



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note **Occupied Palestinian Territories:** **Security situation in Gaza**

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Executive summary

Gaza is a small, densely populated, enclave of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, inhabited by around 2.1 million mostly Palestinian Arabs.

The current conflict in Gaza, which is being fought between the Israeli Defense Forces and Hamas, alongside the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and at least 7 other Palestinian armed groups, has been ongoing since 7 October 2023.

Indicating the level of indiscriminate violence faced by Gazans, conflict fatalities represent at least 0.92% of Gaza's population as of the end of June 2024, and injuries a further 4.16% of the population. Between 70% and 90% of Gazans are internally displaced, many having been displaced multiple times.

Reports of entire neighbourhoods destroyed and damage to hospitals, UN premises and other civilian infrastructure across the Gaza Strip, combined with a near-complete breakdown of civil order, are indicative of compounded security risks posed to civilians.

While the Gaza City governorate is one of the worst affected areas, there have continued to be regular security incidents and fatalities across all governorates of the Gaza Strip.

A severe security situation does not in itself give rise to a well-founded fear of persecution for a Refugee Convention reason.

The security situation in Gaza is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict, as defined in paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules.

Due to levels of indiscriminate violence across the Gaza Strip and the unpredictable and fast-moving nature of the conflict, protection from the state is unavailable and internal relocation within Gaza is not considered reasonable at the time of publication.

Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

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Assessment

About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of whether, **in general**:

- the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian’s life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iv\) of the Immigration Rules](#)
- internal relocation is possible to avoid serious harm
- if a claim is refused, it is likely to be certified as ‘clearly unfounded’ under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case’s specific facts.

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Points to note

Palestinian refugees in Gaza who were receiving protection and/or assistance from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are excluded from the protection of the Refugee Convention under Article 1D unless such protection has ceased for any reason.

Exclusion under Article 1D of the Refugee Convention does not automatically exclude a person from humanitarian protection. Whether a person is entitled to humanitarian protection will depend on the facts of the case. For general guidance, see the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).

This note **must** be considered alongside the [Asylum Instruction on Article 1D of the Refugee Convention: Palestinian refugees assisted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency \(UNRWA\)](#), which provides details on how to consider asylum claims made by stateless Palestinians whose habitual place of residence is the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Lebanon, or Syria (see also, [Exclusion](#)).

It is open to a person to apply for permission to stay as a stateless person. This can be done at the same time as the asylum claim is being pursued. Whether a decision maker may consider an application for permission to stay as a stateless person at the same time as the asylum claim will depend on whether it is possible to determine the statelessness application without contacting the national authorities from which the person is seeking protection, where relevant (see [Permission to stay as a stateless person: caseworker guidance](#)).

It should also be noted that the sources cited within this document use a variety of terms to refer to the Gaza Strip in its entirety, including ‘Gaza’ and ‘the Strip’. The term ‘Gaza’ is also used by some sources to refer specifically to Gaza City, or the Gaza governorate. Such terms should therefore be read and considered within their wider context.

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1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 1.1.3 Decision makers must also consider making an international biometric data-sharing check (see [Biometric data-sharing process \(Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process\)](#)).
- 1.1.4 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person's claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
 - a. [Applicability of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention](#)
- 1.2.2 Article 1D of the Refugee Convention is one of the exclusion clauses in the Refugee Convention. It excludes persons receiving protection or assistance from organs or agencies of the United Nations (other than the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) from the Refugee Convention, but its overall purpose is to ensure the continuing protection of Palestinian refugees until their position is settled in accordance with relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions.
- 1.2.3 Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip who were previously assisted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and continue to be eligible for such assistance but who seek asylum outside the area of UNRWA operation are excluded from the scope of the Refugee Convention unless they can show that UNRWA assistance or protection has ceased for any reason, which includes where a person ceases to receive protection or assistance beyond their control or independent of their volition.

- 1.2.4 A Palestinian eligible for UNRWA protection or assistance and previously registered with UNRWA, or (though not registered) in receipt of UNRWA protection or assistance, is not entitled to Refugee Convention refugee status simply by leaving the UNRWA areas of operation and claiming asylum elsewhere.
- 1.2.5 Situations where UNRWA protection or assistance may cease beyond the person's control or independent of their volition may include the following circumstances:
- where there is a threat to life, physical integrity or security or freedom, or other serious protection related reasons
 - situations such as armed conflict or other situations of serious violence, unrest and insecurity, or events seriously disturbing public order
 - more individualised threats or protection risks such as sexual and/or gender-based violence, human trafficking and exploitation, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, severe discrimination
 - arbitrary arrest or detention
- 1.2.6 Additionally, practical legal and/or safety barriers to accessing UNRWA assistance may mean that UNRWA assistance is in practice no longer available and may include:
- being unable to access UNRWA assistance because of long-term border closures, road blocks or closed transport routes
 - absence of documentation to travel to, or transit, or to re-enter and reside, or where the authorities in the receiving country refuse their re-admission or the renewal of their travel documents
 - serious dangers such as minefields, factional fighting, shifting war fronts, banditry or a real risk of other forms of violence or exploitation
- 1.2.7 In the non-binding case of [SN and LN v Zamestnik-predsedatel na Darzhavna agentsia za bezhantsite \(Directive 2011/95/EU – Person registered with UNRWA\)](#), heard on 11 January 2024 and promulgated on 13 June 2024, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) considered whether, within the meaning of EU Directive 2011/95, UNRWA protection or assistance has ceased when UNRWA finds itself unable to ensure dignified living conditions for the person registered with, or eligible for assistance from, UNRWA, for whatever reason, including by reason of the general situation prevailing in an UNRWA area of operation.
- 1.2.8 The CJEU held in [SN and LN](#) that UNRWA assistance must be considered to have ceased in an UNRWA area of operation when:
- ‘... (i) that body [UNRWA] finds itself unable, for whatever reason, including by reason of the general situation in the sector of that body's area of operations, in which that stateless person had his or her habitual residence, to ensure to that stateless person, taking into account, where applicable, his or her state of vulnerability, dignified living conditions, consistent with its mission, without him or her being required to demonstrate that he or she is specifically targeted by that general situation by reason of elements specific

to his or her personal situation, and

‘(ii) that stateless person of Palestinian origin would find himself or herself, if he or she were to return to that sector, in a state of serious insecurity, taking into account, where applicable, his or her state of vulnerability, since the administrative and judicial authorities are required to carry out an individual assessment of each application for international protection based on that provision, within the framework of which the age of the person concerned may be relevant.’ (Closing paragraph 2)

1.2.9 In summary, the CJEU held in [SN and LN](#) that UNRWA's assistance or protection must be considered to have ceased to a person registered with UNRWA, or eligible for UNRWA assistance, when UNRWA is no longer able to provide, within its relevant area of operation:

- dignified living conditions, **and**
- minimum security conditions

1.2.10 The CJEU also held in [SN and LN](#) that the assessment of whether UNRWA's protection or assistance has ceased in the relevant UNRWA area of operation should take into consideration the period of time from which the person left the UNRWA area of operation until the time of the protection determination.

