



RESTLESSBEINGS

MASS EXTERMINATION, MASS EXPULSION: Documenting Israel's War Crimes in Gaza

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Image: Displacement from Khan Younis, 2024
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Restless Beings is dedicated to championing the rights of the world's most marginalised communities.

We are an international human rights organisation and registered UK charity dedicated to supporting the world's most marginalised communities through advocacy, activism and holistic humanitarian projects. We occupy the space between human rights advocacy (academia, policy, media) and humanitarian response (relief/aid, programmes). We believe this approach is key to affecting real change.

We are committed to challenging and dismantling oppression and believe in the power of people coming together and collectively demanding change. Freedom, equality and justice should be for all.

Our vision is to see a balanced world where marginalised voices are heard, and the communities have better access to their rights. For many, having faced unimaginable violence, poverty and neglect, these basic rights, freedoms and pathways to justice is nothing short of a dream. Our work is centred on making this a reality. We are driven by an unshakeable faith in collective power and collaboration to make these changes - because together we are truly stronger ~ *working towards a free and fearless future.*

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Family displaced in Nuseirat, Middle Area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 7th October 2023, the Gaza region of Palestine has been under a constant bombardment by the Israeli Army that has seen in excess of 36,000 Palestinians murdered. In that time, the Israeli Army, with its stated intentions of recapturing hostages and ridding Gaza of Hamas, has been taken to trial by South Africa to the International Court of Justice under the crime of Genocide. Social media has been awash with the most horrifying scenes which have broadcast the utter destruction and devastation that the Gazans have faced. This report sought to establish if the attacks by the Israeli Army and State were designed to meet its stated intentions (reclaiming hostages and dismantling Hamas) or, as is the prognosis from the majority of those watching in disbelief, that the Israeli Army and State were attacking civilian infrastructure to bring about the shut down of Gazan society.

The attacking of civilian infrastructure is a war crime under the Geneva conventions and is also codified by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as such too. This report monitored the destruction of the following sections of civilian infrastructure: schools, religious buildings and institutes, telecommunications network, water and sanitation hygiene facilities, roads, and hospitals. Data was sourced from IDF official communications, Palestinian citizen reporting and media reporting on the above civilian infrastructure over the course of October 2023 to February 2024. By better understanding the patterns of the Israeli war efforts from army and State, Government(s) will be better positioned to understand if Israel is meeting its stated intentions or is in fact attacking the core of civilian society in Gaza.

SCHOOLS - 193 attacks on schools were recorded across 150 school buildings – 87 of those attacks came in December. There is a clear geographical trend of attacks occurring on schools in North to South direction over the months of the military campaign. In early December, Beit Lahia, Gaza City and Jabalia all in the North saw the brunt of attacks, whereas by February 2024, 55% of all attacks on school building had occurred in the Southern city of Khan Younis. On schools, the most used building for internally displaced people, all methods of attacks have been monitored – from aerial strikes, to sniper attacks, attacks from naval vessels as well as raiding and imprisoning civilians (at least 20 such attacks were monitored where civilian males were rounded up in schools and tortured or taken to unknown destinations).

WATER - By 8th October, water had been cut off from North Gaza via the Al Mentar pipeline immediately affecting more than 610,000 in Gaza city alone. At the end of October only 5% of water for Gaza was being produced by the desalination plants due to the siege on fuel. Over the winter months, with water virtually not available, access to showers was now 1 shower to 700 Gazans and more than 120,000 cases of disease were reported ranging from diarrhoea, scabies and lice, rashes, and jaundice as a direct result of lack of access to clean water. By February 2024, diarrhoea cases of children under 5 had increased by 79% with 104,000 cases reported.

ROADS - On monitoring the attacks on roads, it was clear that the destruction of roads in the north was to dismantle almost the entire population south towards other towns and cities - a third of attacks were focussed on Al Rashid Road and its junctions in the heart of Gaza City. A further 57% of attacks on roads were on the Salah Al Din Road which runs through Gaza North to South and connects the civilian towns of Jabalia, Zeitoun, Nuseirat, Maghazi, Deir al Balah and Khan Younis.

TELECOMS - 11 of the 13 Palestinian telecoms provider have totally collapsed and are unable to offer any connectivity. The only two remaining telecoms providers PalTel and Mada operating at around 30% capacity have suffered multiple blackouts due to lack of access to fuel or mandated Israeli state network cut offs. As was the case with the attacks on roads and hospitals, the telecommunications blackouts by the Israeli state followed a north to south pattern – the second blackout recorded on 1st November 2023, left only 5% of the Middle Area governate with connectivity and the last recorded blackout monitored by this report on January 22nd left Rafah with only 5% connectivity.

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS AND INSTITUTIONS - Of all attacks on religious buildings by the Israeli army, 83% of recorded attacks were on mosques. 36 Cemeteries had been destroyed and corpse desecration is a noticeable trend amongst Israeli army attacks- in December 2023, 71% of all cemetery attacks were in the North of Gaza, while in January 2024 66% of all cemetery attacks were in Southern regions.

HOSPITALS - Across 146 days of monitoring, hospitals were attacked on 65% of those days. The attack on hospitals were systematic moving North to South to render all health facilities non-operational by the middle of February 2024. Roads around hospitals were attacked first to prevent patients from seeking or evacuating medical assistance. In the case of Al Quds, Kamal Adwan and Al Aqsa hospital, fuel was deliberately cut off leading to the death of kidney patients and premature babies in neonatal incubators. Just under half of Gaza's hospitals and health facilities have been attacked multiple times by Israeli Army either by air, sea, or ground attacks.

The findings of the monitoring report show a clear Israeli targeting of civilian infrastructure from North to South and is systemic in following the civilian population to their areas of displacement with their attacks. In all of the 753 cases of civilian infrastructure attacks recorded in the report, civilian loss of life and the destruction of civilian society is clearly evidenced. Rather than meeting the stated intention of extracting hostages and dismantling Hamas, the most obvious findings in this report highlight destruction of places of refuge and accessibility of those who are displaced.

There has been no significant hostage extraction – a clear military objective of Israel. Rather, there are 36,000 civilian deaths. There has been no notable dismantling of Hamas leadership, and the vast majority of senior leaders are still in position – another clear military objective of Israel. Rather there is unfathomable destruction across civilian infrastructure of housing, schools, hospitals, and places of worship. Given the massive military aid that Israel receives from USA and given Israel's highly equipped IDF it's unmet stated military objectives should be discerning for the Israeli leadership. Rather, it seems quite apparent from the patterns identified in this report and by the price of thousands of civilian deaths and 80 years' worth of destruction and debris, that Israel's likely actual military objective was to cause mass 'extermination' (labelled as such because Israel clearly sees Palestinians as less than human with senior administration using terms such as 'human animals') and mass expulsion – policies of violent colonisation and occupation.

In line with the above, funding to UN operations namely UNRWA, WHO and OCHA efforts should be supported and not defunded as has been the case in many situations. The Gaza civilian population is in risk of starvation, forced displacement to a third country and of further attacks whilst Government(s) do not recognise the Israeli strategy of attacks on Gaza - it is not to establish the safe return of hostages or of political change but an attack on civil society and civilian infrastructure – a clear and evidenced War Crime. Government(s) are therefore advised to withdraw from any arms trade and impose a full and complete arms embargo with a State that is clearly attacking civilians. Funding and active participation for humanitarian response to meet the needs of 2.2 million people must also be significantly raised.



BACKGROUND

The Israeli State

Since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, Palestinian lands have been occupied with the expulsion of the native Palestinian populations into two areas in Gaza and the West Bank. In establishing the state of Israel, Palestinians were forced to flee their ancestral lands through a policy of forced displacement, ongoing violent threat, and unaccountable military action against civilian populations. With multiple wars and a lack of international diplomacy, the West Bank and Gaza have remained as occupied lands with a multitude of debilitating conditions which have rendered Palestinians without a right to self-determination, State and ultimately without the protection of international humanitarian law. The borders of Israel have changed dramatically in the 76 years of occupation over Palestinian land as have the conditions under which the Palestinians find themselves. During the 1978 Lebanese Civil War, Israel launched an invasion into Southern Lebanon and maintained occupation until 2000. A maritime agreement with Lebanon was ratified in 2022 but disputes still remain over contested land in Southern Lebanon. The Golan Heights are also occupied lands that Israel invaded during the 1967 war and remains as such until today. There have been more than 100 UN resolutions against Israel and its occupations, and the United States of America has used more than half of its total vetoes to protect Israeli interests against UN Security Council resolutions.

Israel's modus operandi for occupation in Gaza and the West Bank has been through building settlements. Although the 25 Israeli settlements were dismantled in Gaza in 2005, many new settlements continue to be created in occupied West Bank. Furthermore, both Gaza and West Bank are heavily militarized with constant restriction of movements for Palestinians to go about daily life. Economic restrictions such as currency also apply; the Palestine Pound was replaced by the Israeli Shekel and Israel continues to monitor and administer all economic transactions within Gaza and West Bank. Although people in Gaza and West Bank can apply to hold a Palestinian Authority passport, many questions of rights through 'citizenship' persist and the reality of Israel as an occupying State on Palestinian territories perpetuates the basic living rights of Palestinians.

Palestinian reality under Israeli military rule is an everyday violence which regularly breaches international standards. Palestinians have been subjected to paying the highest price by loss of freedoms, livelihood, and at times life itself, in the name of Israeli national security. Although the Israeli state has a policy of using 'shoot to kill' only as a resort to exhausting all other possibilities such as arrests, dispersing crowds with smoke and even using live bullets to maim rather than kill, in practice, these are regularly breached and extreme violence is often the first port of call. Moreover, violations of these policies have been most pronounced during massive incursions into Palestinian territories, particularly in Gaza. In the 76 years of Israeli statehood, Palestinian territories have been attacked in 72 of those years with at least 7 cases of active war across these years. Israeli military use of indiscriminate attacks in these incursions are at massive scale, disproportionately targeting civilians through the bombing of residential buildings.

In its incursions into Palestinian territory and its ever-present occupation, Palestinian children are often at the forefront of violent Israeli repression. Firstly, Israel's use of arbitrary measures, to include the arrest, prosecution, and detention of Palestinian children, is a pronounced example. Israeli military courts have jurisdiction over any person older than 12 years. This policy in practice has led to the detention and prosecution of an estimated 500-700 Palestinian children, as young as 12, by the Israeli military court system every year. During these arrests, most children face physical violence upon and after arrest, have no parent present during their interrogation, and receive inadequate basic necessities including food, water, or access to toilet facilities.

While Israeli military courts offer the semblance of democratic judicial conduct, these courts are firmly entrenched in a power imbalance aimed at preserving Israeli occupation and Israeli privilege over Palestinians. Once arrested, Palestinian prisoners are only ever detained and judicially tried by Israeli soldiers. For this reason, Israeli military courts are unequivocally unable to be a neutral arbitrator. Israeli enforcement of checkpoints against Palestinian populations is another intrinsic arm of Israel's extreme securitisation in occupation. The enforcement of checkpoints and Separation Barriers are inherently for the preservation of Israeli settlements, the very same settlements criminalised by international standards, and which restrict Palestinian freedom of movement. The use of military judiciary for Palestinians and the constant use of militarised checkpoints whilst in occupation have created an Apartheid state in Gaza and the West Bank.

Gaza

Gaza's population saw a massive increase in the days after the establishment of the Israeli state. With thousands seeking refuge the small area known as Gaza (around 365 square km / 25 miles in length) saw its population balloon overnight with more than 70% being refugees escaping the Israeli violence. The Nakba, or the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of people escaping Israeli violence created many refugee neighbourhoods in 1948 in Gaza. Multiple occupations under Egypt first and Israel latterly had restricted growth in civilian and economic development in Gaza. Israeli settlements and the continued risk of violence associated with those settlements, as well as, ever increasing restrictions of movement and goods, reduced much of Gaza's population into being dependent on UN (UNRWA) support in the establishment of basic everyday necessities such as schools, food, and medical facilities. Despite the promise of a Palestinian State that the Oslo talks had in 1993, Israeli settlements continued. With the election victory of Hamas in 2006, Israel pulled its settlements from Gaza and imposed a complete siege via land air and sea on the Gaza territory. Over the course of the 76 years of occupation, time and again, Gaza's socio-economic conditions have deteriorated such that almost all civilian infrastructure has largely been reliant on international aid through UNRWA and other associations.

Gaza remains a heavily militarized area – land borders with Israel and Egypt are heavily securitized and Gazans do not have access to the sea as this too is controlled by Israeli military instruments. Since 2007 the blockade on Gaza has meant that virtually every product whether imported or exported needs to be approved by Israel. These severe restrictions affect everything from the flow of essential items such as food, water, and medical supplies as well the movement of people. The collective punishment of Gaza through these restrictions and Israel's non-compliance with their obligations as an occupying force to provide adequate protection of food, medicine and other civilian needs has resulted in Gaza being referred to as 'an open-air prison.'

October 7th

On October 7th, Hamas operatives of the Al-Qassam Brigades and other allied groups, launched a violent campaign against Israelis on Israeli territory in an operation called 'Operation Al-Aqsa Flood', in an attempt, according to Hamas leadership to 'end the last occupation on Earth'. Thousands of rockets were fired into Israeli territory whilst almost 3000 fighters also infiltrated towns and villages in close proximity to Northern Gaza borders. 250 hostages were taken back to Gaza and 1,143 Israelis were also killed by Hamas fighters. Whilst Hamas claimed that the major focus of their attacks were on military targets, hundreds of Israeli civilians were also killed in a wide range of attacks in Southern Israel including at a music festival and in numerous Kibbutzim. Of those killed, 695 were Israeli civilians, 71 foreign nationals, 376 military personnel (including Israeli soldiers, police officers and Shin Bet operatives) with 1 person missing. Official Hamas lines have denied that Israeli civilians were targeted, however the number of civilians killed and of hostages including Israeli civilians have not been challenged. In response to these attacks, Israel launched 'Operation Swords of Iron' and in the initial hours after

the Hamas attacks, heavy artillery was used to stop the Hamas fighters from causing further carnage. It has been widely reported, and accepted as such, by the IDF, that they opened fire and killed many Israelis in 'friendly fire.' In the hours and days that followed the Netanyahu administration launched a full-scale aerial bombardment of Gaza. This would eventually lead to a ground assault as well as naval bombardment. The North of Gaza was targeted at first and then the campaign moved southwards thereafter. Internationally, USA maintained its unequivocal support of Israeli retaliation and President Biden even claimed to have seen footage of beheadings of children by Hamas operatives. These claims were unsubstantiated and were discredited later. Haaretz newspaper reported many at the music festival site were also killed by IDF helicopters.

