflict conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction. Israel severely restricts the entry of supplies and the restoration of services essential for the survival of the civilian population – including nutritious food, medical supplies and electricity – as well as stringently limiting medical evacuations.

Israeli authorities continue to prohibit the entry of equipment and material necessary to repair life-sustaining infrastructure and required to remove unexploded ordnance, contaminated rubble and sewage, all of which pose serious and potentially irreversible public health and environmental damage.

The systemic expulsion of Palestinians from their homes and what was once the most arable land continues, with Israeli military deployed across 58% of the Gaza Strip. This expulsion risks becoming permanent.

There have also been no prosecutions or investigations of acts of genocide by the Israeli authorities, at least none that has been publicly disclosed or acknowledged. On the contrary, atrocity crimes committed against Palestinians, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture and other ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees, continue to receive high level political support in Israel and within the military ranks.

Not only has the level of dehumanization of Palestinians seen no decline post-ceasefire and the return of the hostages, but new death penalty legislation has been proposed which in its current wording means that it would be primarily applied against Palestinians.

Israel also continues to prevent access to the Gaza Strip to international forensic experts and investigators, including international justice and UN mandated mechanisms, as well as international human rights organizations, and international media. This effectively prevents the collection of time-sensitive evidence that would be essential to pursue accountability and provide redress to victims and survivors.

Restrictions on aid and relief materials

Limited aid to a few does not mean that the genocide has ended or that Israel's intent has changed.

As set forth in Amnesty International's report on the genocide in Gaza, the "act of 'deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction', as prohibited under Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention, refers to methods of destruction that do not immediately kill members of the group but which, ultimately, are able to lead, over time, to their physical or biological destruction.

Such acts include but are not limited to subjecting the group to a subsistence diet, reducing essential medical services below a minimum requirement, systematically expelling members of the group from their homes, and 'generally creating circumstances that would lead to a slow death', such as the lack of proper food, water, shelter, clothing or sanitation. In the absence of direct evidence of the underlying intent with which conditions of life were imposed – in other words, whether they were calculated to bring about physical destruction, international jurisprudence has ruled that consideration may be given to 'the objective probability of these conditions leading to the physical destruction of the group.' In evaluating such a probability, the following factors may be considered: the actual nature of the conditions of life, the length of time that members of the group were subjected to them, and the characteristics of the group, such as its vulnerability, including children in particular.

None of these conditions imposed by Israel has changed since Amnesty December 2024 report, and the physical condition of the Palestinians themselves has declined, with little to no infrastructure left to sustain them. Israel's persistent refusal to ensure sufficient aid to Palestinians in Gaza or to lift its illegal blockade, including by opening all crossings, is damning evidence that this genocidal act continues and that Israel's intent remains unchanged. It consciously and deliberately continues this course defying repeated orders and advisory opinions of the ICJ that has affirmed Israel's international obligations to supply food, medical supplies, food and other essential supplies to the population, required Israel to cooperate with UNRWA, and found its occupation of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem unlawful. Israel also refuses to provide full access to journalists and human rights monitors, thereby attempting to hide the extent of the full impact of its actions.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), between 10 October and 13 November, Israeli authorities blocked more than 6,480 metric tons of humanitarian relief materials coordinated by different UN bodies from entering Gaza. This included shelter materials and equipment essential for sewage treatment, the maintenance and repair of water and sanitation infrastructure, and the removal of unexploded ordnance and contaminated debris.

These restrictions continue to compound the humanitarian situation in Gaza stemming from 18 years of unlawful blockade, which has been further exponentially exacerbated by the last two years of intensive Israeli military operations that severely damaged or destroyed water and sanitation infrastructure throughout the Gaza Strip.

An engineer responsible for water and sanitation in Gaza City told Amnesty International that the municipality has only been able to provide one-third of the population's daily needs for water:

"Before the war, we had the capacity to provide 100,000 cubic metres of water daily, through the city's main desalination plant, which was destroyed at the beginning of the genocide, through the city's 84 municipal wells, and through the pipeline connected to the Mekorot water network in Israel. With the total destruction or severe damage to most municipal wells, shortages in fuel necessary to operate private water wells, the refusal of Israeli authorities to allow spare parts to repair damaged pipes, or water trucks, we can only produce about 35,000 cubic meters of water daily. Large swathes of Gaza City continue to have no running water... Even households that do receive water do not get anywhere near their daily need for consumption."

Engineers at the Gaza City and Deir al-Balah municipalities and at the coastal water authority in the south of Gaza told Amnesty International that Israeli authorities have rejected their requests, made through UN bodies, for the entry of drain-cleaning pumps and other equipment required for the management of sewage water.

Heavy rain on 15-16 November flooded thousands of displaced people's tents, leaving families stranded with their clothes and possessions soaked and nowhere dry to shelter. These devastating scenes offer a tiny glimpse into the disastrous conditions that people will face over winter, amid fears of a sewage overflow catastrophe.