1.2.11 While the UK is not bound by the CJEU determination in [SN and LN](#), the judgement provides helpful guidance on factors to be taken into consideration within an assessment of whether UNRWA protection or assistance has ceased for any reason within the meaning of Article 1D of the Refugee Convention. As such, decision makers should take the CJEU judgement of [SN and LN](#) into account when making this assessment.

1.2.12 Palestinian ‘refugees’ resident in Gaza who were not receiving or eligible to receive protection or assistance from UNRWA **are not excluded** under Article 1D. These cases should be considered on their merits under the Refugee Convention, unless there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the other exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.

1.2.13 Further guidance on handling Palestinians assisted by UNRWA is set out in the [Asylum Instruction on Article 1D of the Refugee Convention: Palestinian refugees assisted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency \(UNRWA\)](#) (see also [Points to note](#)).

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b. Exclusion under Article 1F of the Refugee Convention

1.2.14 There are a number of armed groups operating in Gaza, including (but not limited to) the military wings of Palestinian groups such as Hamas (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya, “Islamic Resistance Movement”) and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). Some of these groups may be involved in terrorist activities (several are proscribed under the UK Terrorism Act 2000, see [Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations](#)) or are responsible for serious human rights abuses in Gaza as well as neighbouring countries such as Israel and other areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

- 1.2.15 If there are serious reasons for considering that the person has been involved with these groups, then decision makers must consider whether any of the exclusion clauses under Article 1F are applicable.
- 1.2.16 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention under Article 1F, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.17 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 A severe security situation does not in itself give rise to a well-founded fear of persecution for a Refugee Convention reason.
- 2.1.2 In the absence of a link to one of the 5 Refugee Convention grounds necessary to be recognised as a refugee, the question to address is whether the person will face a real risk of serious harm to qualify for Humanitarian Protection (HP).
- 2.1.3 However, before considering whether a person requires protection because of the general security situation, decision makers must consider if the person faces persecution for a Refugee Convention reason. Where the person qualifies for protection under the Refugee Convention, decision makers do not need to consider if there are substantial grounds for believing the person faces a real risk of serious harm meriting a grant of HP.
- 2.1.4 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#). For guidance on HP see the Asylum Instruction, [Humanitarian Protection](#).

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3. Risk

- 3.1.1 The security situation in Gaza is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict, as defined in

paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules.

- 3.1.2 Paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules **only** apply to civilians who must be non-combatants. This could include former combatants who have genuinely and permanently renounced armed activity.
- 3.1.3 An enclave of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and inhabited by Palestinian Arabs, the majority refugees, the Gaza Strip is a small strip of land around 25 miles long by 7 miles wide, that comprises 5 governorates and sits between the Mediterranean Sea, Israel, and Egypt. With a population of around 2.1 million, the Gaza Strip has a high population density that is comparable overall with Greater London. Gazans are a young population with a median age of 19.5 years. A proscribed terrorist armed group known as Hamas took over control of the Gaza Strip in 2007 (see [Geography and demography](#), [Exclusion under Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#), and [Actors: Hamas](#)).
- 3.1.4 On 7 October 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups launched attacks against Israel. This renewed conflict in the Gaza Strip, frequently referred to as the 'Israel-Hamas war', continues at the time of publication. A main actor in the conflict, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), has around 170,000 active-duty personnel and between 300,000 and 360,000 active reservists. Its main adversary, Hamas, a designated terrorist group that has held de facto control of the Gaza Strip since 2007 had between 15,000 and 40,000 fighters prior to the conflict in its armed wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. Aligned with Hamas, and also actively engaged in fighting the IDF, is Gaza's second largest armed group, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). The PIJ is also a designated terrorist group and it is estimated that between several hundred and 15,000 fighters were members of its armed wing, the Al-Quds Brigades, prior to the start of the conflict. Sources indicate that thousands more Palestinian fighters belonging to at least 7 other armed groups are also actively fighting the IDF (see [Actors](#)).
- 3.1.5 The conflict has been characterised by aerial bombardment, shelling from the sea, and intense fighting, including the use of explosive ordnance, on the ground. Air and artillery strikes, however, account for most of the casualties. During the first 2 months of the conflict, ground operations took place mainly in the northern governorates of North Gaza and Gaza City, causing displacement of almost half the population from the north into the central and southern governorates less than a week into the conflict. At the end of November 2023, a week-long pause was observed, but this was followed by intense hostilities. In December 2023, the IDF moved into central and southern areas of the Gaza Strip, causing further internal displacements including for already-displaced Gazans, with the vast majority of unable to leave. In early January 2024, the IDF announced it was withdrawing from northern Gaza, though this did not mark the end of ground incursions there. In May 2024, the IDF moved into Rafah, at the far south of the Gaza Strip, causing further displacement, and in June 2024, ground operations were expanded there. Internally displaced Gazans, fluctuating between around 70% and up to 90% of the population since two weeks into the conflict, face additional security risks. Men and boys who may be identified as "fighting age males" risk being killed or arrested during evacuations, women and girls

face an increased risk of domestic and gender-based violence in overcrowded shelters (see [General security in Gaza](#), [Key security events](#), [Displacement](#), [Freedom of movement](#) and [Population density and demography](#)).