In November 2023, a temporary pause was agreed between Israeli state and Hamas which involved a hostage for prisoners exchange. After the agreed time, Israeli bombardment continued and has done so unabated until time of publication, May 2024. Israeli forces began widespread raiding of West Bank towns and refugee camps as well as a huge increase of imprisonment of Palestinians. Another front of attack on the Northern border with Lebanon persists with Hezbollah and Israel continuously attacking targets on either side of the Lebanese border. As Israel stepped up its campaign, international diplomacy and accountability tools were also increased. Two ICJ cases remain active; South Africa's application for Genocide committed by Israel and Nicaragua's application for Germany's military assistance to a plausible case for Genocide by Israel on Gaza. The ICC also maintains that it has jurisdiction on the issue of Israel's non-compliance with international humanitarian law, and particularly, the forced starvation of Gaza's civilians in the North.

The attacks of October 7th were met with large scale international condemnation of Hamas' actions, and this was coupled with many statements of support for Israel's right to defend itself, notably mostly from Western countries such as the EU bloc, UK, USA, and Canada. However, in the months since, the sheer scale of civilian loss of life, destruction of at least 60% of all of Gaza's buildings, multiple displacements and the ferocity of indiscriminate killings and inhumane treatment have been shared and reported across social media. This has led to heightened Palestinian solidarity acts from civil society worldwide.



Civilian Infrastructure and International Humanitarian Law

International law such as the Geneva Conventions, Hague Law and the Rome Statutes clearly identify that the protection afforded to civilians and of the infrastructure needed for basic everyday living is sacrosanct, even in war. The upheaval, tactical targeting, or military destruction of such civilian infrastructures, would therefore amount to the breaking of international humanitarian law and as such accountability would fall within the parameters administered by the world courts – the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court etc.

Civilian infrastructure is regarded, by international law, as non-military infrastructure, i.e. the infrastructure that would be regarded as 'military' would be any building or institution whose primary focus would be in supporting or providing military services. Airfields, industrial factories, ports, messes, and Government owned land that is specifically for armed forces such as training centres etc would be regarded as legitimate military infrastructure. Although international law does not explicitly define civilian infrastructure, it does define persons and institutions which are protected by it. The Fourth Geneva Convention specifies hospitals, passage for medical and religious supplies, women, children, sick, civilians, safe passage of food and medical supplies, as protected. The Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions also specify that attacks on places of worship, collective punishment through weapons which cause 'superfluous' damage, civilian populations and water sources should be regarded as against the law.

For the purposes of this report's findings, the following have been established as civilian infrastructure – schools, hospitals, roads, religious buildings, and institutes (places of worship), WASH facilities and telecommunications. This is not supposed to represent an exhaustive and complete list of all that entails civilian infrastructure. Besides the above, other infrastructure could have included 'government' buildings for civilian purposes, refugee camps, bakeries and food establishments and many other categories which make up the plethora of civil society.



OBJECTIVES

1. To conduct a thorough collection of data from across Gaza to ascertain the scale and nature of destruction caused by the Israeli attacks. The primary focus of this objective is to quantify and therefore build up a better understanding of the patterns, if any, of the attacks.

To draw conclusions on whether or not Israel's attacks amount to a legitimate war strategy or in contravention of International Humanitarian Law. Findings can then be used to inform Government(s) of their position on policy with regards to positions on Palestine and or Israel.

2. To assess with greater clarity the severity of the humanitarian crisis that has unfolded consequent to post October 7th. NGO's, Academics and Government(s) will be able to apply skills, policy and act with more informed decisions moving forward in the coming months, years and possibly generations.

Displacement - October 2023 in Deir Al Balah



METHODOLOGY

This report is based on data collected across 146 days of attack from 7th October 2023 to 29th February 2024. Data was collected from specific sources but against the backdrop of an unprecedented volume of citizen reporting by Gazans across social media and enhanced through those networks. As an organisation, Restless Beings has had presence in Gaza for over 5 years albeit on a humanitarian level and not in documentation and human rights research capacities. The Palestinian suffering is a long drawn 76-year long issue and consequential to the occupation that has troubled the region, data collection remains a difficult ordeal.

Amidst the innumerable swathes of social media posts and countless thousands of column-inch reporting, an accurate mode of reporting the widescale damage was needed. As with any 'in combat war' situation, subject matter and recorded atrocities change massively even on a daily basis. The Israel-Palestine conflicts always produce the most interest in any given news cycle, but this 7th of October situation is unparalleled in terms of the interest garnered from across the world. Simply the length of Israel's attacks on Gaza but also the wide reporting of the attacks and the nature of them is what has kept interest and commentary to a consistently elevated level.

A limitation of reporting from 'combat' situations is the lack of safety for researchers. As such, this study was designed based on a collection of data from a range of sources. Alongside traditional news network reporting, the study incorporates the communications channel of the IDF and the semi-official aggregated communications from Hamas and its subsidiaries. The telegram channels of both sides were used to identify and quantify attacks, their severity, and their nature. The report did not take into consideration social media posts and reporting. This is because the posts and the content creators political bias, verification and objectivity could not be qualitatively assessed. Rather the official or semi-official channels of both the occupying states military arm and the attacked territories 'Governance' were used. There is undoubted bias in these channels, with regular underwhelming and overwhelming reporting, credibility could be ascertained if both had reported the same incident. This was cross analysed to create verification with the reporting of wide reaching and reputable media networks.

The scope of the study was 146 days of attacks from early October 2023 to the end of February 2024. Specifically, this report sought to gain clarity on attacks against civilian infrastructure targets, namely, schools, hospitals, roads, places of worship, water/sanitation/hygiene facilities, and telecommunications outposts. While immeasurable damage was caused to housing and in refugee camps, and despite these unquestionably falling within civilian damage, the report did not take these into account as they constitute to individuals' targets rather than communal or societal civilian targets. In total data for 753 verified incidents and attacks were recorded.

To meet objective 1, in the first instance, data recorded against the six categories aforementioned were collated. To demonstrate the size and nature of damage the following metrics for data analysis were used – date of attack, nature of attack, weaponry used in attack, frequency of any repeated attacks on the same target and whether or not the attack rendered the target location non-operational. Once the above data was collected, analysis of patterns and trends helps to formulate conclusions of Israel's attack on Gazan civilian infrastructure. Ascertaining the iterative and cumulative nature of Israeli attacks builds clearer understanding of the outcomes of those attacks – a legitimate war plan or contravening international humanitarian law.

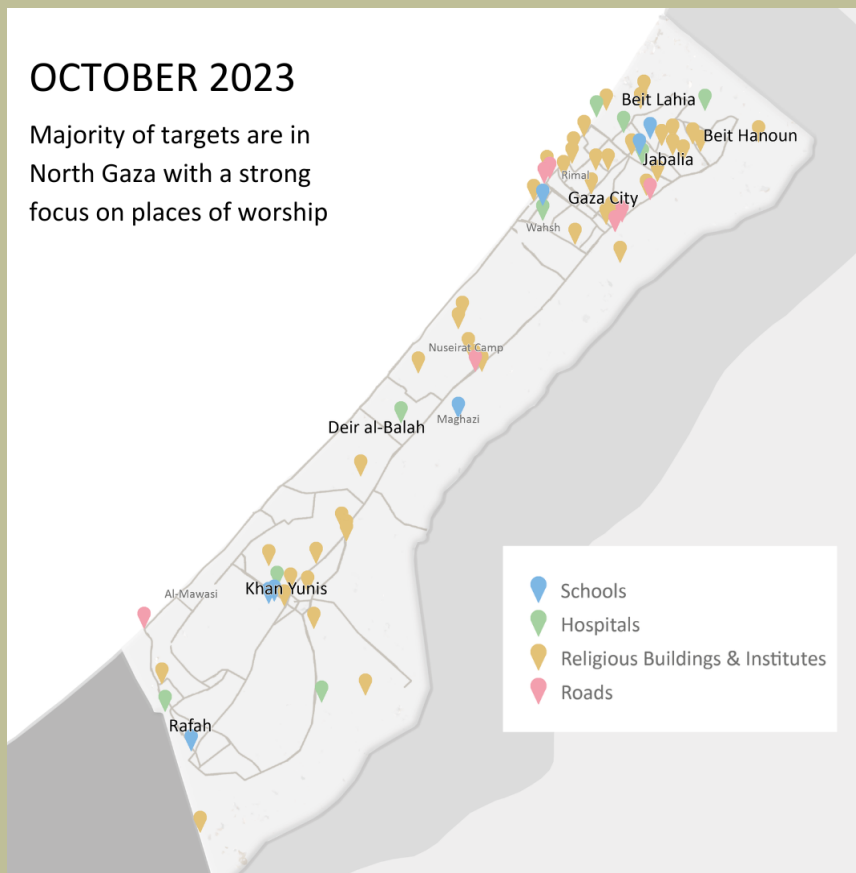
From the collection and analysis of data the key hot spots of humanitarian needs can be identified to meet the reports 2nd objective both geographically and in scale. In the case of the WASH and Telecommunications categories, both IDF and the Palestinian reporting were cross analysed with UNRWA and other UN bodies reporting.

REPORT FINDINGS

Mapping attacks by month and targets:

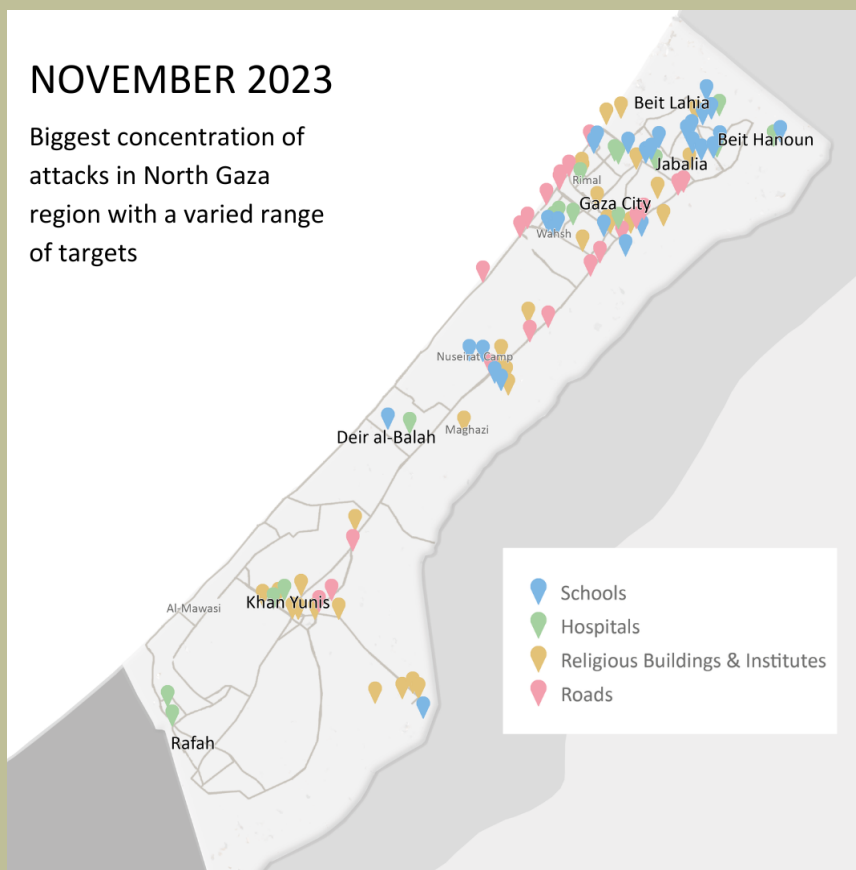
OCTOBER 2023

Majority of targets are in North Gaza with a strong focus on places of worship



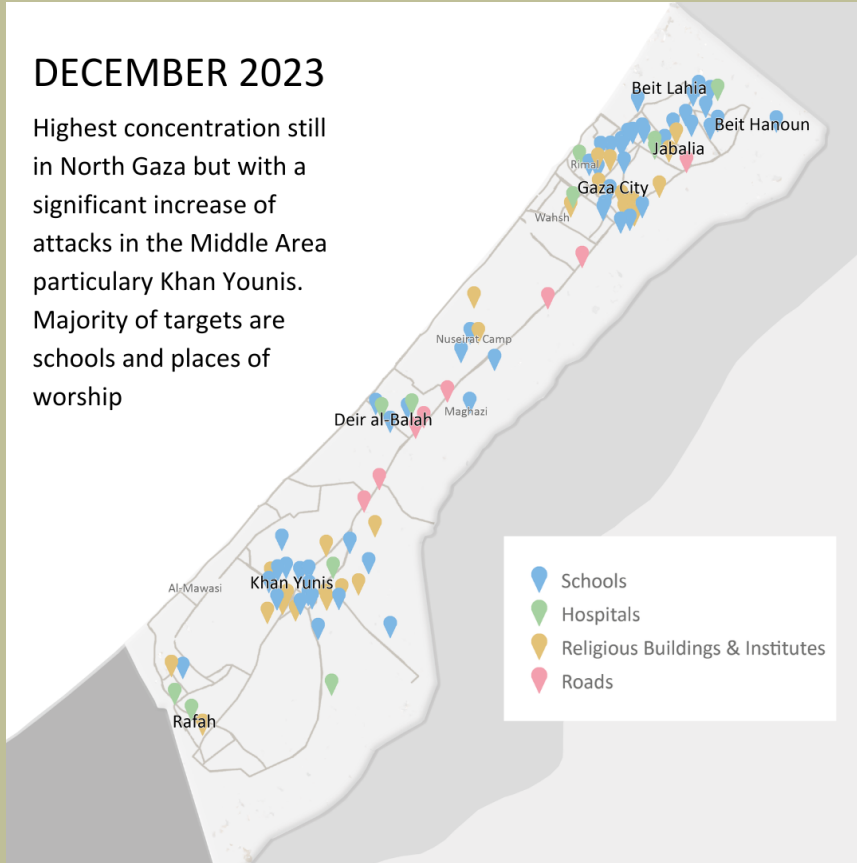
NOVEMBER 2023

Biggest concentration of attacks in North Gaza region with a varied range of targets



