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Total razing of Khuza'a further evidence of Israel's genocide in Gaza

Amnesty International's analysis of satellite imagery and verification of video footage reveals how Israeli forces completely razed what remained of the town of Khuza'a in the southern occupied Gaza Strip over the course of two weeks in May 2025.

The analysis underscores the urgent need to investigate the Israeli military for the war crimes of wanton destruction and collective punishment. It also provides fresh evidence of Israel's genocide against Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip.

The findings of this research indicate a pattern of deliberate destruction of life-sustaining infrastructure, including some of Gaza's most fertile agricultural land, undertaken by Israel as part of a calculated plan to impose on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life designed to bring about their physical destruction, in whole or in part. Amnesty International's [previous research](#) uncovered a pattern of Israeli destruction of civilian areas between December 2023 and May 2024 without imperative military necessity during efforts to expand a "buffer zone" along the eastern perimeter of Gaza.

The latest images from May 2025 illustrate how Khuza'a, a town in the Khan Younis governorate, once home to approximately 11,000 Palestinians, has been entirely reduced to rubble in less than two weeks after a significant part of the town had already been destroyed in 2024. This evidence strongly suggests Israel is continuing its pattern of destroying civilian areas in the absence of imperative military necessity, given that the methodical destruction went significantly beyond tactical engagements. While some destruction may be attributed to shelling, air strikes or fighting during combat, much of the destruction appears to

have been deliberately and methodically carried out outside active combat.

“The annihilation of Khuza’a is a chilling testament to Israel’s ongoing campaign of systematic destruction in Gaza, transforming entire towns into desolate landscapes of dust and rubble,” said Erika Guevara Rosas, Senior Director for Research, Advocacy Policy and Campaigns at Amnesty International.

“The scale of this destruction far exceeds any conceivable military necessity and points to a deliberate campaign by Israeli forces to render the area uninhabitable.”

The destruction of some of Gaza’s most fertile agricultural land, including land essential to the production of food, must be seen in the context of Israel’s use of starvation as a method of warfare. For 77 days beginning on 2 March 2025, Israeli authorities completely blocked the entry of food and other supplies essential to the survival of the civilian population. While it has recently allowed a trickle of aid in, the militarization of aid distribution has made access to food both extremely deadly and dehumanizing. Coupled with mass displacement and systematic destruction or denial of access to sources of food production, Israel has engineered an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, which is part and parcel of the genocidal conditions of life it has imposed in Gaza.

A town erased: May 2025 timeline of destruction

The extent of destruction in Khuza’a unfolded rapidly throughout May 2025. Between 14 and 15 May Palestinian media reported Israeli air strikes and artillery shelling in the area, likely in preparation for the deployment of ground troops. By 17 May, satellite imagery analyzed by Amnesty International’s Evidence Lab showed new heavy vehicle tracks crossing from Israel directly into Khuza’a . It was also on 17 May that the Israeli military announced the launch of operation “[Gideon’s Chariots](#),” signalling an expansion of its offensive in the occupied Gaza Strip. While Palestinian media reported that Palestinian Islamic Jihad fighters targeted an Israeli tank in Khuza’a with an RPG on 20 May, the scale of subsequent destruction indicates far more than tactical engagement.

Further visual evidence of the devastation emerged swiftly. By 27 May, [drone footage](#) circulated on social media and verified by Amnesty International, provided undeniable, detailed visual evidence that large sections of Khuza’a had been completely reduced to rubble over the preceding days. A video posted on social media and verified by Amnesty International [showed three unarmoured excavators bringing down what was left of a building in Khuza’a](#), suggesting that there was no major perceived threat to the soldiers operating them and that this was not a combat zone.

In a statement on 25 May Israeli military commander Lt. Col Dor Yoetz declared [in a letter to troops](#) they had set out to “eliminate the terrorist nest known as Khirbat Ikhza’a [a different name used in Hebrew to refer to Khuza’a]”. He said that within a few days they defeated their enemy, and that “Khirbat Ikhza’a no longer exists”.

The dire reality was confirmed by the municipality of Khuza’a itself on 31 May, which [released a statement](#) on its Facebook page asserting that “the amount of destruction in the town exceeds all estimates, putting the town entirely out of service.” This recent devastation follows earlier reports from the municipality in February 2025, stating that much of the town had already been destroyed. An Israeli displacement order issued in mid-March, forced residents to abandon what little remained. This displacement order was particularly devastating for residents who had attempted to rebuild their lives in Khuza’a and rehabilitate their homes and lands following widespread destruction in late 2023 and early 2024.

Mohammed Hamdan Qudaih, a 66-year-old farmer and resident of Khuza’a displaced multiple times, described to Amnesty International how his family’s farmland, once their entire livelihood, and their three-story home were destroyed. He said his four children all work with him on the land where they would plant tomatoes, peppers and *molokhiya*. They were first displaced in December 2023.

“When we returned to Khuza’a in June 2024, most of our crops had been destroyed and most of the land was destroyed, so we started rehabilitating it and repairing the greenhouses,” he said, but he and his family were again forced to flee on 18 March 2025.

“Displacement is worse than death, believe me,” he added. “I’ve heard that they [Israeli forces] razed the land, but I refuse to believe that my greenhouses are gone... now I just want to return to see what happened to my land and we just want to go back.”

Satellite imagery analyzed by Amnesty International shows the area around where Mohammed Hamdan Qudaih’s home and greenhouses were located was destroyed over the course of a week from 18 to 23 May 2025.

A pattern of wanton destruction and collective punishment

The recent razing of what had remained of Khuza’a is not an isolated incident but rather a continuation of a systematic and unlawful pattern of destruction by the Israeli military in Gaza.

Amnesty International’s [previous research](#) analyzed satellite imagery and social media videos between October 2023 and May 2024 and identified

newly cleared land along Gaza's eastern perimeter with Israel, ranging from approximately 1km to 1.8km wide. Over 90% of [buildings within this area](#)—more than 3,500 structures—appeared destroyed or severely damaged, and over 20km² of [agricultural land](#) showed a significant decline in health and density of crops according to data acquired from UNOSAT

In many documented cases, including the initial waves of destruction in Khuza'a itself from late 2023, the destruction occurred after Israeli forces had taken operational control of the areas, meaning they were not a direct result of ongoing combat. The presence of unarmored excavators in May 2025 suggests this was also the case with the recent razing of Khuza'a.

While Israel claims such destruction is being carried out for security purposes, they must abide by international humanitarian law. The "imperative military necessity" exception for property destruction is narrowly defined and not applicable to the wholesale razing of civilian areas, especially when alternative measures exist and when the destruction is disproportionate to any legitimate military purpose.

"The international community must not stand by while Israel is systematically dismantling essential civilian infrastructure, destroying agricultural land and collectively punishing Palestinians in Gaza," said Erika Guevara Rosas.

"The effective erasure of Khuza'a in May 2025 demands an independent and impartial investigation. This blatant act of wanton destruction, coupled with the ongoing pattern of razing civilian areas across Gaza, represents not only Israel's brazen disregard for international law and the fundamental rights of Palestinians, but also its calculated plan to transform Gaza into a wasteland, destroy its social fabric and continue inflicting on Palestinians conditions that would lead to their physical destruction. This is genocide and it must end now."

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