- 3.1.6 There are reports of entire neighbourhoods being destroyed and of damage to hospitals and other civilian infrastructure across Gaza. As of the end of June 2024, ground operations and heavy fighting continue. In addition, almost 40 million tonnes of debris containing asbestos, contaminants and unexploded ordnance and a near-complete breakdown of civil order are compounding the risks to civilians. There are reports of shootings amidst looting of aid supplies and an absence of police and security forces (see [General security in Gaza](#), [Key security events](#) and [Law and order](#)).
- 3.1.7 By the end of June and start of July 2024, 37,000 conflict fatalities were reported by the Hamas-affiliated Gaza Ministry of Health (MoH), 37,953 by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and approximately 39,000 fatalities by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). This would represent around 1.75–1.85% of the CIA World Factbook's 2023 estimated population (see [Key statistics](#) and [Population density and demography](#)).
- 3.1.8 In late April 2024, OCHA estimated that 52% of identified fatalities were women and children, whereas the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated the figure to be 72%. Given the number of Gazans missing and inherent difficulties with recording fatalities, it is highly likely that the true number of deaths across the Gaza Strip is higher. The conflict in the Gaza Strip is continuing and it is not clear when the true numbers of civilian fatalities will be known. As the MoH does not distinguish between male civilian and combatant deaths, and as ACLED does not report specifically on civilians killed (except for events targeting civilians), the most cautious figure – 9.2 civilian deaths for every 1,000 of the population – is a conservative proxy for general levels of indiscriminate violence (see [Key statistics](#) and [Population density and demography](#)).
- 3.1.9 By 3 July 2024, according to the OCHA, there were also 87,266 conflict injuries and more than 10,000 missing. These reported injuries represent around 4.16% of the 2023 population, while its reported total number of fatalities, injuries, and those missing under the rubble, represents more than 6.44%. The United Nations Environment Programme reported more than 300 target hits or bombings per day during the first two months of the conflict, based on IDF claims. For the corresponding time-period, ACLED reported towards 300 security events per week (see paragraph 8.8.9 for how ACLED defines and categorises different types of security events). The Gaza City governorate is one of the worst affected areas; with the exception of January 2024, it has the highest or second highest recorded number of security events of all 5 governorates for every month of the conflict up to the end of June 2024, and the highest recorded fatalities up to the end of March 2024. There have continued to be regular security incidents and fatalities across all 5 governorates of the Gaza Strip (see [Key statistics](#), [General security in Gaza](#) and [Population density and demography](#)).
- 3.1.10 For guidance on considering serious harm where there is a situation of

indiscriminate violence in an armed conflict, including consideration of enhanced risk factors, see the Asylum Instruction, [Humanitarian Protection](#).

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4. Protection

4.1.1 Due to levels of indiscriminate violence across the Gaza Strip at the time of publication, protection from the state is unavailable.

4.1.2 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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5. Internal relocation

5.1.1 Due to the levels of indiscriminate violence across the Gaza Strip and the unpredictable and fast-moving nature of the conflict, internal relocation within Gaza is not considered reasonable at the time of publication.

5.1.2 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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6. Certification

6.1.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

6.1.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

About the country information

This section contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment.

The structure and content follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

The COI included was published or made publicly available on or before 3 July 2024. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

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7. Geography and demography

7.1 Geography & Maps

7.1.1 For information on the geography, and for maps, see the Country Policy and Information Note, [Occupied Palestinian Territories: Humanitarian situation in Gaza](#).

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7.2 Population density and demography

7.2.1 The CIA World Factbook estimated the Gaza Strip's population to be 2,098,389 people in 2023¹ and 2,141,643 in 2024². The 2023 estimate from this source was used by CPIT to calculate a pre-conflict population density of 5,828 people/km² (based on 360km² land area, see [Geography](#)).

7.2.2 The same source also stated that the population of the Gaza Strip is Palestinian Arab and (in a 2012 estimate which was not updated) comprised 98 to 99% Muslims, predominantly Sunnis. It further estimated 38.8% of Gazans to be aged 0 to 14 years, 58.3% aged 15 to 64 years, and 2.9% aged 65 years or over, with a median age of 19.5 years old. The population was also stated by the source to be mainly concentrated in the major cities, particularly Gaza City in the north³.

7.2.3 On a webpage entitled 'Where we work', which was last updated in August 2023, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) stated: 'The Gaza Strip has a population of approximately 2.1 million people, including some 1.7 million Palestine Refugees... Eight recognized Palestine Refugee camps span the Gaza Strip and have some of the highest population densities in the world.'⁴

¹ CIA World Factbook, ['2023 Archive: Field listing – Population'](#), undated

² CIA World Factbook, ['Gaza Strip'](#) (People and Society), last updated 30 July 2024

³ CIA World Factbook, ['Gaza Strip'](#) (People and Society), last updated 30 July 2024

⁴ UNRWA, ['Where we work'](#) (Gaza Strip), last updated August 2023

7.2.4 On 16 October 2023, the Financial Times published an article entitled ‘The Gaza Strip – in charts’ which stated:

‘... Gaza [has] a population density that is similar to London. But more granular data shows that many areas are up to six times as dense. This includes the parts of northern Gaza, including Gaza City...

‘... The Gaza Strip as a whole has a population density of 5,751 per square kilometre, which is very similar to 5,601 for Greater London [Central London has a population density of 11,144 people/km²].

‘... But in some areas of Gaza City in the north and Khan Younis, density tops 30,000 people per sq km.

‘... 1.6mn [million], [refugees] are in Gaza. The Gazans who are not officially defined as refugees... are [typically] descendants of locals...’⁶

7.2.5 On 10 October 2023, NBC News, a US-based news division⁷, published an article entitled ‘The Gaza Strip’s density, visualized’ which stated: ‘The Gaza Strip’s density is comparable to many major global cities, but whereas people in those areas have the option of leaving or expanding the suburbs, Gazans cannot.’⁸

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8. Security situation: October 2023 to June 2024

8.1 Main Actors

8.1.1 Encyclopaedia Britannica published an undated article, last updated on 10 April 2024, entitled ‘Israel-Hamas War’ which described the current conflict in Gaza as a: ‘... [W]ar between Israel and Palestinian militants, especially Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), that began on October 7, 2023...’⁹

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8.2 Hamas (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya, “Islamic Resistance Movement”)

8.2.1 On 30 November 2023, the US State Department (USSD) published ‘Country Report on Terrorism 2022’, covering 2022, which stated, of Hamas:

‘Aka [also known as] the Islamic Resistance Movement; Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya; Izz al-Din al Qassam Battalions; Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades; Izz al-Din al-Qassam Forces; Students of Ayyash; Student of the Engineer; Yahya Ayyash Units.

‘... Hamas was designated as an FTO [foreign terrorist organisation] on October 8, 1997. Established in 1987 at the onset of the first Palestinian uprising, or First Intifada, Hamas is an outgrowth of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Its armed element, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, has conducted anti-Israeli attacks, including suicide bombings against civilian targets inside Israel. Hamas also manages a broad, mostly

⁵ Trust for London, ‘[London’s geography and population](#)’, undated

⁶ Financial Times, ‘[The Gaza Strip – in charts](#)’, 16 October 2023

⁷ NBC News, ‘[About NBC News Digital](#)’, 26 June 2020

⁸ NBC News, ‘[The Gaza Strip’s density, visualized](#)’, 10 October 2023

⁹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘[Israel-Hamas War](#)’, undated, last updated 6 August 2024

Gaza-based, network of Dawa or ministry activities that include charities, schools, clinics, youth camps, fundraising, and political activities. After winning Palestinian Legislative Council elections in 2006, Hamas gained control of significant Palestinian Authority (PA) ministries in Gaza, including the Ministry of Interior. In 2007, Hamas expelled the PA and Fatah from Gaza in a violent takeover. In 2017, Ismail Haniyeh was selected as Hamas's new leader. Hamas remained in de facto control in Gaza in 2022.