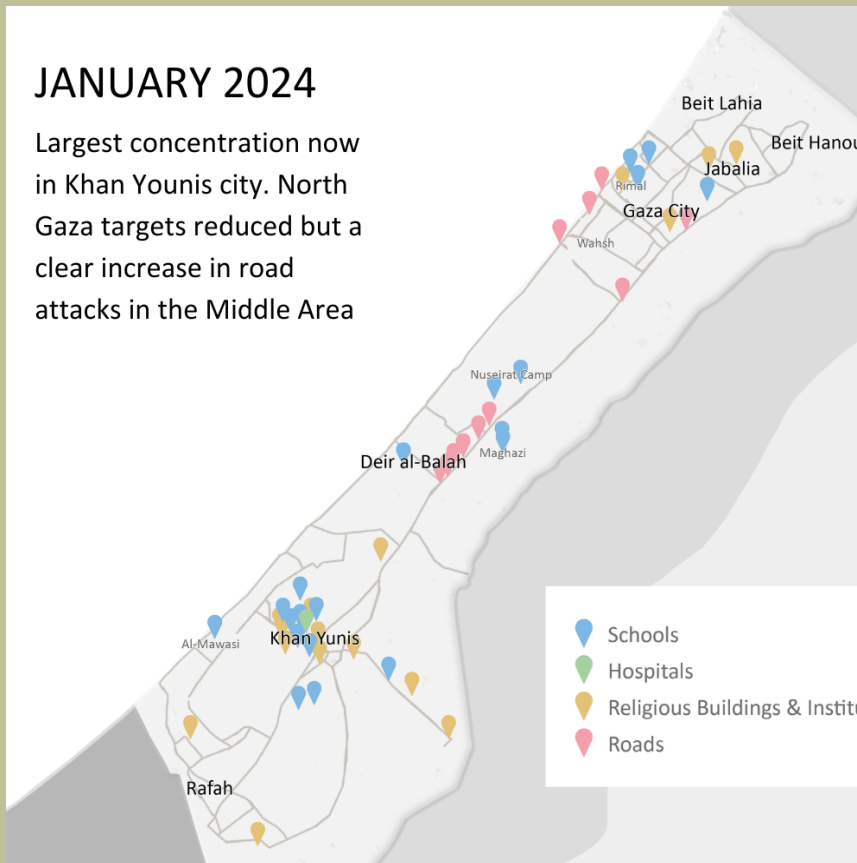
DECEMBER 2023

Highest concentration still in North Gaza but with a significant increase of attacks in the Middle Area particularly Khan Yunis. Majority of targets are schools and places of worship



JANUARY 2024

Largest concentration now in Khan Yunis city. North Gaza targets reduced but a clear increase in road attacks in the Middle Area



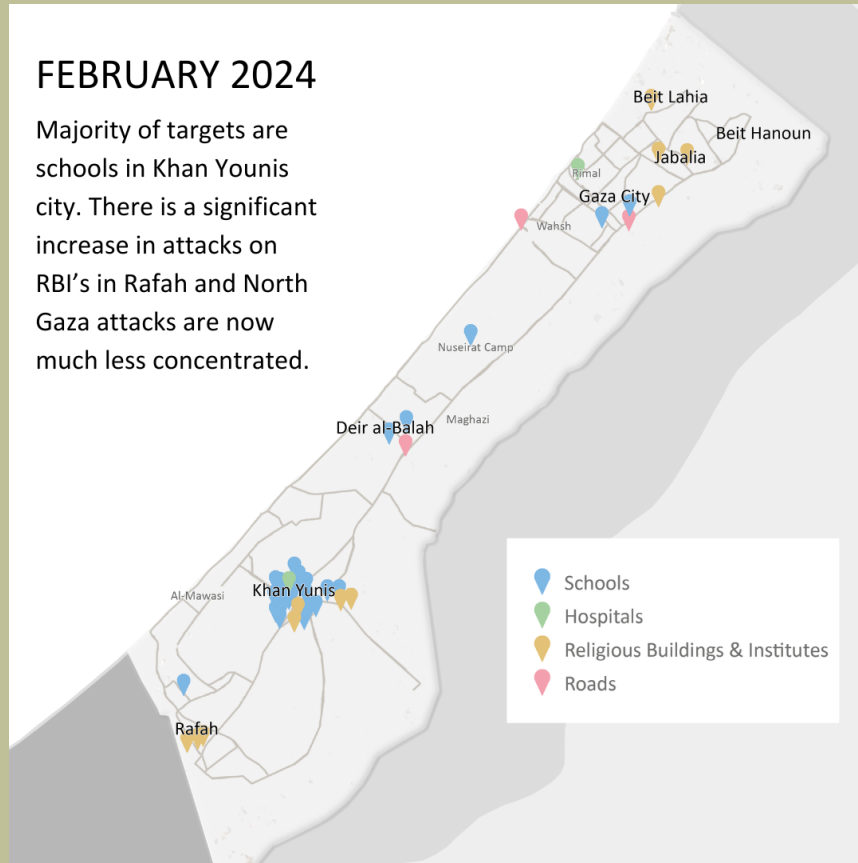
ALL MAPS

Source: Restless Beings 2024

Constructed by: Alec McCulloch

FEBRUARY 2024

Majority of targets are schools in Khan Yunis city. There is a significant increase in attacks on RBI's in Rafah and North Gaza attacks are now much less concentrated.



Search and rescue through the night - Rafah, December 2023



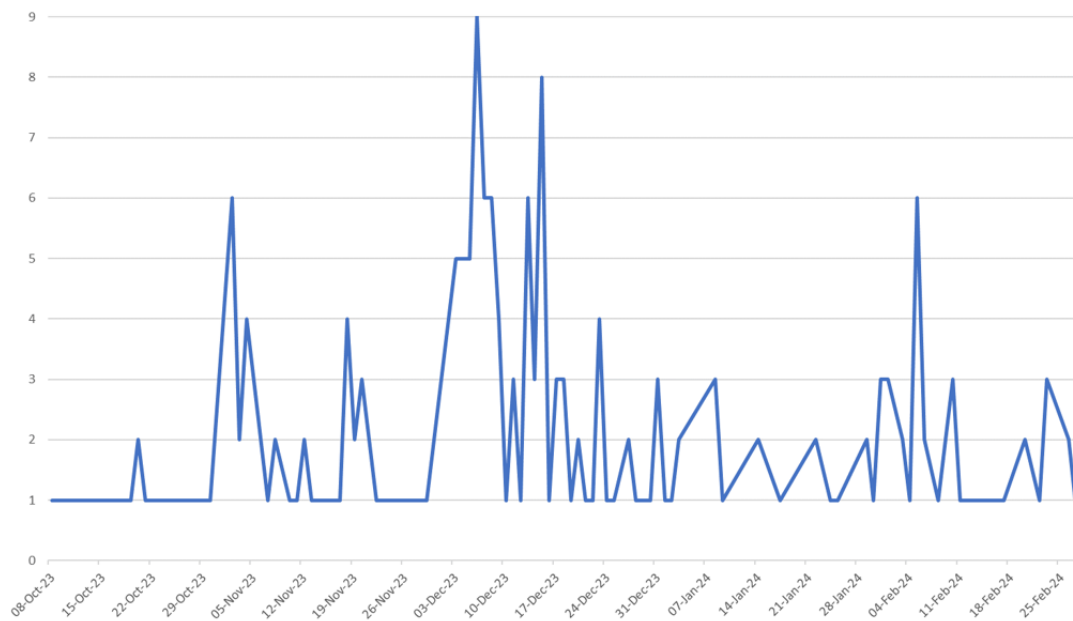
SCHOOLS

76% of IDF attacks on schools cause death/injury

193 school attacks, across 150 school buildings, have been documented from 7th October until 29th February. 147 of these 193, 76% of all attacks caused injury and or death. This is despite the fact that schools, and especially UNRWA schools, have functioned as places of refuge for those displaced during Israel's onslaught on Gaza. Regardless of Israel's claims to avoid civilian casualties, it is clear that buildings known to be densely populated with people displaced from their homes have been a target of Israeli attacks, including those within Israeli declared safe zones. Through the use of airstrikes, smoke bombs, White Phosphorus bombing, tank shelling, drones, snipers, artillery, and raids, thousands of displaced Palestinians seeking shelter in schools have been killed, injured, and taken hostage. In some cases, schools have been completely destroyed, and in others severely damaged. In almost every attack, schools have sustained damage, and when no damage has occurred, snipers or drones have killed people.

Peak of school attacks in December

Figure 1: Number of school attacks recorded on each day, 7th October 2023 until 29th February 2024



Source: Restless Beings, 2024

In the 146 days of monitoring of this report:

- At least one attack was recorded on 84 of those days (58%).
- On 41 of those days multiple attacks were recorded.
- The most attacks were documented on 6 December -with nine schools being attacked, including five forced evacuations and four airstrikes across Beit Lahia, Gaza City, Jabalia and Khan Younis.

In October 2023, school buildings were the least targeted recording only 5% of the overall attacks - this included nine school attacks identified across eight days.

November 2023 saw a 20% share of all attacks on schools, with 40 attacks occurring across 20 days, including eight days where multiple attacks were recorded. Gaza City experienced the majority of these attacks. 2nd November saw the most attacks, with six attacks documented across Deir al Balah, Gaza City and Jabalia.

Of the 31 days of December, there were only four days where no attacks were identified. A massive 87 attacks were recorded across 27 days, and this included 17 days where more than one attack was documented. Most of these attacks were recorded in Khan Younis (24/28%), Gaza City closely followed with 22 attacks (25%) occurring in this period. December saw the deadliest day, with nine attacks recorded on 6th December. The deadliest week was also recorded in December. 36 attacks were identified between the days 2nd December and 8th December. The full arsenal of attack methods were used during this week.

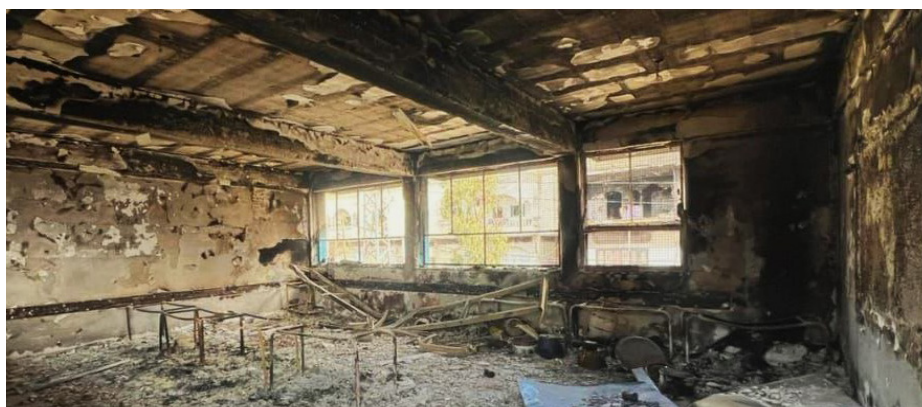
In January 2024, 22 school attacks were recorded across 13 days, making up 11% of the overall attacks. This includes five days where multiple attacks were documented. Khan Younis again suffered the most attacks, with 12 attacks (55%) recorded in this area. Recorded attacks increased in February to 32 attacks across 16 days, 17% of the overall attacks. For nine days in February, multiple attacks were recorded, with the most attacks (five) occurring on 5th February, all in Khan Younis. These were all artillery attacks, with one case where a sniper was also reported to have been used.

As more residential areas were bombed, raided, and classified as 'unsafe' by the IDF, the number of people displaced from their homes and seeking shelter in school buildings increased daily. This basic temporal analysis makes it abundantly clear that the Israeli military is continuously and intentionally attacking schools in Gaza -buildings known to host large numbers of civilians.

Schools in 'Safe Zones' attacked

The first evacuation line was announced on 12th October, indicating that all regions south of Gaza city were 'safe zones.' However, at least seven attacks on schools were documented below the evacuation line, at least five of these schools were being used as civilian shelters. On 4th November, Palestinians were notified of a second evacuation line further south, marking all areas south of Deir El Balah as safe zones. Two schools were attacked in Khan Younis, including the total destruction of Al-Azhar University on the day the evacuation line was announced, an attack on an UNRWA school which killed one person and injured nine was also documented in Khan Younis whilst it was deemed 'safe.' The final evacuation line was announced on 30th November, before the grid system was enforced. This marked only Rafah as a 'safe zone.' At least one attack was recorded here after this time. It is evident that the Israeli military has disregarded the so-called 'safe zones' that they themselves implemented.

In further demonstration that Israel has not respected agreed upon relative safety, there is evidence that Israel committed an attack on a school during the truce period. The truce between Hamas and the IDF came into effect at 7am on the 24th November and ended at 7am on 1st December. Shockingly, an attack on UNRWA run, Al Faluja school in Beit Lahia was recorded on the 25th November.



Khalid Bin Zayed School
North Gaza

Military tactics change in December - more targeted attacks on civilians

December saw the first recorded instances of displaced Palestinian males being taken hostage. On 4th December, in Gaza city's, Al Mamounia school (UNRWA) and Al Mukdassa school, eyewitnesses accounts detail how the IDF stormed the buildings and took males hostage after conducting degrading tactics against them, such as stripping males down to their underwear and conducting torture. On 7th December, two more instances similar to this were evidenced by eyewitnesses at UNRWA's Beit Lahia Elementary School and at Halab School also in Beit Lahia. Both schools housed 4000 people each at the time of the attack. Dozens of males, including the elderly and children, were again stripped, blind-folded, and forced to sit outside in the cold. Some of these males were loaded onto trucks and transported to unknown locations. 10 attacks similar to the above have been recorded in December, with seemingly arbitrary capture of hostages, random gunfire and shooting of those evacuating frequently reported. The capture of hostages shows how as the IDF moved toward ground assaults, they conducted more calculated and intentional attacks on civilians in the name of drawing out Hamas. Three further documentations of schools being raided were found, two with reported casualties. The raid on Shadia Abu Ghazaleh school is harrowing.

The UN run school, Shadia Abu Ghazaleh school, was attacked at least three times in December. After the vicinity of the school was attacked, the school was then raided, and the multitude of deaths reported suggest a massacre had taken place. The walls of the classrooms were peppered with bullet holes and burned char marks. Witness accounts describe how the Israeli military indiscriminately shot at those sheltering in the classroom without giving any opportunities to evacuate. The bodies of men, women, children, and even babies were found in the aftermath of this attack.