A 28-year-old widow told Amnesty International she was unable to find dry clothing or bedding for her two-year-old daughter after their tent was flooded by the torrential rain.

In December 2024, Human Rights Watch highlighted how, since October 2023, Israeli authorities had deliberately obstructed Palestinians' access to the amounts of water required for survival and described it as an act of genocide.

Those obstructions remain in place, and their impact is even greater due to the additional damage inflicted over the past year and the protracted lack of repairs.

A father of six told Amnesty International that lack of access to water stopped his family from returning to their home in Tal al-Hawa, in Gaza City: "If at the beginning of the war we could cope with this, now we are completely drained; I don't have the strength to start from scratch all over again, after so many displacements."

A 29-year-old nurse who returned with her family to their destroyed home in Jabalia in northern Gaza after being repeatedly displaced and is now living in a makeshift shelter in the ruins of their house, said: "We have no electricity, or water or any infrastructure. We cannot pump water from the well near our home because there is no fuel for the water pump, but we manage to get some small quantities of water from a nearby school where many displaced families are sheltering." Despite the conditions, she said their family is in a better situation than people who remain displaced and do not know when or if they will ever be able to return.

Israel continues to prohibit UNRWA, the largest provider of aid and education, from coordinating the entry of supplies into Gaza. This is despite last month's International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory opinion concluding that Israel has an obligation to not impede the work of UNRWA and other humanitarian organizations in the OPT and that, in fact, Israel has a duty to facilitate their operations. This obstruction of UNRWA and others also violates repeated ICJ provisional measures orders to Israel to allow unimpeded humanitarian aid into Gaza.

Other major humanitarian organizations' requests for the entry of desperately needed aid into Gaza have also been rejected on the grounds of lack of registration in Israel, a condition Israel imposes to arbitrarily restrict humanitarian operations. These restrictions particularly hamper the ability of international medical organizations to deliver essential medical supplies into Gaza, depriving Palestinian patients of life-saving medications.

A staff member of a major international humanitarian organization told Amnesty International that they were only allowed to get hygiene kits into Gaza, but their requests for the entry of other critical supplies have either been rejected or gone unanswered.

These restrictions are reflected in the grim reality of life in Gaza, where ongoing severe shortages in medical supplies – including in medication for blood pressure, infections, kidney failure, cancer, or diabetes – remain extremely dire. The impact of such shortages is compounded by the fact that many Palestinians in Gaza are already more vulnerable to sickness and spread of disease due to the continuing effects of malnutrition and prolonged deprivation of health care. An emergency doctor at al-Shifa hospital told Amnesty International:

“Patients with chronic illnesses, especially older people, arrive at our hospital and there is nothing we can do to save their lives. Now that the deaths due to bombardment have significantly reduced since the ceasefire, we are seeing cases that before the war could have easily been averted, people with heart disease, with diabetes, with kidney failure, whom we don’t have the equipment, staff, nor the capacity to treat. They are dying a slow death.”

He added: “Although the situation for us improved after the ceasefire, with the opening of new primary health points, shortages in life-saving medical supplies continue to affect our ability to save patients, especially people with complications resulting for diabetes, shortages of medicine required for cancer patients or for heart disease.”

According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, cited by the OCHA, 343 out of 622 (more than 55%) essential drug items are currently at zero-stock levels. This includes 74% of chemotherapy and blood disease drugs, 64% of primary healthcare drugs, 56% of mothers’ and child health drugs and 50% of kidney transplantation and haemodialysis drugs. In addition, 710 out of 1,006 medical single-use items known as consumables (71%) were at zero-stock levels in October 2025. These include 100% of open heart and catheterization consumables, 99% of orthopaedic surgery consumables, and 91% of ophthalmic surgery consumables.

The situation is particularly deadly for people in need of life-saving treatment outside Gaza but unable to access it. This is often due to Israel’s delays in granting permits and its ongoing ban on treating Palestinians from Gaza in hospitals in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel.

According to the World Health Organization, in the month since the signing of the ceasefire, it facilitated the medical evacuation out of Gaza of 165 patients, including 105 children. At least 16,500 critically ill or wounded Palestinians – nearly 4,000 of them children- require urgent specialized treatment.

Unlawful Displacement under inhumane conditions

The mass forcible transfer of Palestinians continues, exacerbating the conditions under which Palestinians live, and has been used to justify the killing of Palestinians. According to the ceasefire agreement, the Israeli military remains fully deployed in around 54-58% of the Gaza Strip, leaving this area cut off from the rest of the Gaza Strip. The perimeter of this area is ambiguously indicated on maps published by the Israeli military, and in some cases demarcated with concrete blocks, and is referred to as the “yellow line”. Within this area, the Israeli army, for the last two years, has implemented a meticulous plan of destruction and flattening the entire area, in which military outposts have then been established. Palestinians are prevented from returning to their homes or agricultural lands located in areas beyond the yellow line, and the Israeli military has shot at those who come near. Some 93 Palestinians attempting to cross and return to their homes have been killed.