'... Hamas comprises several thousand Gaza-based operatives.

'Location/Area of Operation: Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon.'¹⁰

- 8.2.2 On 4 February 2024, ABC [Australian Broadcasting Corporation] News, 'a multi-platform media operation and a public broadcaster'¹¹, published an article entitled 'Who are the key players in the Israel-Gaza war and how are they stoking the conflict?' which stated: 'Hamas is the political party that governs the Palestinian territory of Gaza and its main objective is to create a Palestinian Islamic state. The group also has an armed militant wing called Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, which is funded mostly by Iran.'¹²
- 8.2.3 On 29 February 2024, Freedom House published its 'Freedom in the World 2024 – Gaza Strip' report, covering events of 2023, which stated:
- 'Because repeated attempts to form new PA [Palestinian Authority] unity governments have failed, Hamas continued to exercise de facto executive authority in the Gaza Strip. The leader of Hamas in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, was confirmed for a second term as de facto head of government in a closed election by Hamas officials in 2021; he had first been chosen in 2017. Haniyeh [Ismail Haniyeh], who has been living abroad in recent years, was similarly confirmed as the overall leader of Hamas for a second four-year term in 2021. Both men remained in their posts as of 2023.
- '... No open elections for any office have been held in Gaza since 2006.'¹³
- 8.2.4 Hamas is a proscribed terrorist organisation in the UK under the UK Terrorism Act 2000 (see [Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations](#))¹⁴.
- 8.2.5 On 7 November 2023, Newsweek, a US-based global media organisation¹⁵, published an article entitled 'Not Only Hamas: Eight Factions at War With Israel in Gaza' which stated: 'As with many Palestinian factions, it [Hamas] views itself as a national liberation movement, while Israel, the U.S. and number of European countries see it as a terrorist organization.'¹⁶
- 8.2.6 On 12 October 2023, The Associated Press (AP) News, an independent US-based global media outlet¹⁷, published an article which stated: 'Hamas has 15,000 to 20,000 fighters, the International Institute for Strategic Studies estimates. Israel puts the number higher, at up to 30,000 fighters.'¹⁸ CPIT

¹⁰ USSD, '[Country Report on Terrorism 2022](#)' (p273-274), 30 November 2023

¹¹ ABC News, '[ABC History](#)', undated

¹² ABC News, '[Who are the key players in the Israel-Gaza war... ?](#)', 4 February 2024

¹³ Freedom House, '[Freedom in the World 2024 – Gaza Strip](#)' (Section A), 29 February 2024

¹⁴ Gov.uk, '[Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations](#)', undated, updated 26 April 2024

¹⁵ Newsweek, '[About Us](#)', undated

¹⁶ Newsweek, '[Not Only Hamas: Eight Factions at War With Israel in Gaza](#)', 7 November 2023

¹⁷ AP News, '[About Us](#)', undated

¹⁸ AP News, '[A possible Israeli ground war looms in Gaza...](#)', 12 October 2023

was unable to find the report published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies that this article refers to in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

- 8.2.7 On 3 November 2023, the Wilson Center, a Washington DC-based regional studies think tank which helps to inform the US government and international policy community¹⁹, published an article entitled 'Palestinian Factions: Hamas and PIJ' which stated, of Hamas' military wing: 'By 2023, the Hamas militia had built a diverse inventory of weapons, including rockets, drones, mortars, incendiary balloons, and even torpedoes... Israel and Western media reported up to 40,000 fighters.'²⁰
- 8.2.8 The Institute for the Study of War (ISW), a US-based non-partisan, non-profit, public policy research organisation²¹, and the Critical Threats Project (CTP), created by the American Enterprise Institute to provide intelligence analysis on unclassified information of threats to the United States and its allies²², published a daily 'Iran Update' which, citing various sources, covered the conflict in Gaza beginning on 7 October 2023. The 18 June 2024 Update stated: 'An Israeli Army Radio correspondent reported on June 18 [2024] details from an IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] Southern Command discussion on Hamas' military capabilities in the Gaza Strip. The correspondent reported that the IDF believes Hamas has turned into a "guerilla army" that lacks organized and uniform command and control in the strip.'²³
- 8.2.9 The CIA World Factbook stated:
- 'HAMAS maintains security forces inside Gaza in addition to its military wing, the 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades; the military wing ostensibly reports to the HAMAS Political Bureau but operates with considerable autonomy... (2024)
- '... the military wing of HAMAS has an estimated 20-25,000 fighters (2023)
- '... the military wing is armed with light weapons, including an inventory of rocket, anti-tank, anti-aircraft, indirect fire (typically mortars), and armed UAV capabilities; HAMAS acquires its weapons through smuggling or local construction and receives significant military support from Iran (2024)'²⁴

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8.3 Palestinian Islamic Jihad (Ḥarakat al-Jihād al-Islāmī fī Filasṭīn, PIJ)

- 8.3.1 The CIA World Factbook also stated: '... [As well as Hamas,] there are several other militant groups operating in the Gaza Strip, most notably the Al-Quds Brigades of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which are usually but not always beholden to HAMAS's authority (2024)'²⁵
- 8.3.2 The USSD 'Country Report on Terrorism 2022', published on 30 November 2023, stated, of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad:

¹⁹ Wilson Center, '[About the Wilson Center](#)', undated

²⁰ Wilson Center, '[Palestinian Factions: Hamas and PIJ](#)', 3 November 2023

²¹ ISW, '[Who We Are](#)', undated

²² CTP, '[The Project](#)', undated

²³ ISW & CTP, '[Iran Update, June 18, 2024](#)' (p7), 18 June 2024

²⁴ CIA World Factbook, '[Gaza Strip](#)' (Military and Security), last updated 30 July 2024

²⁵ CIA World Factbook, '[Gaza Strip](#)' (Military and Security), last updated 30 July 2024

'Aka PIJ; PIJ-Shaqaqi Faction; PIJ-Shallah Faction; Islamic Jihad of Palestine; Islamic Jihad in Palestine; Abu Ghunaym Squad of the Hizballah Bayt al-Maqdis; al-Quds Squads; al-Quds Brigades; Saraya al-Quds; al-Awdah Brigades.

'... Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) was designated as an FTO on October 8, 1997. Formed by militant Palestinians in Gaza during the 1970s, PIJ is committed to the destruction of Israel and to the creation of an Islamic state in historic Palestine, including present-day Israel.

'PIJ is estimated to have a thousand to several thousand members.

'Location/Area of Operation: Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank'²⁶

8.3.3 The Wilson Center 3 November 2023 article stated:

'PIJ, which was created as a small group of underground cells, has long been more extremist in ideology and tactics [than Hamas].