In five separate instances, also in December, civilians sheltering in schools in Khan Younis were forcibly expelled following direct orders from the Israeli military. The IDF reported that two schools in Gaza City were raided due to Hamas terrorists concealing themselves there. It is unclear from these reports whether civilians were in these buildings, or whether there were any casualties.

Schools have not only been damaged, but some entirely destroyed

These attacks have not only damaged school buildings, but in some cases completely destroyed the infrastructure. This has either been through controlled demolition of schools for example, Beit Hanoun Elementary and Middle School on 12th December; through arson, as was the case with Khalifa bin Zayed Secondary School in Beit Lahia on 10th December; or through intense shelling and/or airstrikes for example, Ibn Al-Uthaymeen School in Khan Younis on 8th December. This destruction of school buildings has been documented across the entirety of Israel's bombardment of Gaza.

For at least three of these schools, the people seeking shelter inside were forcibly expelled before the school was destroyed. In one case, this was 6000 people and as is the case of many of the raids, males were separated out and forced to strip before some were arrested. The school was subsequently set ablaze.

In another case, the IDF entered the school with tanks and bulldozers whilst people were inside. They ordered them to follow a specific evacuation route and destroyed the tents erected outside for shelter. These examples, alongside the other methods of destruction indicate calculated and intentional destruction of school buildings. Where there was no evidence of any controlled demolitions, rather, the methods used for destruction set aim to cause as much damage as possible.

On 30th January 30 people were found dead amongst the rubble of Khalifa bin Zayed School in Beit Lahia, their hands bound, and their bodies wrapped in black plastic bags tied shut with zip ties. It will likely never be known what happened in the last moments of these 30 people's lives. However, it is known that the school was attacked at least four times between 22nd November and 10th December.

The 3000 people seeking shelter in this school were subjected to White Phosphorous bombing first, then sniper shootings, airstrikes, and besiegement, before finally being forcibly expelled. On 10th December, the Israeli military set the school ablaze, rendering it uninhabitable.



School in Deir Al Balah

Increased attacks on schools actively used as shelter

Across all attacks taking place on schools in Gaza, the overwhelming majority has been on schools used as shelter (81%). This analysis includes only reports where it has been explicitly stated that schools were used as civilian shelter at the time of attack. It is however likely that more were being used as shelter. It is common knowledge that as hundreds of thousands have been displaced from their homes, with infrastructure severely damaged and as resources continue to dwindle, schools have become a place of refuge for civilians in Gaza. The fact that schools are being targeted can only suggest that the IDF is intending to, at the very least, push Palestinians out of Gaza by reinstating that nowhere in Gaza is safe, and at worst, to concentrate their attacks on highly civilian populated buildings to cause as much death as possible.

Further evidence in favour of this is shown through the targeting of UNRWA schools. At least 74 (38%) of the total number of attacks were committed on UNRWA operated schools, with approximately half of the attacks each month being on UNRWA schools. As UNRWA school names are not public information, ownership has only been recorded where explicitly stated, which means that this number could be much higher. It is important to note here that UNRWA shares the coordinates of any UNRWA facilities with all those party to the conflict and displays the UN flag on all their buildings. If Israel abides by its claims to minimise civilian casualties, this information should be used to ensure that steps are taken to avoid these buildings when conducting airstrikes and ground attacks. These school buildings are known to house highly concentrated numbers of civilians. Despite this and claims to avoid civilian casualties, it is clear that UNRWA schools are a target of the Israeli military bombardment on Gaza.

At least 21 of the schools recorded to have been attacked during this time period have been attacked on multiple occasions. A range of different methods were used to attack these schools including artillery, airstrikes, raids, arson, hostage capture, and point-blank executions. It can be inferred from this that the Israeli military is using all resources available to damage schools as much as possible. Awin al Hartharni School in Beit Lahia for example, was attacked at least two times before those inside were forcibly evacuated and the school set on fire. This suggests that the Israeli military is repeatedly attacking schools if they are not destroyed in the first instance of attack, before finally destroying the school beyond repair rendering it uninhabitable. This again demonstrates intentional and calculated IDF targeting of buildings where high concentrations of civilians reside. Furthermore, the larger the school and the greater capacity it has to host civilians, the more likely it is for people to return after an attack has taken place, as options for places of refuge dwindle. It is therefore clear that the Israeli military is carrying out multiple attacks on one school as a tactic to permanently drive civilians out of the schools.



Temporary water point in Deir Al Balah
November 2023

WATER AND SANITATION HYGIENE

The weaponization of water in Gaza

To serve the population of 2.2 million Palestinians with a survival supply of water of suitable quality for drinking and cooking would require 13 million litres per day. International humanitarian standards require that the drinking water supply be of sufficient quantity, appropriate quality and is equally accessible to the population. All three factors need to be addressed to save lives and to prevent infectious water borne diseases. In addition to drinking water, the population requires water for personal and domestic hygiene, an additional 20 million litres per day. The total water need is 33 million litres per day.

Israel, and its national water company Mekorot, foster near-total control over water systems and access in Gaza and the West Bank. Mekorot has been repeatedly documented for plundering and exploiting water resources in Palestinian territories of Gaza and West Bank. While restricting Palestinian access to water, Israel has effectively developed its own water infrastructure and water network in the West Bank for the use of its own citizens in Israel and in the settlements. Israeli state-owned water company Mekorot has systematically dug wells and tapped springs in the occupied West Bank to supply its population, including those living in illegal settlements with water for domestic, agricultural, and industrial purposes. As a result of continuous restrictions, many Palestinian communities in the West Bank have no choice but to purchase water brought in by trucks at much higher prices ranging from 4 to 10 USD per cubic metre. Furthermore, there have been instances where Israel, overnight, has stunted water allocations to Palestinian communities in the West Bank, raiding villages and destroying water networks to foster their occupation. This displays the degree of systematic oppression and potential for weaponization of water Israel is capable of, and has access to, through denying Palestinians their rightful access to water resources from water in their own lands.

This has been further exemplified in the case of Gaza across this conflict. Water infrastructure in Gaza Strip are organised into three categories, Israeli-Mekorot main pipelines, desalination plants (public and private), and groundwater wells (public and private). There are three Mekorot pipelines - the Al Mentar pipeline covering North Gaza and Gaza City, the Bani Saeed pipeline covering Deir Al Balah in the Middle Area and the Bani Suhaila pipeline covering Khan Younis and Rafah to the south. The Al Mentar pipeline to the North has a capacity of 24 million litres per day. If running to its full potential, the northern Gaza pipeline could foster 72% of total water needs for the whole of Gaza.

By 9th October, two days after the Hamas attacks, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant announced, "I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed. We are fighting human animals, and we are acting accordingly,"

Northern Gaza completely cut off from water

However, from 8th October, this pipeline was rendered non-operational due to an Israel-mandated cut to its stream, leaving the average daily supply at 0 that has spanned the entire timeline of this report. Israel's decision to cut the water supply to Gaza via the Mekorot water company in the north by 100% has impacted over 610,000 people in Gaza. This decision forced a bleak reality over civilians in the northern Governorates, leaving civilians to either be reliant on humanitarian relief delivering bottled water from Rafah, which only arrived in November for the first time, or drink unsafe water from groundwater wells that have not been destroyed by heavy shelling. The price for bottled water from private vendors skyrocketed due to the blockade.

Between 8th October and 20th October, there was a complete siege over the crossings into Gaza, meaning no movement of goods and services in or out. As a result, all 3 public desalination plants became non-operational due to loss of fuel and power by 16th October 2023. All three desalination plants shared a total potential for 18 million litres a day. Due to the strict blockade over northern Governorates, the Gaza desalination plant, with a potential of 10 million litres, was strangled into becoming non-operational first, followed by the other two plants, in just two weeks. Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) reported by 20th October that municipal water production capacity was at only 5% of the normal daily production. It is estimated that the population in Gaza had access to less than 3 litres of water per person per day, far below the minimum emergency threshold of 15 litres per person per day. By comparison, in the UK the average person uses in the region of 50 litres per day and in the US, this jumps to around 100 litres per day for personal non household use.

The water supply from Israel to western Khan Younis was non-operational until 15th October when it was reactivated, but only until 30th October. Southern Gaza's water supply from Israel was also cut off from 30th October.

On the other hand, in the Middle Area and southern Gaza, the operation of two seawater desalination plants at about 40% of their capacity, alongside 120 water wells and 20 pumping stations, continued. As a result, households still connected to the water network were receiving water for only a few hours a day, while others received water by trucks. By contrast, access to water in Gaza city and northern Gaza was far more challenging than in the south. Neither the water desalination plant nor the Israeli pipeline supplying those areas were operational by the end of October.

WASH Facilities depleted - disease on the rise

Water system operations by November started off in similar conditions to how October ended. The operation of water wells and desalination plants in the southern half of Gaza stopped almost completely on 2nd November, after their fuel reserves had been exhausted.

Aid was coming in from Rafah at a very slow pace and as an example, on 2nd November, three trucks out of the aid convoy carried about 100,000 litres of water, which covered the drinking water needs for some 20,000 people for only one day, and for only Gazans refuging in southern refugee centres.

By November, water system depletion began to clearly affect livelihoods and wellbeing of Gazans. Reports of people hosted or living near the sea reaching the beaches to bathe and wash clothes in the sea as well as carry seawater to their homes and shelters for domestic consumption. Sea water in most Gaza beaches is highly polluted, a situation exacerbated by the shutdown of all wastewater treatment and dumping of raw sewage in the sea. In November, WHO reported 795,500 Gazans, out of 1.5 million displaced people, were refuging in 156 UNRWA shelters. Of these, 160 Gazans were forced to share one toilet, while 700 Gazans had to share one shower unit at this stage in the conflict. Due to WASH facility deterioration, 71,224 cases of acute respiratory infections, and 44,202 cases of diarrhoea. By the start of November, diarrhoea cases for children under 5 was 15-fold higher than the average cases per month in 2021 and 2022. Moreover, there were 10,952 cases of scabies and lice, 14,195 cases of communicable skin rashes, and 355 cases of jaundice reported at UNRWA shelters. Take this as a snapshot of best conditions for displaced Gazans able to refuge in UN safe housing. Notably, on 4th November and 5th, seven water facilities across the Gaza Strip were directly hit and sustained major damage, including three sewage pipelines in Gaza city, two water reservoirs (in Gaza City, Rafah and Jabalia refugee camp) and two water wells in Rafah. In the north, grave concerns of dehydration and waterborne diseases due to water consumption from unsafe sources persisted.

Growing refugee population leads to greater WASH difficulties

While some fuel was reaching desalination and water pumping stations and the production of water had increased by December, there was almost no improvement in the access of residents in the North to water for drinking and domestic purposes for weeks. WHO reported 129,230 cases of acute respiratory infections, a growth of 45% new cases since November. Cases of diarrhoea at UNRWA shelters grew significantly as well, new cases grew by 39%, with under 5-year-old cases growing at a greater rate than adults, with 54% new cases from mid-November to merely the first week of December. These numbers were only what had been reported to UNRWA staff and so the actual number will be significantly larger.

Sewage systems had reached destitute conditions in Rafah repeating patterns seen in the Middle Area and in Khan Younis due to a lack of water flow. In Rafah, which had the best access to water, open defecation persisted as toilet facilities could not match the needs of an increasing refugee population by late December. At least 50 % of WASH facilities - providing basic water and sanitation services - had been damaged or destroyed in Gaza, and UNICEF warned that the impact of this situation on children was particularly worrying because they are more susceptible to diarrhoea, disease, and malnutrition.

New year promise brought more disease

The first week of January, two of the three main water pipelines were operational, as a result of repairs to the southern pipeline on 30th December. Better movement of goods and services, to include bottled water and WASH repair equipment meant on surface level the situation seemed to be improving. On 1st January, the UAE doubled the capacity of its desalination plants on the Egyptian side of the Rafah border with the Gaza Strip. The expanded plants estimated a supply of 4.5 million litres of clean drinking water a day to Gazans. However, by the end of January, the Khan Younis pipeline was once again damaged, meaning only Deir Al Balah pipeline was operational but only at 47% capacity. Northern Gaza still remained without water and heavy rainfall and consequential flooding had increased the spread of disease once again - cases of diarrhoea affecting children under the age of 5 was now spreading at a rate 23 times in comparison to 2021 and 2022 figures.

Rafah overpopulated - disease rates skyrocket

On 4th February 2024, the IDF destroyed the largest water desalination plant, the Gaza plant. The plant, operational since 2019 and funded by Kuwait, aimed to provide safe drinking water to the residents. This meant by mid-February, only two out of three main water desalination plants were partially functional, including the Middle region desalination plant and the South region desalination plant. Only 17% of groundwater wells were operating by 20th February, with 39 destroyed, 93 severely or moderately damaged, and 48 possibly damaged. All wastewater treatment systems were not working. Since 19th November 2023, municipalities have had limited water treatment, no water quality testing capacity, and no fuel for solid waste management, severely impacting the lives of the 1.7 million internally displaced people (IDP) in the Gaza Strip.

More notably, the UAE's small desalination plant located on the Egyptian side of Rafah was operating at full capacity, providing 2,400 cubic metres per day, following the construction of a 3-kilometre transmission line. This presents a promising picture for the better delivery of safe drinking water via both public and private desalination plant operations.

Much of January and February saw heavy bombing and ground attacks in Khan Younis and other Middle Area towns leading to a huge movement of people to the southern city of Israel. With Rafah, bursting with the displaced population overcrowding in safe zones further evidenced ongoing outbreaks communicable diseases. There were 330,192 cases of acute respiratory infections as of 20th February, meaning a harrowing +78% of new cases since mid-November. Diarrhoea cases grew by 79% since mid-November, with 104,213 cases of diarrhoea cases amongst under 5-year-olds.

Civilian ramifications due to collapse of WASH infrastructure:

Due to the lack of safe drinking water and domestic facilities, people have resorted to accessing water from unsafe sources that are brackish or saline water, water from agricultural wells and other potentially polluted waters. This is having a negative health impact, particularly for children, who are suffering from diarrhoea and dehydration. Families are reusing domestic water for multiple needs and reducing hygiene practices such as body washing and showers, to preserve the little amount of domestic water available. This is already resulting in negative health impacts such as infectious and contagious skin diseases.