By preventing people from accessing their agricultural land and sources of food production, Israel is compounding the impact of its deliberate restrictions on the entry of nutritious food and other necessities of life. Access restrictions and the widespread destruction of agricultural and industrial areas, along with Israel’s severe restriction to Gaza fisheries prevent Palestinians from accessing independent forms of sustenance, deliberately forcing them to rely entirely on the inadequate supply of food and other supplies whose entry and distribution in Gaza Israel arbitrarily restricts.

A 54-year-old teacher told Amnesty International that she is still forced to live in unsanitary conditions in an overcrowded camp because her home in Shuja’iya is located beyond the yellow line:

“We would have been willing to return to Shuja’iya, if just to set up tents on the ruins of our destroyed home, but the yellow line prevents us from doing so. Neighbours who went to Shuja’iya just to inspect the damage to their homes were shot because the Israeli military said they crossed the line.”

The displaced population faces unsanitary and overcrowded conditions, exacerbating the spread of disease amongst people whose immune systems remain weak due to malnutrition and prolonged deprivation of health care, and many of the main displacement areas lack life-sustaining infrastructure. Displacement is compounded by the extensive destruction of infrastructure, including roads, and the lack of transportation which make it even more difficult for Palestinians to reach the limited medical services available and for agencies to be able to effectively distribute aid across the Gaza Strip.

The situation is particularly dire for people with disabilities. A 56-year-old wheelchair user from Jabalia refugee camp, who has since been displaced to a camp in Al-Zawayda, said:

“Everything is tough here. There are no toilets equipped for people with a wheelchair, so every time I need the toilet for me is a torment. For us maybe the only thing that improved is the fact that the ceaseless bombing stopped; that at least there is some safety now, but it’s also worse because now we don’t see any end on the horizon. Are we doomed to stay in tents and in the camp for the rest of our lives, without dignity, without privacy?”

Dunia al-Ajrami, 24, who was injured in an Israeli strike on 16 November 2024 and had to have one leg amputated above the knee and four fingers removed, described the challenges she faces in the camp as a person with disabilities:

“I am a special education specialist; I had a job before the war, I worked with kids... The injury stripped me of my independence, but worse still, the tent strips me of my humanity. The toilets are not accessible, it’s very difficult for me to move in the tent, to shower. I used to provide for my family but now we are completely reliant on aid.”

A nurse who is unable to return to her family home east of the yellow line told Amnesty International: “I have been displaced multiple times and have lost everything, and now I am living in a tent in conditions that couldn’t be worse as these days heavy rain has come and everywhere is flooded and with winter coming it will only get worse. If at least we could go back to our land, we could shelter in the rubble of our house and at least we would have some privacy. At least it would be home.”

International pressure must stop all genocidal acts, not just the bombing

In its report on Israel’s genocide in December 2024, Amnesty International detailed the extensive evidence of Israel’s deliberate creation of conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the Palestinians in Gaza. It also provided evidence of Israel’s genocidal intent, based on the general context in which the prohibited acts were committed, the existence of a pattern of conduct, the scale and systematic nature of the prohibited acts and the scale, nature, extent and degree of harm experienced by the protected group. Except for the cessation of continuous bombing, little has changed that was documented in Amnesty December 2024 report and nothing suggests that Israel’s intent has changed.

Israel’s system of apartheid against Palestinians continues, with the constant continued dehumanization of Palestinians. Israel’s state policy of discrimination and forcible transfer of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank has worsened, with increasing state-backed violence and killings. Israel’s arbitrary detention of Palestinians and torture and other ill-treatment of detainees continues with at least 98 having died in detention since October 2023. All of these “culpable acts, systematically directed against the same group” remain evidence of Israel’s intent.

Within occupied Gaza itself, Palestinians remain held within less than half of the territory, in the areas least capable of supporting life, with humanitarian aid still severely restricted. Still today, even after repeated warnings by international bodies, three sets of legally binding orders by the ICJ, and two ICJ advisory opinions, and despite Israel’s obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, both as an occupying power and as a party to an armed conflict, Israel deliberately continues not to provide or allow necessary supplies to reach the civilian population in Gaza.

The ceasefire was the result of international pressure, including from its ally, the United States, not the result of any apparent change of heart.

International jurisprudence recognizes that international pressure may prevent the perpetrator of a “genocidal plan from putting it into action in the most direct and efficient way” and compel it instead to adopt “the method which would allow them to implement the genocidal design while minimizing the risk of retribution.” At this point, while the bombing has largely stopped, Israel continues to restrict and obstruct aid to Gaza, perpetuating the conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction – the slow death reported by observers within Gaza. Any episodic mitigation efforts by Israel to allow the provision of humanitarian aid or other essential supplies to the population of Gaza does not negate an inference of genocidal intent, as long as any such effort is inconsistent or insufficient and does not translate into a fundamental reversal of the conditions of life imposed on Palestinians in Gaza. And at this point it is clear that Israel will not permit the provision of aid sufficient to create life-sustaining conditions within Gaza unless the international community demands that it takes effective measures to ensure that it does so.