'... [U]nlike Hamas, it has not provided social services, schools or health services so has not built wider public support. It also rejects political engagement, so has built no formal constituency. The difference between the two movements [Hamas and the PIJ] is that Hamas, which governs Gaza, has had to consider the costs - and potential backlash - of any operation against Israel. PIJ does not.

'... PIJ could have up 15,000 fighters, according to Western media...'²⁷

8.3.4 On 18 October 2023, The Guardian published an article entitled 'What is Palestinian Islamic Jihad and what is its relationship with Hamas?'. It stated:

'The Islamic Jihad movement in Palestine (Ḥarakat al-Jihād al-Islāmī fī Filasṭīn), or Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) as it is more often known, is the second largest armed group in Gaza. It is considered one of the most extreme and uncompromising Palestinian armed factions and operates on the West Bank too. Last week [i.e. early-mid October 2023], PIJ were also reported to have attacked Israel from Lebanon. It rejects any political peace process and sees a military victory over Israel as the sole means of attaining its objective of establishing an Islamic state across Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

'PIJ has its own stock of rockets and mortars, and a month ago its military wing, the al-Quds Brigades, could probably have fielded several hundred fighters, analysts believe. It is unclear how many remain alive...

'... Though it has frequently collaborated closely with Hamas, PIJ remains a rival. Strategic, ideological and interpersonal differences have long prevented any real rapprochement between the two. PIJ has always remained clandestine, with a compartmentalised cell structure, in contrast to the mass mobilisation favoured by Hamas. Nor does it have the extensive welfare network or involvement in administration and government of the bigger group. PIJ and Hamas have frequently clashed on tactics, negotiations and a range of other issues, even if many of their ultimate

²⁶ USSD, '[Country Report on Terrorism 2022](#)' (p284-285), 30 November 2023

²⁷ Wilson Center, '[Palestinian Factions: Hamas and PIJ](#)', 3 November 2023

objectives and core Islamist beliefs remain identical.’²⁸

8.3.5 The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and Critical Threats Project (CTP) 5 April 2024 Update stated: ‘PIJ has been aligned with Hamas throughout the war.’²⁹

8.3.6 The PIJ is a proscribed terrorist organisation in the UK under the UK Terrorism Act 2000 (see [Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations](#))³⁰.

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8.4 Other Palestinian militants

8.4.1 The 7 November 2023 Newsweek ‘Not Only Hamas: Eight Factions at War With Israel in Gaza’ article stated:

‘As the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) fight their way deeper into the hostile Gaza Strip, they face not only the Hamas movement but an array of other Palestinian factions that have taken up arms.

‘While these groups vary significantly in terms of ideology, influence and power, they are united in their dedication to establishing a Palestinian state through armed resistance against Israel. They have also openly demonstrated their willingness to coordinate during the ongoing conflict that erupted exactly one month ago, sharing footage of their operatives working side-by-side and issuing joint statements.

‘... [T]he Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades has... worked closely alongside Hamas and Islamic Jihad both in past operations and the ongoing war.’³¹

8.4.2 On 22 May 2024, The New Arab, a London-based English-language news and current affairs website with a large network of reporters in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region³², published an article which stated:

‘To support Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and despite any ideological or political differences, thousands of fighters from four other Palestinian factions have been fighting against the Israeli occupation forces in Gaza since last October [2023].

‘... [T]hese other armed factions fighters are actively participating... according to a senior Palestinian official, who preferred to remain anonymous.

‘The following will outline the most important armed factions involved. These factions are smaller in number of fighters and possess fewer capabilities than Hamas’ Al-Qassam Brigades and PIJ’s Al-Quds Brigades:

‘Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades

‘Despite being the main political rival to Hamas, fighters in Fatah’s al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in Gaza have joined “... qualitative military operations in support of both Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters”, noted senior Palestinian officials.

²⁸ The Guardian, [‘What is Palestinian Islamic Jihad and... relationship with Hamas?’](#), 18 October 2023

²⁹ ISW & CTP, [‘Iran Update, April 5, 2024’](#) (p5), 5 April 2024

³⁰ Gov.uk, [‘Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations’](#), undated, updated 26 April 2024

³¹ Newsweek, [‘Not Only Hamas: Eight Factions at War With Israel in Gaza’](#), 7 November 2023

³² The New Arab, [‘About Us’](#), undated

'... Three battalions within the Fatah movement are actively in combat with the Israeli army, led by the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the official military wing of Fatah: the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the Nidal Al-Amoudi Brigade, and the Mahmoud Masoud Brigade, in addition to the Al-Ahrar Movement, headed by Khaled Abu Hilal, a former Fatah leader killed during an Israeli raid on his home last November [2023].

'According to officials in the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the number of fighters operating under its banner is a few thousand.

'... Al-Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades

'Al-Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades is the armed wing of the Popular Resistance Committees.

'... Thousands of Palestinian fighters belong to the Popular Resistance Committees. According to Palestinian officials, Al-Nasser Brigades fighters played an important role in attacking Israeli army concentrations in Gaza by targeting them in joint operations with Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades with several homemade rockets and close-range shells.

'Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades

'Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the military wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), was formed as part of the Popular Resistance Forces in 2000.

'It is currently considered the fifth-strongest force and includes hundreds of fighters in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

'The Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and the Jerusalem Brigades participated in joint operations to defend against invading Israeli forces.

'The Palestinian National Resistance Brigades

'The Palestinian National Resistance Brigades is the military wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). Like others, it was formed during the Second Intifada in 2000 and has an armed presence in Gaza...

'According to statements by its officials, a number of its fighters... are supporting in guarding the Israeli captives in the Gaza Strip.

'Additionally, its fighters are regularly in active combat against Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip.'³³

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8.5 Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)

8.5.1 The October 2023 AP News article stated: 'Israel is one of the best-armed nations in the wider Middle East... Israel has some 170,000 troops typically on active duty and has called up some 360,000 reservists for the war - three-fourths of its estimated capacity, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies.'³⁴

³³ The New Arab, '[... \[F\]our other armed Palestinian factions are fighting Israel in Gaza](#)', 22 May 2024

³⁴ AP News, '[A possible Israeli ground war looms in Gaza...](#)', 12 October 2023