ROADS

Clear plan to isolate Gaza City

There are two main roads running through Gaza from north to south - Salah al Din Road, through the middle of the strip and Al-Rashid Road running along the coast. These roads are central to infrastructure in Gaza and from the beginning of the attacks, civilians have used them to evacuate south. Both of these roads have been attacked continuously by Israeli forces despite being declared as safe routes with people being directly attacked while travelling on these roads as instructed by Israeli forces. This report monitored all attacks along these roads over the duration of study.

There were 74 reported attacks on the two main roads from 7th October 2023 to 29th February 2024 with 29 airstrikes and 40 ground and sea attacks. These attacks were made over 35 days with the deadliest time period being 30th October to 13th November. 39% of the road attacks occurred between these two weeks with the majority of the attacks in the North, including Gaza City which sits to the west of Al-Rashid Road. A third of all reported attacks during this time were focused on this area which is significant in highlighting Israel's intentions to destroy and isolate the most populous region in Gaza.

Within these two weeks, the deadliest days on Al-Rashid Road were in early November which saw attacks on Al-Shifa Hospital, ambulances, Gaza City, and civilians fleeing from the north as ordered to do so by the military. Al-Shifa Hospital is Gaza's biggest hospital which is situated 5 minutes from Al-Rashid Road, meaning Al-Rashid Road is the key route for reaching the hospital for both civilians and ambulances. Attacks on Al-Rashid Road were carried out alongside the hospital attacks and were intentional in order to ensure that ambulances could not reach the hospital. On 2nd November, an ambulance was attacked by Israeli forces, and paramedics were shot while transporting people who were killed and wounded along Al-Rashid Road. Israeli tanks were stationed along the road towards the hospital causing further blockages. The following day saw ambulances attacked again as a convoy of five ambulances left Al-Shifa Hospital. The convoy travelled around 2.5 miles down Al-Rashid Road from the hospital but could not go any further due to rubble and rocks as a result of shelling in the area. One of the ambulances was directly targeted by a missile resulting in the injuries of the ambulance crew and patients and the death of 14 civilians on the coastal road. On this occasion, the road was damaged as a result of the direct attack on the ambulances, but Israeli tanks were also present on the road at the time, intentionally making it clear that the area was not safe and making escape harder. 3rd November was the single deadliest recorded day on Al-Rashid Road with 5 separate attacks, concentrated around Al-Shifa Hospital as Israel achieved their goal of destroying the road, preventing evacuations, access to medical care and ambulance routes. Medical and relief services became increasingly challenging following road blockades in North Gaza and Gaza City as access was prohibited and vehicles became targets.

'3rd November was the single deadliest recorded day on Al-Rashid Road with 5 separate attacks, concentrated around Al-Shifa Hospital'



Road and school destroyed in Beit Hanoun

Civilians targeted during evacuation

The huge percentage of attacks being targeted in the north and Gaza City show a clear pattern of Israeli destruction tactics. Civilians were specifically instructed to use Al-Rashid Road to evacuate Gaza City where they faced blockades and attacks, making it as hard as possible for civilians to move out of harm's way. These attacks came as an immediate aftermath of civilians being told to evacuate with Al-Rashid Road being the only feasible route out of Gaza City, making these attacks intentional in line with evacuation orders.

We monitored several reports from 4th November to 12th November of IDF attacks on Al Rashid Road on civilians trying to evacuate to southern areas. This included testimonies of the bodies of at least 7 people who had been killed on their journey south from Gaza City. Furthermore, Israeli tanks were targeting anyone that drove along Al-Rashid Road and had killed 8 people including children who were using the road to reach safety as instructed by the military.

“The road was like a nightmare. The evacuation was under air and artillery bombardment, with soldiers pointing their rifles at us. We walked long distances under high heat. It was exhausting and terrifying . . . The road was terrifying. All around us were bombed and destroyed buildings, with a large number of bodies and body parts strewn across the road, including those of targeted individuals and animals.”

Before the attacks began, there were approximately 700,000 people living in Gaza City making up 35% of the population in the entire Gaza strip. Almost 20% of all attacks were made on the roads next to Gaza City, deliberately isolating the city, forcing evacuations, preventing returns, and eradicating vital infrastructure. The targeting of Al-Rashid Road was directly aimed at civilians who were evacuating as ordered as well as people trying to access medical care. Israeli forces had the intention of blockading the road to cut off Gaza City early on, and the attacks on Al-Shifa served the purposes of both attacking civilians, destroying the hospital, and cutting off the road at that point.

Salah Al-Din Road records most attacks

Many of the other major towns and areas that have been targeted, including Jabalia, Nuseirat, Maghazi, Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis lay along Salah Al-Din Road which runs through the middle of Gaza from north to south. The road has been destroyed and bulldozed as Israeli tanks have made their way down the road to access the surrounding districts. 57% of the recorded road attacks took place on Salah Al-Din Road with sustained reports of people being shot at on this road since the beginning of the attacks in October.

Attacks on Salah Al-Din Road started from 7th October as civilians were forced to flee south along what the Israeli army claimed was a 'safe corridor'. Multiple reports of targeted attacks have been collected. Cars have been shot at and blown up, and Israeli tanks have been a constant presence on the two main roads. The majority of reports show that attacks were grouped in three main areas along the road - near Zeitoun in the north, Deir al-Balah in the Middle Area and Khan Younis in the South suggesting that tanks were positioned and attacks targeted coinciding with the safe zone lines, strategically separating areas of Gaza strip, making it extremely difficult for people to evacuate to the south or return to the north.

Other significant attacks on Salah Al-Din Road include the section of the road leading to Nuseirat refugee camp and Al-Maghazi refugee camp. Both of these camps are accessed from Salah Al-Din Road and through destroying the road, refugees could not evacuate via the main highway. Jabalia is the largest refugee camp in Gaza which sits to the east of Salah Al-Din Road in northern Gaza. The camp

has become inaccessible with the north part of Salah Al-Din Road being attacked continuously from the beginning of October to the end of November. The attacks on the main highway surrounding the refugee camps highlights Israel's intentions to target refugees who were already internally displaced within Gaza. From the end of December to the beginning of January, tanks attacked Al-Maghazi refugee camp, situated just off Salah Al-Din Road to the west, suggesting their blockade of the road had been intentional with plans to attack Al-Maghazi and giving refugees no evacuation route.

Abductions and harassment targeting women

During the truce between 24 and 30 November, Israeli operations were still active on Salah Al-Din Road with civilians being detained and families being separated at a checkpoint with snipers present. Reports of abductions and arrests of people passing through Salah Al-Din, especially at checkpoints, has remained consistent since the beginning, with at least 142 females, including elderly and infants, being held in Israeli jails including Damon and Hasharon prisons. It was also reported that Israeli forces abducted at least 10 women on Salah Al-Din Road two days before the truce, removing their scarves and blindfolding them. The road has been described as a 'death corridor,' playing into psychological warfare as civilians know that there is a high chance they could be killed or detained while fleeing down one of the only accessible routes available to them. During the truce, attacks continued with ground attacks hitting Al-Mugharaqa, located to the west of Salah Al-Din Road and destroying the road too. With the announcement of the truce, Salah Al-Din Road was used for evacuations with people believing it would be safe without the threat of attacks – IDF however remained in position setting up numerous checkpoints and continuing with harassment of civilians. Following the end of the truce, the road was reported to be completely destroyed as Israeli tanks were moving along Salah Al-Din Road cutting it off between Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis which was still a 'safe zone' at the time as attacks continued.

Majority of Salah Al-Din Road attacks are ground offensives

On 9th December, an IDF spokesperson announced the complete road closure of Salah Al-Din Road and civilians were told to use the coastal road instead as Israel continued targeting civilians including an ambulance, killing 4 paramedics. By 20th December, the IDF was no longer allowing civilians through Salah Al-Din Road, bombing the road to make it unusable between camps and to prevent ambulances and other vehicles passing and also completely cutting off the north from the south via the main highway. Almost 28% of attacks on Salah Al-Din Road occurred in December. Meanwhile, there are no recorded attacks on Al-Rashid Road in December which is consistent with photos showing the streets completely destroyed and razed with nothing left. With Al-Rashid Road being the only main route left available to civilians, tanks remained present on the road and as Israeli forces channelled their attacks to other areas of Gaza, there were no further strikes reported. This may be due to the fact that 68% of attacks on Al-Rashid Road were airstrikes while 62% of attacks on Salah Al-Din Road were ground strikes with shootings being reported frequently. It seems that military attacks on Al-Rashid Road were focused in and around Gaza City and Al-Shifa Hospital and once they had been destroyed and isolated the focus moved to razing the remainder of Al-Rashid Road. However, Salah Al-Din Road was a thoroughfare for many refugee camps and major towns and the attacks here continued from October through to the end of the reporting period, February 2024.

January and February saw road attacks become less frequent as the damage to the roads had become more severe. The number of civilians using the roads to evacuate had decreased as these main roads had been closed off by the IDF. Additionally, it became commonplace for civilians being shot along the roads. 31% of the total recorded attacks on the two main roads occurred in January and February 2024.

The new year saw a similar pattern with 56% of attacks on Salah Al-Din Road being ground attacks on civilians attempting to pass through. Deir Al Balah in the Middle Area saw 9 ground attacks along Salah Al-Din Road in January as the IDF started to move their attack south. One of the most prolific attacks took place on 29 February when a civilian was bulldozed leaving his body flattened on the ground.

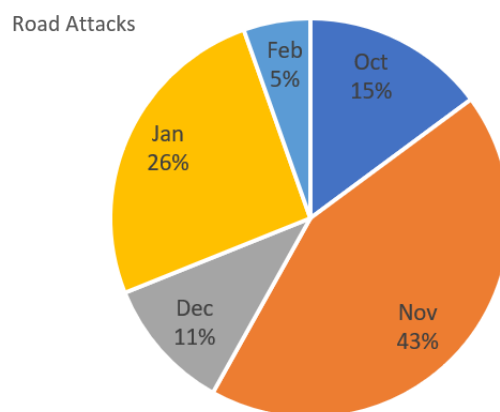
By March 2024, Israel went on to complete a new military road which completely separated North Gaza by cutting through the complete width of Gaza from Israeli territory to the Mediterranean Sea, slicing what was Al-Rashi Road and Salah Al-Din Road in half.

The Flour Massacre

As the IDF campaign continued into 2024, there were a number of instances of civilians being attacked as aid was delivered on Al-Rashid Road. There were three recorded attacks on civilians as they waited to collect flour bags near the coast. The first was on 9th January where a ground attack killed and injured multiple people. The second flour attack took place on 17th January where over 50 people were killed in ground and air strikes while waiting to receive aid. However, the deadliest road attack since the beginning of the Israeli campaign took place on 29th February on Al-Rashid Road. The attack killed around 150 people and injured up to 1000 civilians who were waiting to receive aid at the coast on Al-Rashid Road when an airstrike hit them in what has come to be known as the 'Flour Massacre'.

As Israeli tanks have started to withdraw from Salah-Al Din Road, the extent of the damage has become visible. The road is full of craters, and the rubble of demolished buildings that once surrounded the road cover it. The extent of the damage means that what was once Gaza's most central highway, and one of the oldest roads in the world, is no longer usable by vehicle nor foot and Israel has completely demolished what was once central infrastructure to life in Gaza. The destruction of these roads means that civilians have been left without accessible routes to safety or medical care. Salah Al-Din Road and Al-Rashid Road were the arteries of Gaza and they have been destroyed.

Figure 2: Percentage of Attacks on Roads from October 2023 to February 2024



Source: Restless Beings, 2024

The summarised data is consistent in line with two major readings of analysis:

- a clear strategy of forcing civilian populations out in waves, first from Gaza City as seen by the 43% of attacks in November and secondly targeting populations to move into the Middle Area by January's share of 26%.
- Al-Rashid Road was heavily targeted in November to isolate Al Shifa Hospital and Gaza City whilst Salah Al Din Road has continuously seen attacks to prevent civilian safety in using the road as thoroughfare between civilian conurbations.

TELECOMS

For the purpose of telecoms monitoring, a number of sources were used to ascertain the level of communications outages and network blackouts. Not all Internet outages are caused by government shutdowns, but also could be due to power or fuel outages. However, as it has been well documented from the start of the conflict that the IDF has been denying fuel into the Gaza Strip, internet outages due to lack of electricity or fuel is an evident consequence of this IDF war tactic.

ISPs Total Collapse

Telecommunications functionality in the Gaza Strip has been extremely limited since the escalation of hostilities on 7th October. 13 ISPs were observed for this report across October 2023 to February 2024. Of the 13, only two providers, Palestine Telecommunications company (PalTel) and Mada, have recovered the various telecommunications disruptions this conflict has waged over Gaza and its populations. PalTel Group, the largest Internet provider to Palestine, and its subsidiaries Hadara and Jawwal, were affected at times to total communication blackouts that later subsided, as opposed to suffering a total collapse. Mada, the second-largest telecommunications service provider in Palestine, also survived several outages, yet restoring itself to moderate levels of connectivity. Adversely, a total of 11 ISPs were documented having reached total collapse, exacerbated by the unforgiving conditions of this conflict.

This report's findings show that the first weeks of the escalation, from 7th October to 20th October 20 (8 ISPs collapse), saw the greatest number of telecommunications providers reach total collapse.



Figure 3: ISPs observed across 7th October 2023 to 29th February 2024

ISP	Upstream providers	Consumer market	Date of Total Collapse
PalTel - including partners Hadara and Jawwal	Foreign providers (Level 3 (American), Orange (French), Euroweb Romania (Romanian), Voxility (British))	1,228,566 Gazan users (of 2,457,132 total users considering Paltel claims 50% of its total Palestinian market share in Gaza Strip)	Moderate disruption from 7/10/23. Further, total blackouts affected PalTel 10 times
Mada	PalTel	225,574 Gazan users (of 451,148 users with 50% of its market share in the Gaza Strip.)	Moderate disruption from 7/10/23, dropping 25-30% connectivity. Further outages on 21/10, 24/10, 02/11, 03/11, 19/11, 13/01, 14/01 and 07/02-29/02
NetStream	PalTel	17,291 users	Total Collapse from 27/10/23
Al-Aqsa University	PalTel	Roughly 49,000 users	Total Collapse from 14/10/23
Fusion	PalTel	96,342 users	Total Collapse from 9/10/23 (partially restored by 18/12/23)
NewStarMax	PalTel	28,957 users	Total Collapse 7/10 (partially restored 31/12) Total Collapse 5/1/24 (partially restored 7/02)
AjyalFi	Bezeq (Israeli)	14,741 users (Palestinian market is in West Bank but the ISP is registered in Rafah)	Total Collapse from 7/10/23 (partially restored 20/10)
SpeedClick	Cellcom, ITC NG (Israeli), Hot-Net (Israeli), PalTel	79,436 users	Total Collapse from 20/10/23
JetNet	SpeedClick	112,704 users	Total Collapse from 20/10/23
TechHub-HiNet	SpeedClick	7,188 users (Palestinian market is in West Bank but the ISP is registered in Rafah)	Total Collapse from 9/10/23
Digital Communication Company (DCC)	Bezeq (Israeli)	12,479 Gazan users (50% of 24,958 total Palestinian users)	Total Collapse from 9/10/23
PalWiFi	DCC	7,353 users	Total Collapse from 9/10/23
CityNet	DCC	<1,000 users	Total Collapse from 9/10/23

Palestinian users affected by the total collapse of Gazan ISPs was roughly 1,671,000 users, or 75% of Gaza's 2.2 million population. Considering PalTel and its downstream, Mada, did not experience complete and total collapses, but rather multiple complete blackouts followed by partial restorations, it can be estimated around 200,000 Gazans were in complete digital darkness from the very first days of the conflict, as a result of the 11 smaller ISPs that totally collapsed.

In relation to ISP total collapse, it is evident that providers with Israeli upstreams, such as DCC, AjyalFi, and SpeedClick collapsed in the first week of the conflict (between 7th October to 9th October 2023). This indicates the intentional shutdown of these services by Israeli providers in response to the start of hostilities. Furthermore, smaller ISPs with fewer users that were reliant on larger providers collapsed across the early weeks of the conflict, which could indicate these being as a result of paternal telecoms organisations experiencing fuel and electricity shortages or having to cut off their smaller partners for their own survival. PalTel's offices in Gaza were destroyed by Israeli airstrikes from as early as 9th October, where PalTel headquarters based in Zeitoun near Shifa Hospital was struck and instantly destroyed. This would have undoubtedly contributed to the collapse of the ISP Fusion on 9th October 2023, and the swift erosion of other ISPs reliant on PalTel for connectivity across October 2023.

Attacks on Telecoms & Trends

15 attacks on telecommunication infrastructure were recorded in this monitoring report. The findings of this report displayed notable patterns in the nature and strategy of these telecommunication attacks. Firstly, telecommunication attacks occurred from the very first days of the hostilities, with the targeted strike and destruction of telecoms networks hubs in Palestine Tower, Al Watin Tower, Hajji Tower (3rd November 2023) and a communications tower in Al-Bureij refugee camp (30th October 2023) were reported as targeted and destroyed, hosting many local telecommunication companies, as well as prominent media houses like Al Jazeera.

PalTel is the most essential telecommunications provider across Gaza and the West Bank, as the only Palestinian-owned provider, with the largest Palestinian market share of any other ISP. For this reason, as a result of being the largest telecoms provider for both Gaza and the West Bank, PalTel has been repeatedly targeted for destruction of its offices and infrastructure, some sustaining multiple attacks, with even its employees being targeted and killed while repairing PalTel infrastructure. The very targeting of PalTel's headquarters on 9th October showed that severely disrupting communication streams across Gaza, and affecting as many Gazans as possible, was one of the IDF's first military priorities, despite its devastating ramifications for civilians. The 9th October Israeli bombing at PalTel's head office took out 2 of the 3 main lines for mobile communications that connect Gaza to the outside world.

Furthermore, attacks on telecommunications infrastructure have targeted and killed service providers while attempting to restore communication in the region. Two instances of this were reported by PalTel. The first being on 13th January 2024, with the killing of PalTel and then 14 of its employees being targeted and killed while repairing PalTel infrastructure by 19th January 2024.

Finally, across the span of this report, there have been many cases of civilian targeting and killing when searching for connectivity as a result of telecommunications disruptions. Many civilians were killed after they were directly targeted by Israeli army drones in the Al-Bashir area of Tal Al-Zaatar in Jabalia Camp. The victims were attempting to access internet services to communicate with their families and relatives. Palestinian civilians are climbing to high elevations in an effort to intercept communications signals to access the internet using electronic cards (eSims), as an alternative for communication due to the massive devastation on telecommunication infrastructure. Moreover, there have been cases of Palestinians seeking connectivity in civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, as these are the sites most likely to have the Internet when blackouts hit. Hospitals have been severely targeted by both air and ground attacks by the IDF which makes Palestinian venture for connectivity as a result of telecommunication blackouts a lethal one. The Israeli forces continue to deliberately target these civilians, who pose no threat or danger, clearly looking for service in a vulnerable state.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Staggering destruction across religious buildings and institutes

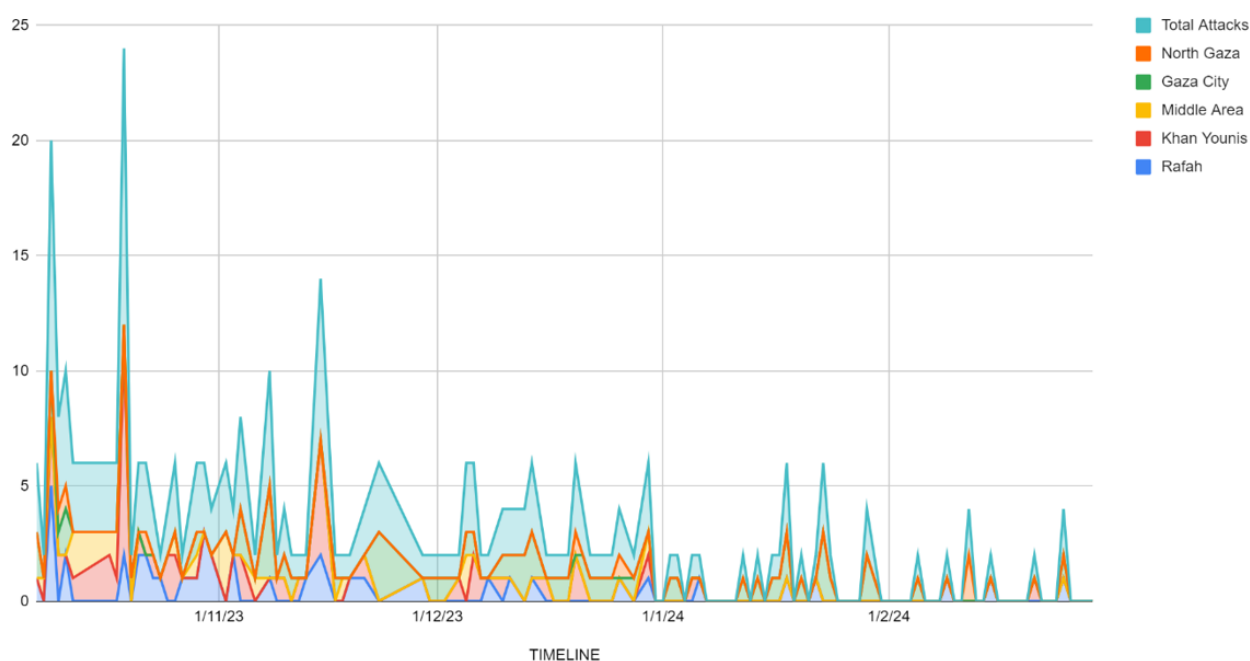
From October 2023 to February 2024, there were 203 documented attacks, across 171 religious buildings and infrastructure (RBIs) in Gaza. Of the 171 total RBIs damaged and destroyed, 42 (24%) were in North Gaza, 46 (27%) Gaza City, 25 (15%) were in Middle Area, 51 (30%) were in Khan Younis, and 7 (4%) were in Rafah.

Of the 146 conflict days, at least one attack was recorded on an RBI for 79 of those days i.e. 54% of total conflict days saw at least one RBI damaged and destroyed. 52% of those days had multiple attacks documented. The fact that the majority of conflict days saw at least one RBI attack, and a high portion of those days saw multiple RBI attacks indicated the preservation of religious buildings and infrastructure, and of civilians seeking refuge within them, were not prioritised, with this pattern exhibiting signs that IDF devastation of Gazan civilian infrastructure goes further than the claimed 'collateral damage'. Despite the IDF claiming it only attacks military targets, this evidence reveals IDF's primary military strategy has been relentless bombardment of civilian infrastructure, including RBIs.

Types of military attacks investigated include various forms of airstrikes and ground attacks. 85% of RBI attacks were as a result of airstrikes, with ground attacks only documenting 15% of RBI attacks. It is important to note that whilst the majority of attacks occurred against mosques, there are multiple instances of attacks against churches, monasteries, chapels and disturbingly a substantial number of cemeteries including corpse desecration.

Majority of RBIs were attacked once across the timeline of this report, with only 8 RBIs being attacked more than once (6% of total RBIs). An anomaly in the data found that Al-Zilal Mosque in western Khan Younis was attacked 7 times. In this instance, IDF and Hamas forces fought for several weeks near the mosque (6th November 2023 to 25th December 2023), in an intense exchange of ground attacks, by means of tank shelling, rockets and mortar shelling.

Figure 4: Total Attacks and locations on RBI's Oct 23 to Feb 24



Source: Restless Beings, Jan 2024

40% of all attacks on places of worship within first week of attacks

According to this data, the harshest conditions for RBIs occurred at the very start of the conflict. The first week being between 8th – 15th October, where 27 attacks on RBIs occurred, causing either heavy damage or total destruction. The second most damaging week, 17th – 23rd October resulted in 28 attacks on RBIs resulting in either heavy damage or total destruction. These figures combined, reveal approximately 40% of all documented RBIs heavily damaged or totally destroyed in this report happened in these early days of the conflict (19% October 8-12; 20% October 17-23). This clearly depicts the massive force by which the Israeli military commenced its attack on Gaza civilian infrastructure, across the Gaza, but mostly in Gaza's most populous regions, North Gaza, and Gaza City. The first evacuation notice by the Israeli Government only came on 12th October, where civilians were told to evacuate within 24 hours further south to Middle Area. However, this only came at the end of the second deadliest week for RBIs (8th October to 12th October). This demonstrates IDF attacked civilian infrastructure prior to giving any civilians notice or opportunity to seek refuge before their neighbourhoods were turned into an overnight warzone. North Gaza and Gaza City are the most populous regions of the Gaza Strip, which indicates that the IDF did not prioritise civilian safety and wellbeing in their military advancements, countering their claim that they prioritise minimising harm of Palestinian civilians.

An even more damaging week for RBIs followed suit, between 17th – 23rd October, where 28 attacks on RBIs occurred. This demonstrates that despite an evacuation notice only being issued four days prior (12th October), the severity of IDF attacks on RBIs was nearly consistent with the previous week. Whereas between 8th October and 12th October, most RBI attacks took place in North Gaza, the following week, Gaza City sustained the most RBI damage, whereby 14 of the 28 total RBI attacks happened in Gaza Governorate. That means 50% of the attacks on RBIs between 17th October and 23rd October occurred in Gaza City, while an estimated 1.1 million Palestinian civilians from North and central Gaza were still evacuating the conflict zones to Middle Area. This trend continues from the end of October to November.

The third deadliest week for RBI attacks was 30th October to 4th November, where 17 attacks on RBIs were documented, leading to heavy damage or total destruction. As of this week, the highest number of RBI attacks documented in this report in a single Governorate was in Middle Area, the supposed 'safe zone' drawn out by Israeli military on 12th October. This, yet again, proves that in the initial stages of the conflict, nowhere in Gaza was safe from IDF attack, and that civilian 'safe zones' were in fact not respected by the IDF. It also depicts just how little IDF prioritised civilian safety, waiting until only 4th November to instruct civilians to evacuate further south. Further, in the week of 4th November to 10th November, this pattern of IDF apathy for civilian safety becomes increasingly evident.

On 4th November, Israeli forces instructed approximately 1.4 million Palestinian civilians from the North, Gaza, and Middle Area, to evacuate across the Khan Younis border for their safety. During that time, 13 RBIs sustained heavy damage or destruction due to Israeli assault. In fact, 8th November was the deadliest day for RBI attacks within that week due to attacks that took place in Khan Younis, with 4 attacks on RBIs being documented. This illustrates a clear, full picture, whereby attacks on RBIs followed civilian forced displacement, as directed by Israeli forces evacuation orders. The only Governorate that this pattern was not deduced was in Rafah, whereby only one attack was found in the Governorate after the evacuation notice instructing civilians to Rafah on 30th November. This attack took place on the Tel al Sultan Cemetery in Rafah, where 80 Palestinian unidentified bodies were seized to Israel during a ground invasion by Israeli forces, and returned, some in pieces, on 26th December 2023. The IDF claimed they were checking for hostages. The bodies were finally laid to rest in a mass grave in Tel al Sultan Cemetery.

Destruction of Al Rabat Mosque in North Gaza



100% of all churches and monasteries destroyed

Of the RBIs included in this report, the vast majority of all damaged and destroyed RBIs were mosques (89%), whilst cemeteries made up 9%, churches 3%, and monasteries only 2%. Despite this being easily deduced as Gazan Palestinians are overwhelmingly of Muslim faith, it does indicate that RBIs of different faiths were also deliberately targeted by the IDF. It is estimated that there were only approximately 1,000 Palestinian Christians living in Gaza prior to the war. The severity of the IDF assault raises fears over whether this war could bring the end to a Christian presence in Gaza, a community with cultural and historical heritage on the enclave dating back to Roman occupation. In one instance, while civilians were sheltering under the Church of Saint Porphyrius on 16th October 2023, an estimated 200 children, women, elderly, and sick people, across faiths, were attacked when Israeli warplanes struck the Church with two targeted air raids, leaving it in ruin, and instantly killing 18 civilians, including several children (19th October 2023). Further, this shows that the IDF have targeted RBIs with knowledge of these institutions being used as safe housing by displaced civilians.

Of the 4 churches either heavily damaged or destroyed in this report, 2 churches resulted in civilian casualties from those safe housing within the churches, with a minimum of 20 dead as a result of IDF attack. These were Saint Porphyrius on 19th October and the Holy Family Parish Church (or Latin Church) on 16th December, where two women sheltering within the Parish were shot by sniper rifle from inside the church. The monasteries at the Shrine of Al-Khadir in Deir Al Balah and Abdel Moati Abu Eyada Monastery in Al Bureij of Middle Area, were both heavily damaged during bombings. The findings of this report reveal a contradicting narrative to the IDF claims that Christian places of worship are sensitive and protected areas. Deliberate targeting by the IDF, despite knowledge of sheltering civilians, led to many civilian casualties. It also shows a clear favouring of Gazan Christian safety over Gazan Muslims by the IDF, evident in the overwhelming majority and brutal force used against Islamic RBIs.