- 8.5.2 On 24 February 2024, Axios, a US-based news and information company³⁵, published an article which stated:
- ‘The Israel Defense Forces [IDF], founded two weeks after the state of Israel was established in 1948, relies on a tradition of compulsory military service beginning at age 18.
- ‘There are approximately 169,500 active-duty personnel and roughly 465,000 Israelis in reserve units.
 - ‘In the days since the Oct. 7 [2023] Hamas attack, more than 300,000 reservists have been called up.
 - ‘The IDF’s annual budget of around \$23.6 billion, as of 2023, surpasses the total military spending of Egypt, Iran, Lebanon and Jordan combined.’³⁶
- 8.5.3 The CIA World Factbook stated on its undated ‘Israel’ webpage, which was last updated on 30 July 2024: ‘Israel Defense Forces (IDF): Ground Forces, Israel Naval Force (IN, includes commandos), Israel Air Force (IAF, includes air defense) (2023)... approximately 170,000 active-duty personnel (130,000 Ground Forces; 10,000 Naval; 30,000 Air Force) (2023).’³⁷
- 8.5.4 The IDF, on its undated ‘Our Mission’ webpage, stated its purpose is to: ‘... protect Israel and its independence and ensure the security of its residents.’³⁸
- 8.5.5 The 7 November 2023 Newsweek article stated: ‘The main goal of the current IDF operation, called “Swords of Iron,” is to eliminate Hamas once and for all... But he [IDF Colonel Moshe Tetro] warned that any group or individual that took up arms against Israel would be targeted.’³⁹
- 8.5.6 The ISW 5 June 2024 Update stated: ‘The IDF announced on June 5 [2024] that it will increase the maximum active reservists by 50,000 soldiers. The previous quota restricted active reservists to 300,000. The IDF said that the increase in manpower is related to the ongoing operation in Rafah...’⁴⁰

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8.6 General security in Gaza

- 8.6.1 On 18 June 2024, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) published a report, citing various sources, which stated:

‘At the time of writing [June 2024], intensive conflict had been under way in Gaza for eight months. The conflict was characterised by aerial bombardment of buildings, accompanied by bombardment from the sea and land. Heavily impacted locations of shelling from the sea include Gaza City, Rafah City, Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahiya, Khan Younis and the Gaza Strip’s northern regions.

³⁵ Media Bias Fact Check, ‘[Axios - Bias and Credibility](#)’, last updated 12 May 2023

³⁶ Axios, ‘[U.S. officials warn: Gaza “is turning into Mogadishu”](#)’, 24 February 2024

³⁷ CIA World Factbook, ‘[Israel](#)’ (Military and Security), last updated 30 July 2024

³⁸ IDF, ‘[Our Mission](#)’, undated

³⁹ Newsweek, ‘[Not Only Hamas: Eight Factions at War With Israel in Gaza](#)’, 7 November 2023

⁴⁰ ISW & CTP, ‘[Iran Update, June 5, 2024](#)’ (p9), 5 June 2024

'The specific quantities and types of weapons used in Gaza are not known to UNEP. However, it is clear from statements by Israel (and from evidence of damage, including unprecedented quantities of debris) that an exceptionally large quantity of munitions has been deployed in a densely populated area. In a press statement issued on 10 December 2023, the Israel Defense Forces confirmed to have hit 22,000 targets in Gaza, more than 300 hits or bombings per day. The Mines Advisory Group (MAG), a partner of the UN Mine Action Service [UNMAS], estimated in February 2024 that more than 25,000 tons of explosives have been used on the Gaza Strip since 7 October 2023, "equivalent to two nuclear bombs". There have been reports of the use of specific types of weapons in Gaza, including white phosphorus. UNEP has noted in previous reports that it is difficult to identify or distinguish between white phosphorus and the legal thermite-based ammunition using only photo/video material.'⁴¹

- 8.6.2 On 10 November 2023, UN News published details of the UN Security Council's meeting of the same date which stated: 'The UN Security Council met again on Friday [10 November 2023] to discuss the ongoing Israel-Palestine crisis... "In Gaza, nowhere and no one is safe," said WHO [World Health Organization] Director-General Tedros [Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus]...'⁴²
- 8.6.3 On 19 December 2023, UNICEF published an article quoting its spokesperson, James Elder, who had spoken at a press briefing on the same date at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, which stated: "'The Gaza Strip is the most dangerous place in the world to be a child...'"⁴³
- 8.6.4 On 8 February 2024, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) published a report entitled 'War on Gaza: twenty-first century's deadliest 100 days?' which stated: 'No other armed conflict in the twenty-first century has experienced such a devastating impact on a population in such a short timeframe.'⁴⁴
- 8.6.5 On 23 March 2024, the United Nations (UN) published an unofficial transcript of the 'Secretary-General's press encounter in Al Arish, Egypt' in which the Secretary-General is reported to have stated: '... [T]here is no safe place in Gaza today.'⁴⁵
- 8.6.6 On 24 May 2024, the Protection Cluster, a group of multiple UN agencies set up to ensure well-coordinated and effective humanitarian responses⁴⁶, published a report entitled 'Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt): Gaza - Protection Analysis Update May 2024', which stated:
- 'At the time of this report... fighting has intensified. So too have the protection risks facing Gazans. Civilians have borne the brunt of these hostilities.

⁴¹ UNEP, '[Environmental Impact of the Conflict in Gaza...](#)' (p38), 18 June 2024

⁴² UN News, '["Nowhere and no one is safe" in Gaza...](#)', 10 November 2023

⁴³ UNICEF, '[Gaza: the world's most dangerous place to be a child](#)', 19 December 2023

⁴⁴ ESCWA, '[War on Gaza: twenty-first century's deadliest 100 days?](#)' (p2), 8 February 2024

⁴⁵ UN, '[Secretary-General's press encounter in Al Arish, Egypt](#)', 23 March 2024

⁴⁶ UNHCR, '[Protection Cluster](#)', last updated 31 January 2024

‘... Men and adolescent boys are at high risk of being identified as a “fighting age male” and therefore at risk of being unlawfully killed or arrested during evacuations.

‘... The current situation of Gaza is unprecedented in scale and scope of stressors which exist simultaneously and continuously. These have affected the population for 8 months with no redress, and include the volume of civilian casualties, the attacks on civilian objects,... forced displacement and consequent concentration of IDPs [internally displaced persons] in what was already the most densely populated territory in the world.

‘... There are [also] concerns about domestic and gender-based violence given the extreme overcrowding.’⁴⁷

8.6.7 The same source also stated:

‘The nature of hostilities mean that the lives of Palestinians in Gaza remain at imminent risk across all of Gaza as long as fighting continues. People are at risk from direct hostilities such as air strikes, active combat on the ground, and exposure to explosive ordnance... There has been only one significant pause in the conflict, between 24 November – 1 December [2023]. This was followed by intense attacks and displacement across Gaza, including North Gaza, Gaza City and Khan Younis. While IDF reportedly reduced forces and the intensity of operations in northern Gaza in early January 2024, these areas remain subject to incursions and people attempting to flee from northern Gaza to southern Gaza are at acute risk of being killed, injured, or arrested.’⁴⁸

8.6.8 On 27 May 2024, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) published an advance, unedited, version of a ‘Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel’, citing various sources, which stated: ‘Air and artillery strikes account for the majority of casualties since 7 October [2023].’⁴⁹

8.6.9 On 25 June 2024, UN News published an article entitled ‘Security Council: Regional crisis deepens as Gaza war grinds on’ which stated:

‘Tor Wennesland, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, was briefing ambassadors during one of his regular briefings in the Security Council.