25 cases of totally destroyed RBIs resulted in civilian deaths and injury, with most cases of civilian casualties being in Gaza City (10 cases / 40% cases resulting in civilian casualties) and North Gaza (6 cases resulting in civilian casualties). An example of this would be Ihya Al-Sunna Mosque, where on 15th November, between 30 and 50 people were killed upon impact by an Israeli airstrike. On 14th December, at about 12:00, continuous Israeli shelling in the centre of Khan Younis, hit several locations including Osama Bin Zaid Mosque and Abdul Karim al-Shaer Mosque killing at least 30 people. The true figure is likely much higher in consideration of the high number of civilians seeking shelter in these mosques. This indicates that RBIs were targeted directly as part of Israeli military strategy, that destructive force was used to attack the RBIs at a high rate (approx. 40%), and that the IDF were not deterred despite public knowledge of RBIs being used as safe housing for civilians escaping war, resulting in a high rate of civilian casualties and deaths.

The IDF attacked RBIs during the 'humanitarian truce'

Despite media reporting stating that both warring parties respected the humanitarian truce for 7 days of peace between 24th November and 1st December, this report's findings conclude there were in fact 2 attacks on RBIs between this truce period. The first was in North Gaza on 29th November, where the Salim Abu Muslim Mosque in Beit Lahiya was targeted and destroyed by IDF airstrike. This mosque dated back to the 13th century, first built in the Mamluk period. The second RBI to be attacked during the truce period was in Khan Younis on 30th November; The Al Toubra Mosque. Both of these mosques were targeted and totally destroyed, despite the Israeli government propagating that the humanitarian truce period was being respected by its forces.

Cultural heritage sites destroyed wiping away 900 years of history

RBI's act as physical representations of a people's heritage, histories, memories, and sense of belonging. The existential and likely irreversible implications of this conflict will not only scar Palestinians but hosts global ramifications. Calculated damage and destruction of RBI's is an unconscionable uprooting of history, culture, not solely specific to Gaza Strip, but on a global scale.

Beyond this conflict, it is crucial Palestinian religious and cultural heritage sites are preserved. The coastal port city of Gaza is immensely rich in layered history. Despite Gaza's long struggles with occupying forces, from the Egyptians, Romans, Byzantines and Mamluks, to present day Israel, Gaza is host to an incredibly ancient and flourishing culture. It is a city with historical and cultural value to the world, has acted as a prosperous trading centre between the Mediterranean with Africa, Asia and Europe for millennia.

The Great Omari Mosque is one of the most historical mosques in Palestine. It is located in the heart of the old town in Daraj neighbourhood of Gaza City. Al-Omari Mosque's Basilican architecture stretched a vast 44,000 square metres, making it the largest mosque in the Gaza Strip. Al-Omari Mosque's impressive marble columns, ample courtyard, and inscriptions date back to the Mamluk and Ottoman eras. The library, established by Sultan Zahir Baybars and opened in 1277, once boasted a collection of 20,000 books and manuscripts. After the Al-Aqsa Mosque library in Jerusalem, the Omari's collection was one of the richest in all of Palestine. These hard copies of these manuscripts have all been destroyed, along with the mosque, in the strike on 8th December.

The fall of the Great Omari Mosque is not a sole case. Othman bin Qashqar Mosque, built in 1220 at the site where Prophet Muhammad's great-grandfather is believed to have been buried, was struck by an airstrike on 7th December, sustaining considerable damage. The Imam al-Shafi'i Mosque, one of the biggest mosques in Gaza, collapsed upon impact by a series of airstrikes, resulting in civilian casualties and displacement of those that sought refuge within its walls.

Growing evidence of IDF desecration of cemeteries

The Israeli army has admitted to digging up graves in the Gaza Strip. Their claim is that this is necessary to confirm whether bodies were that of Israeli hostages.

The Israeli army has admitted that its soldiers dug up graves in the Gaza Strip. The military claimed this was done to confirm that the bodies of captives were not buried. As the civilian population was displaced repeatedly moving further south, the desecration of cemeteries in those locations also continued to match the trend of airstrikes on RBI's where the displaced had moved to. Following the first evacuation plan, people from North Gaza and Gaza City were displaced to Middle Area towns such as Nuseirat and Deir Al Balah.

By November 2023, the instruction to move further south towards Khan Younis arrived by the IDF forcing hundreds of thousands of displaced civilians into Khan Younis by January. Not without coincidence, but by military design, the highest frequency and greatest quantity of corpse desecration monitored occurred in January in Khan Younis.

On 24th January further instruction to evacuate to Al Mawassi and Rafah had arrived from the Israelis. It is once again, not without coincidence, that the remaining attacks monitored in February all occurred in the southern Governorate of Rafah.



Omari Mosque, Gaza

HOSPITALS

Israel's bombardment of Gaza has seen the systematic destruction of its hospitals and healthcare centres. Since the start of the assault, all of Gaza's hospitals have been bombed, with 100% of them being non-operational at some point. Not only have hospitals been used to treat the wounded but have also acted as a place of shelter for those who have been displaced from their home as a result of Israeli airstrikes. With this being public knowledge, 47% of Gaza's hospitals have suffered multiple attacks by the IDF from 7th October 2023 to 29th February 2024.

211 attacks against hospitals recorded

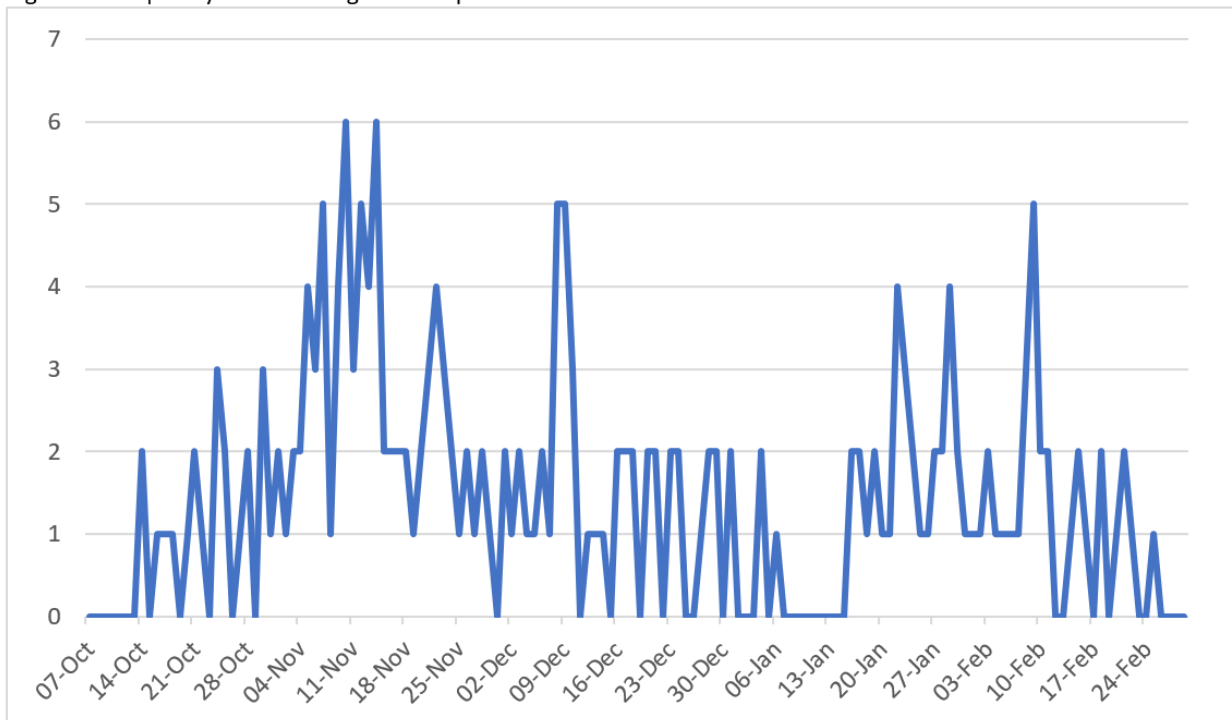
In total, there have been 211 attacks on hospitals across Gaza from October 2023 to February 2024. Of these, 18 have suffered multiple attacks including some of Gaza's largest hospitals such as Kamal Adwan, the Indonesian Hospital, Al-Shifa and Nasser Hospital. Larger hospitals have faced a varied approach to attacks, with 21% of hospitals being targeted by airstrikes, gunfire, and raids, along with a sustained trend of how these attacks are carried out starting with blockading, besieging, and bombarding larger hospitals.

However, smaller hospitals such as the Jordanian Field Hospital, Yaffa Hospital and Al Helou International Hospital were all destroyed after a single airstrike.

Frequency of Attacks

Of the total period of 146 days monitored, 65% of those days saw attacks on hospitals. During this time, 58 days saw multiple attacks on hospitals across Gaza. The deadliest week of attacks was the second week of November where 25% of hospitals were bombed during the recorded period, and the first 10 days after the pause saw 23 attacks across hospitals. In summation, the IDF attacked hospitals across 95 days during a 146-day period.

Figure 5: Frequency of Attacks Against Hospitals



Source: Restless Beings 2024

Military Tactics Against Hospitals

Israel's tactic when targeting larger hospitals begins with bombing and blockading the entrances and roads in the vicinity of the hospital. In doing this, the IDF ensures no ambulances are able to reach the hospital whilst also trapping the wounded and displaced within the complex. Furthermore, blockading the entrances means essential supplies such as fuel, water and food are unable to reach the hospital. IDF communications suggest that this tactic is used to prevent fighters from transporting weaponry or leaving or entering the hospital. If the assumption by the IDF, that hospitals were harbouring fighters, was true or evidenced, then while this tactic of cutting supply routes is credible, the lack of access to the sheer number of sick and injured requiring treatment would also lead to terrible humanitarian consequences. It easily falls within the definition of collective punishment – a war crime. The cut off of fuel led to the death of kidney patients and premature babies in neonatal incubators, and patients in intensive care units at Al Quds, Kamal Adwan and Al Aqsa hospitals. The lack of equipment, overwhelming number of patients and damage to hospital complexes eventually forced these hospitals to close and cease service.

As thousands remained trapped with no access to medical or essential supplies, the IDF continued to besiege hospitals with tanks and troops threatening to shoot anyone who tries to leave. Similarly, there has been the systematic arrest of medical staff at this stage with hospital directors at Kamal Adwan, Al-Awda and Al-Shifa all being arrested and held for questioning.

After besieging the hospitals with tanks and gunfire, data patterns emerge that the IDF's next phase of attack is to then bomb the hospital further to cause infrastructure damage, rendering them non-operational, and causing intentional death of civilian life as they carry out their campaign. For example, Beit Hanoun hospital in northern Gaza saw continuous bombing resulting in severe damage which left the hospital completely out of service. Similarly, Israeli warplanes bombarded Al-Rantisi Hospital from 7th to 11th November, wounding 35 people and destroying the hospital's solar panels and water tanks, cutting off fuel, water, and electricity.



Patients and displaced rounded up in Kamal Adwan Hospital

Between 12th and 14th December, Israeli airstrikes destroyed the majority of facilities and all major roads leading to Kamal Adwan Hospital. The hospital was accommodating 65 patients, including 12 children in intensive care and six newborns in incubators. Tanks then surrounded the perimeter of the hospital and called anyone aged 15 and over to come out of the building, where over 70 men and boys were rounded up in the courtyard and 2 mothers were killed when the maternity department was hit. The IDF also detained the hospital's Director, Ahmed al-Khalot and other staff who were tortured and deprived of food and drink.

The mass graves at the site of Kamal Adwan highlighted another supposed military tactic which is clearly in infringement of international humanitarian law. On the 16th and 17th December Israeli soldiers prepared a mass grave where bodies of dead patients were transported using military bulldozers. These bulldozers were then used to crush and bury around 20 people and their tents who were sheltering in the courtyard. Dogs were then released – mauling one person to death. Additionally, the 6 premature babies were trapped without food and water, with some sustaining moderate to severe burns from airstrikes. The IDF completely destroyed the southern part of the hospital and fired gunshots during a press conference held by the remaining medical staff on 17th December.

Indonesian Hospital

The Indonesian Hospital was sieged on 30th October 2023 where the entrances were blockaded to prevent essential supplies coming in with IDF communications suggesting a strategy of preventing fighters from accessing the hospital. Shelling destroyed parts of the roof causing the ceiling to collapse in a number of rooms and caused damage to the area surrounding the hospital. After a sustained attack, the hospital became completely out of service on 16th November due to a lack of supplies and the overwhelming number of patients. With a capacity of 140 beds and 500 wounded in the hospital, medical teams were forced to amputate patient's body parts due to rotting organs with limited equipment.

By 20th November, hundreds remained trapped as tanks continued to besiege the hospital. Artillery fire killed at least 12 people in the complex which was surrounded by Israeli troops who killed anyone trying to leave. On 25th November, the IDF targeted the main generator and raided the hospital in the early morning. The fourth floor was hit with a missile, cutting off electricity and solar power to the buildings, as well as destroying large parts of the hospital infrastructure, equipment, and supplies. No burials were able to happen in this time due to Israeli snipers targeting anyone trying to dig a grave and medical staff were interrogated about fighters and the hospital's entrances and exits.

Al Shifa Hospital – most attacked hospital in Gaza

At Al-Shifa hospital, more than 20 patients died on 17th November after the continued Israeli raid which resulted in fuel shortages and power cuts. Prior to this a targeted campaign of destruction of all roads leading to and from Al Shifa including the arterial Al Rashid Road were destroyed on a large scale. The following day IDF soldiers forced doctors, patients, and displaced people to leave the hospital at gunpoint after days of besieging. This led to 500 people being forced to evacuate and the hospital's director Muhammad Abu Salmiya was arrested on 23rd November and held for questioning. On 18th December, the IOF shelled the hospital twice, killing 5 people and damaging the surgery building. In 6 hours, 28 displaced people were killed, and dozens injured, along with a civilian car transporting wounded which was also targeted. Between 7th October and 31st December, Al-Shifa hospital and its surrounding area was attacked 23 times through raids, shelling, and airstrikes. The IOF renewed their siege of Al-Shifa hospital on 29th January 2024 – bombing the hospital and its vicinity. Thousands of displaced people were forced to find a new place of refuge after over 20 airstrikes targeted the area, leading to the death of 25 people and injury of over 50. On 8th February, further deaths were caused after the IDF bombed a group of people at the entrance of the hospital.

500 people killed at Al Ahli Hospital

Unlike the other large hospitals, Al-Ahli was only targeted twice but sustained unparalleled damage. On 17th October, a deadly air raid killed at least 500 people with many stuck under the rubble. Evidence suggests that the bomb used left no crater, characteristic of the pre-impact airburst of the JDAM-fitted US bombs. This suggests that the strike was directed, deliberate and designed to cause maximal death. The IDF then targeted the western areas of Al-Ahli using white phosphorus on 13th November, and later that week arrested and targeted medical staff, wounded and the displaced.

Nasser Hospital

After instructing the population to move south to the supposed 'safe zone,' the IDF began heavy bombardment of Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis in mid-January 2024. On 16th January IDF warplanes began heavily bombing the vicinity of the complex forcing hundreds of displaced people to leave the hospital under bombardment. Over the following days fierce clashes broke out between the IDF and Hamas fighters. The violence saw a repeat scenario of what happened to other hospitals in the North and Middle Area Governorates with hospitals failing to operate at maximum capacity, full of the wounded and displaced.

By 26th January, power was completely cut off and no longer had food, anaesthetics, or painkillers. As the siege continued 500 patients and staff, in addition to hundreds of displaced families, faced forced starvation and direct IDF targeting from within the hospital. On 10th February, tanks fired bullets and shells towards the hospital killing a child at the entrance and 4 people in the courtyard after it was bombed. By 14th February, the IDF forced people to leave the hospital, displacing them once again to the east of the city after weeks of besieging.



Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis

CONCLUSIONS

In light of the findings of the study and ahead of the conclusions, some considerations must first be addressed. Firstly, it is important to note, that collection of data occurred at a time of live active Israeli military assaults. The analysis, findings and conclusions are for monitored data only – and it is very much plausible and expected that many more attacks have happened over the period. Due to a lack of connectivity, safety, lack of safe passage, damaged locales, all attacks have not been reported and the true extent of destruction and loss of life may never be known. Despite this, clear trends and patterns emerge.

The civilian infrastructure monitored in this study, schools, WASH, telecoms, roads, places of worship and hospitals can be split into two distinctive classes – places of refuge and access. Roads, telecoms, and water can be assessed on the basis of accessibility whereas schools, religious buildings/institutes and hospitals represent places of refuge. This distinction is important as the entire Israeli military campaign is based on the premise that it's objectives are the removal of Hamas fighters and the retrieval of hostages. With these stated military objectives, both access-based infrastructure and refuge-based infrastructure appear to be legitimate targets.

International condemnation of the use of military grade weaponry used against civilian infrastructure can be rebutted by the Israeli state on this key notion – that Hamas fighters embed themselves within civilian infrastructure to evade punitive action. This is quite a plausible argument but would need to be evidenced as such. Without the evidence of Hamas operatives within the civilian infrastructure, the nature, scale, and mode of attacks on civilian infrastructure and more significantly on civilians themselves will of course be challenged robustly. International humanitarian law provides one, but not solitary or exclusive, lens of accountability and justice mechanisms.

From the findings of the report the patterns and trends that emerge clearly illustrate that Israeli stated objectives and the reality of their military campaign do not align and unquestionably, the military strategy seeks to cause civilian deaths rather than civilian deaths being the price of military combat.

1. *Clear geographical pattern that causes and follows civilian displacement*

The targeting of places of refuge such as schools, mosques, and monasteries and of hospitals by its nature alone implies civilian involvement in military directives. The aerial bombardment, ground assaults etc of such places will inevitably create displacement. It is clearly evidenced particularly in the case of schools, RBI's, and hospitals that IDF forces attacked and destroyed in Northern Gaza first. Evacuation notices were issued to North Gaza residents to move to Middle Area – supposed 'safe zones.' The same types of buildings were attacked in the Middle Area whilst being declared 'safe.' This pattern was repeated with displacements to Khan Younis followed by subsequent bombing of places of refuge in Khan Younis and again to Rafah. In much the way that almost the entirety of North Gaza was razed, Khan Younis followed in the months after the reporting period concluded. As of publication, in May 2024, aerial bombardment of the last city that civilians can reach in Rafah continues. There is imminent and plausible threat of a further ground incursion – this would be catastrophic on a level of unprecedented scale.

2. *Israeli Communications*

From Benjamin Netanyahu to Yoav Gallant to Daniel Hagari and beyond, all of the Israeli senior political and military figures have spoken of mass destruction, of all military measures not only privately, but in public too. From Gallant's comments on creating siege conditions as Israel goes after 'human animals' to Netanyahu's defiant claims of international impunity through to many cases of Hagari's claims of Hamas operations provably unevicenced, the intent on causing civilian deaths is apparent. It is this type of rhetoric which gives South Africa the leading edge in their International Court of Justice case against Israeli genocide.

3. *Death and destruction is beyond military campaign*

The case studies in the findings which highlight the humiliating arrests of men and boys in schools across northern Gaza, of women being shot by snipers whilst seeking refuge in churches, of dead civilians being buried in prepared mass graves by Israeli soldiers all paint the same conclusion – the military campaign is provably targeting civilians over military targets. Young boys arrested in schools, women shot in churches and dead bodies of civilians can not be military targets in any version of law or peace covenants. At the very bare minimum, this shows the Israeli attacks place no value on the obvious civilian price that is to be paid by their objectives. At worst, it is a targeted, deliberate attack on a civilian population. The rhetoric from leadership suggests the latter. The scale of destruction against the backdrop of stated military objectives evidence collective punishment.



Rafah Displacement Camp

4. *Infrastructure targets are civilian not military*

In the cases of places of refuge, neither in Hamas ministry reporting nor in IDF reporting is there enough evidence to suggest that Israeli targeting of civilian infrastructure has led to either a significant capture of hostage nor of Hamas fighters. The overwhelming majority of hostages retrieved have been during the temporary pause in November when the agreed hostages were released. Israel has failed to retrieve any significant number of hostages. The civilian deaths that have been caused as a result, are therefore simply that, civilian deaths. Either the Israeli war effort has spectacularly failed, or its intention was simply to cause that level of civilian death. Bearing in mind the well documented military aid that Israel receives and its world leading weaponry, it is unfathomable to conclude that the Israeli war effort is a catastrophic defeat. What is more plausible, is that it has achieved and continues to achieve, its strategy of civilian deaths.

Insofar as the access-based infrastructure of water, roads and telecommunication, the pattern is less clear but still overall conclusive. Without question, the targeting of telecommunications and of roads would have severely hampered Hamas fighters and in being able to move hostages at regular intervals. With Israel's might in cyber-security however, the destruction of telecommunications is surely rudimentary in nature and affects civilians more than it does Hamas. Keeping the telecommunications open would have led to far easier identification of Hamas locations and vis a vis, hostage locations. It is reasonable to suggest therefore that the telecommunications outages affect civilians more than helping Israeli military objectives. Similarly, by attacking the two main arterial roads, Hamas operations are definitely hampered and fall within Israeli war efforts. However, the data finds that more attacks were perpetrated on civilians than on destruction of the road itself. 57% of all road attacks reported were on the civilian population using Salah Al Din and Al Rashid Roads to evacuate. Finally, the cutting off and subsequent targeting of water facilities falls in line with telecoms and road targeting, deliberately designed to affect civilian populations and not to meet the objectives of the military campaign.

5. *Hindsight proves the targeting of civilians*

Schools, hospitals, and RBI's were the first targets in North Gaza. As the military campaign continued, it became clear that these three places of refuge would become targets in Middle Area towns, Khan Younis and in Rafah. The early airstrikes on hospitals caused concern globally. However, in the months since, these hospitals were targeted time and again. Up until the end of the reporting period, February, Al Shifa for example, had been targeted multiple times. By the time of publication however, Al Shifaa has been raided and almost entirely destroyed. Mass graves were found in the Al Shifaa complex. The exact same method has been used in Khan Younis hospitals with evidence of people being buried alive, children's corpses with hands zip-tied, patients with catheters still attached found in the mass graves. Up until the end of the reporting period in February, much of Gaza City was in total destruction. At the time of publication in May 2024, Khan Younis is now also almost completely razed to the ground. By the end of the reporting period, Salah Al Din Road and Al Rashid Road were almost completely destroyed. By the time of publication of the findings however, a new military road which completely cuts off the roads from northern Gaza has been created. All of the above show the tactics and strategy of colonisation and not of the stated military objectives of retrieval of hostage and targeting Hamas fighters. The very real, imminent, and highly likely threat to the 1.5 million displaced in the last Gazan city of Rafah is similar to the rest of Gaza until now. Mass expulsion and mass extermination, by design and deliberate in its approach.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings and conclusions of the report have wide and varied ramifications for Government(s), academics, humanitarian organisations, and civil society at large. As evidenced, the study's findings report that Israel's offensive in Gaza is a deliberately designed targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure. The patterns of attack, displacing and following the civilian population to the most southern city of Rafah, using rhetoric that is not in line with stated military objectives, the lack of achievement of military objectives but high civilian price and the subsequent intentional violence towards civilians, all point to Israel's intention of harnessing unliveable conditions for Gazans. Here lies questions and deliberations of Genocide determination, State's diplomacy approaches towards Israel, the notion of Palestinian protection mechanisms and more. However, for the stated objectives of the study, more narrowed recommendations will be given.

OBJECTIVE 1

The scale and nature of the Israeli attacks on Gaza that have been documented in this report give rise to solid suggestions that Rafah, currently hosting 1.5 million displaced Gazans is targeted for the next attacks. Rafah already has been under aerial bombardment and the Israeli leadership has made firm commitments that it will press ahead with a ground incursion regardless of any ceasefire agreements. If, as anticipated these go ahead, it is within reasonable plausibility that the Palestinian populations in the West Bank are also in line to be targeted.

As has been laid out in the findings and conclusions, Israel has led a deliberate strategy of targeting civilians. Consequentially, it is highly recommended that Government(s) adjust their policies towards Israeli engagement accordingly. In its very first instance, any current or forthcoming arms trade with Israel needs to be addressed. Given the 35,000+ civilian deaths, the 1.5 million displaced, and the unbelievable scale of destruction to civilian infrastructure from housing, schools, hospitals, places of worship, roads, telecommunications, water supplies, severe restrictions and challenges in accessible humanitarian aid to a forced starved population, policies should reflect, at minimum, a total and complete arms embargo on any military trade with Israel. Any Government(s) that continues to trade arms with a State committing war crimes or worse, surely becomes complicit in that crime.

As signatories and essential partners in the establishment of the Geneva Conventions, Hague Law and Rome Statutes, the application of what is commonly known as international humanitarian law must be upheld in relation to Israel's deliberate war strategy of targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. It is not sufficient to rely on Israel's own internal reviews on whether or not they are acting in accordance with international humanitarian law. In Israel's 2006 Manual on Rules of Warfare, "A military target is any target that, if attacked, would damage the military competence/fitness of the other side." It further states, "Discussions regarding the distinction between military and non-military targets, and how far it might [be] possible to stretch the limits are very extensive in the modern era." Clearly with a very opaque definition of what constitutes military and civilian targets and given the extensive and devastating cost of civilians and civilian infrastructure in this context, whether or not Israel is acting in accordance with international humanitarian law should be left to the arbitrators i.e. the ICC and ICJ. The deliberate targeting of civilians is a war crime. The collective punishment of a civilian population is also a war crime. They are also essential facets of Genocide determination. Policies designed to uphold law rather than to retrospectively realise that leniencies were applied speaks of justice and accountability rather than culpability and delayed remorse. Government(s) are therefore recommended to push for independent investigation mechanisms and to pursue the letter of international humanitarian law. Outside of the remit of the objectives of the report, it would be advisable to also pursue consequentially, the right to self-determination for Palestinians as the long-term pursuit for justice and accountability of this decades long unresolved issue.



OBJECTIVE 2

In the entirety of the 76 years of occupation of Palestinian territory, the crisis in Gaza that has been created by the Israeli attacks is unmatched. The response from the humanitarian community, therefore, has to be long lasting. Recent reports suggest that to rebuild Gaza to what it was could take as long as 80 years, longer than the time that Gaza has been occupied. The scale of debris and destruction will have impact for a generation. It is vital that Government(s) are part of this rebuild and to not look for 'Arab' countries and civil society alone to complete the recovery.

The civilians who have been displaced multiple times over since October 2023 carry with them trauma of having lost family, psychological impact of months long war, physical realities of being in displacement and uncertainty of even the possibility of a future. Humanitarian organisations have until now worked under increasingly difficult conditions to try to address the very basic of needs – medical support is elementary at best and supply of food and water is still at an urgent level of addressing severe malnutrition. It is fundamental for the humanitarian assistance response to be co-ordinated, properly funded and longstanding. Therefore, it is an essential recommendation that support and funding for UNRWA is re-established. UNRWA is the best placed organisation with the most expertise in the region to co-ordinate and implement the decades long humanitarian response that will be needed to aid a civilian population that has seen 35,000+ deaths, multiple displacements, and agonising psychological impacts of the Israeli attack on Gaza.

The recommendations to Government(s) to introduce an arms embargo on Israel, to pursue international justice and accountability for the war crimes Israel has perpetrated on the Gazan civilian population and to have active participation in the humanitarian response for Gaza are the foundations but should not be the only facets of policy. For the humanitarian community, the recognition of the scale of damage and the continued difficulties in response work during active war should be the core anchor for future rebuilding efforts. UNRWA must be the leading organisation to co-ordinate. Finally, mass extermination and mass expulsion, the identifiable strategies of the Israeli military campaign in Gaza, are the policies of colonialist occupation. In this light, Academia must play catch up as it has a necessary and essential role in the study, discourse, and intellectual decolonisation of Palestine.





Al Maghazi Refugee Camp

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It seems quite apparent from the patterns identified in this report and by the price of thousands of civilian deaths and 80 years' worth of destruction and debris, that Israel's likely actual military objective was to cause mass extermination and mass expulsion – policies of violent colonisation and occupation.



RESTLESSBEINGS