‘... Mr. Wennesland told ambassadors he’d witnessed the deteriorating security situation on each of his visits and characterized the scope of death and destruction as “catastrophic and horrifying”.

‘The use of explosive weapons by Israel in densely populated areas has destroyed entire neighborhoods and damaged hospitals and other civilian infrastructure, as well as UN premises, he said...

‘... Ongoing military operations and a “near total breakdown” of civil order have resulted in multiple reported incidents of theft of relief supplies and shootings that posed significant risks to the population and humanitarian

⁴⁷ Protection Cluster, [‘... Gaza - Protection Analysis Update May 2024’](#) (p2,3,4,5), 24 May 2024

⁴⁸ Protection Cluster, [‘... Gaza - Protection Analysis Update May 2024’](#) (p8), 24 May 2024

⁴⁹ HRC, [‘Report of the... Commission of Inquiry...’](#) (para 39), 27 May 2024

workers.⁵⁰

8.6.10 On 27 June 2024, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) published ‘On-the-record update #4 on situation in Gaza, Palestine’ which, based on updates from its teams in Gaza, stated: ‘Ground incursions and heavy fighting continue to be reported across the Gaza Strip.’⁵¹

8.6.11 On 1 July 2024, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) published ‘Humanitarian Situation Update #185’ (formerly the ‘Flash Update’, rebranded as the ‘Humanitarian Situation Update’ from 31 May 2024⁵²) which stated:

‘Explosive remnants of war and unexploded ordnance (UXO) continue to pose significant risks of injury or death to people across the Gaza Strip, with IDPs, people returning to areas that have been bombarded or seen heavy fighting, and children being particularly affected... UNMAS estimates that over 37 million tons of debris in the Gaza Strip contain about 800,000 tons of asbestos, other contaminants, and UXO, noting that at least 10 per cent of fired ammunition potentially fails to function. According to the Protection Cluster, there are ongoing efforts to conduct explosive hazard assessments, deploy additional Explosive Ordnance Disposal officers, and raise public awareness about the risks of explosive ordnance, despite a range of challenges that prevent the scaling up of mine action work, including lack of funding, administrative hurdles (e.g. delayed visas), insecurity, and the denial of entry of critical mine action supplies.’⁵³

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8.7 Key security events

8.7.1 On 7 April 2024, The Washington Post published an article entitled ‘Six months of the Israel-Gaza war: A timeline of key moments’ which stated:

‘Oct. 7 [2023]: Hamas launches deadly attack on Israel

‘Oct. 9 [2023]: Israel orders “complete siege” of Gaza

‘... Oct. 12 [2023]: Israel warns people to evacuate northern Gaza

‘... Oct. 21 [2023]: Rafah crossing reopens

‘Oct. 27 [2023]: Israel launches ground invasion

‘Oct. 31 [2023]: Israeli strikes on Jabalya [in North Gaza governorate] kill more than 100 people

‘Nov. 6 [2023]: Death toll tops 10,000

‘Nov. 15 [2023]: Israeli forces raid al-Shifa Hospital [in Gaza City governorate]

‘... Nov. 24 [2023]: Israel, Hamas pause fighting in hostages-for-prisoners deal [the pause lasted 7 days, with fighting having resumed on 1 December

⁵⁰ UN News, ‘[Security Council: Regional crisis deepens as Gaza war grinds on](#)’, 25 June 2024

⁵¹ NRC, ‘[On-the-record update #4 on situation in Gaza, Palestine](#)’, 27 June 2024

⁵² OCHA, ‘[Humanitarian Situation Update #173 | Gaza Strip](#)’, 31 May 2024

⁵³ OCHA, ‘[Humanitarian Situation Update #185 | Gaza Strip](#)’ (p2), 1 July 2024

2023^{54]}

'Dec. 4 [2023]: Israeli forces push into southern Gaza [this event was reported by some other media outlets, including BBC News, on 3 December 2023^{55]}

'... Dec. 22 [2023]: Gaza death toll passes 20,000 [this figure was reported by BBC News on 20 December 2023^{56]}

'... Feb. 29 [2024]: Death toll passes 30,000'⁵⁷

8.7.2 On 1 May 2024, Reuters published an article entitled 'Chronology of Israel's war in Gaza' which stated:

'... Around Dec. 26 [2023]: Israeli forces launch a ground assault on areas in the central Gaza Strip, again putting hundreds of thousands to flight, most of them already displaced.

'From Jan. 1, 2024: Israel signals it will start withdrawing from northern parts of Gaza, while intense fighting continues in the south.

'... Late January [2024]: Israeli forces intensify their effort to encircle Khan Younis. Following this campaign, more than half Gaza's population will end up sheltering in Rafah.

'... Feb 29 [2024]: More than 100 Gazans are killed queuing for aid in the presence of Israeli troops who opened fire, in one of the deadliest incidents of the war. Palestinian authorities say most were killed with heavy machine guns in a "massacre". Israel says most died in a stampede, and its troops fired only at "looters".

'... March 18 [2024]: Israel launches a new assault on Al Shifa Hospital. Over the next two weeks, Israel will claim to have killed hundreds of fighters in combat there and arrested hundreds of others. Medical staff and Hamas deny fighters are present and say many civilians were killed.

'... April 1 [2024]: Israeli air strikes on a convoy kill seven aid workers for the World Central Kitchen charity, drawing a global outcry and increasing pressure to allow in more aid. Israel apologises and later punishes some military commanders.'⁵⁸

8.7.3 The ISW and CTP 7 April 2024 Update stated: 'Israel withdrew most of its forces from the Gaza Strip on April 7 [2024]. Israeli officials and media sources have framed the withdrawals as part of their preparations for conducting a clearing operation into Rafah.'⁵⁹

8.7.4 The ISW and CTP 8 April 2024 Update stated: '... [T]he IDF... remains at the seam of the northern and central Gaza Strip to secure Israeli-built highway Route 749 and other Israeli military sites in the area...'⁶⁰

⁵⁴ BBC News, ['Why has the Gaza ceasefire come to an end?'](#), 1 December 2023

⁵⁵ BBC News, ['Israeli forces pushing into south Gaza'](#), 3 December 2023

⁵⁶ BBC News, ['Israel Gaza: What Gaza's death toll says about the war'](#), 20 December 2023

⁵⁷ The Washington Post, ['... A timeline of key moments'](#) (accessed via free subscription), 7 April 2023

⁵⁸ Reuters, ['Chronology of Israel's war in Gaza'](#), 1 May 2024

⁵⁹ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, April 7, 2024'](#) (p1), 7 April 2024

⁶⁰ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, April 8, 2024'](#) (p5), 8 April 2024

- 8.7.5 The ISW and CTP 6 May 2024 Update stated: 'Israeli forces began conducting targeted airstrikes against Hamas in eastern Rafah. Israeli officials have suggested that a clearing operation into the area is imminent.'⁶¹
- 8.7.6 The ISW and CTP 7 May 2024 Update stated: 'Israeli forces launched a limited ground operation to control the Palestinian side of the Rafah crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip.'⁶²
- 8.7.7 The ISW and CTP 8 May 2024 Update stated: 'Israeli forces advanced into eastern Rafah overnight on May 7 [2024] and seized control of the Rafah crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt.'⁶³
- 8.7.8 The ISW and CTP 12 May 2024 Update stated: 'The... IDF... launched a re-clearing operation in Jabalia after Israeli intelligence assessed that Hamas and Palestinian militias were attempting to rebuild infrastructure in the area.'⁶⁴
- 8.7.9 The ISW and CTP 17 May 2024 Update stated:
 'Israeli forces described the fighting in Jabalia as some of the most intense of the war.
 '... The IDF published a summary of its activity in Zaytoun neighborhood, southern Gaza City, after completing a re-clearing operation there on May 16 [2024]. Israeli forces initially launched the operation in Zaytoun on May 8 [2024], marking the third time that the IDF has conducted a clearing operation there.'⁶⁵
- 8.7.10 The ISW and CTP 18 May 2024 Update stated: 'Israeli forces expanded clearing operations in eastern Rafah.'⁶⁶
- 8.7.11 The ISW and CTP 22 May 2024 Update stated: 'Israeli forces are advancing along the Philadelphi Corridor in Rafah. The Philadelphi Corridor is a 14-kilometer-long strip of land between Egypt and the Gaza Strip.'⁶⁷
- 8.7.12 The ISW and CTP 23 May 2024 Update stated: 'The IDF announced on May 23 [2024] that it... conducted a raid into Beit Hanoun [in North Gaza governorate] in recent days. Israeli forces have conducted several operations into Beit Hanoun since beginning ground operations in the Gaza Strip in late October 2023.'⁶⁸
- 8.7.13 The ISW and CTP 27 May 2024 Update stated: 'An IDF airstrike killed two Hamas officials in Rafah on May 26 [2024], but the strike also caused a fire that killed 35 Palestinian civilians.'⁶⁹
- 8.7.14 The ISW and CTP 28 May 2024 Update stated: 'The IDF expanded operations into Western Rafah. IDF units moved deeper into Rafah along the

⁶¹ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, May 6, 2024'](#) (p3), 6 May 2024

⁶² ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, May 7, 2024'](#) (p4), 7 May 2024

⁶³ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, May 8, 2024'](#) (p6), 8 May 2024

⁶⁴ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, May 12, 2024'](#) (p2), 12 May 2024

⁶⁵ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, May 17, 2024'](#) (p2), 17 May 2024

⁶⁶ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, May 18, 2024'](#) (p1), 18 May 2024

⁶⁷ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, May 22, 2024'](#) (p4), 22 May 2024

⁶⁸ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, May 23, 2024'](#) (p4), 23 May 2024

⁶⁹ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, May 27, 2024'](#) (p4), 27 May 2024

Egypt-Gaza Strip border overnight on May 27 and 28 [2024]... The IDF... is [also] “expanding” operations in the central Gaza Strip.’⁷⁰

8.7.15 The ISW and CTP 29 May 2024 Update stated:

‘Israeli forces have expanded their clearing operations in Jabalia in recent days.

‘... The New York Times reported on May 29 [2024] that the IDF used GBU-39 bombs [‘The GBU-39B Small Diameter Bomb, or SDB, is an extended range all-weather, day or night 250-pound class, guided munition. The SDB relies on the Global Positioning System to provide navigation to the target’⁷¹] in an airstrike to kill Hamas senior officials in Tel al Sultan, Rafah, on May 26 [2024]. The Tel al Sultan strike caused a fire that killed 45 Palestinian civilians, according to local officials.’⁷²

8.7.16 The ISW and CTP 31 May 2024 Update stated: ‘The IDF withdrew completely from Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip after weeks of intense fighting there.’⁷³

8.7.17 The ISW and CTP 2 June 2024 Update stated: ‘The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) announced on June 1 that it launched a raid into the Sabra and Zaytoun neighborhoods of Gaza City. Israeli forces have conducted multiple operations in this area of Gaza City throughout the war.’⁷⁴

8.7.18 The ISW and CTP 4 June 2024 Update stated:

‘An Israeli military correspondent reported on June 4 [2024] that Israeli forces have withdrawn from Sabra back to the Netzarim Corridor... which the IDF uses to facilitate raids targeting Hamas fighters and militia infrastructure in the northern and central Gaza Strip.

‘... The IDF said on June 4 [2024] that it launched a re-clearing operation targeting Hamas in Bureij in the central Gaza Strip... Locals in Bureij have reported several airstrikes in Bureij and nearby Maghazi refugee camp in recent days.’⁷⁵

8.7.19 The ISW and CTP 6 June 2024 Update stated:

‘The IDF Air Force struck a Hamas compound within a UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) school in Nuseirat, central Gaza Strip, on June 6 [2024]. The IDF said that it identified 20 to 30 Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad fighters in the compound... The compound also served as a civilian shelter for approximately 6,000 people. The IDF said it took precautions to reduce the chance of harming uninvolved civilians. The IDF targeted the classrooms that the fighters were in which was separate from where civilians were sheltering. Local sources reported up to 33 people died in the strike, including women and children. An IDF spokesperson said he is not aware of any civilian casualties following the strike... Hamas continues to use civilians as human shields to protect Hamas’ military

⁷⁰ ISW & CTP, [‘Iran Update, May 28, 2024’](#) (p5,7), 28 May 2024

⁷¹ US Air Force, [‘GBU-39B Small Diameter Bomb Weapon System’](#), undated

⁷² ISW & CTP, [‘Iran Update, May 29, 2024’](#) (p4,7), 29 May 2024

⁷³ ISW & CTP, [‘Iran Update, May 31, 2024’](#) (p4), 31 May 2024

⁷⁴ ISW & CTP, [‘Iran Update, June 2, 2024’](#) (p1), 2 June 2024

⁷⁵ ISW & CTP, [‘Iran Update, June 4, 2024’](#) (p5-6), 4 June 2024

infrastructure, weapons, and personnel. These tactics intentionally put civilians in harm's way.⁷⁶

8.7.20 The ISW and CTP 7 June 2024 Update stated:

'The IDF Air Force struck a container in a... UNRWA... school in al Shati refugee camp [in the northern Gaza Strip]. Hamas used the UNRWA school to direct militia activity. The IDF said that the container served as a "concentration point" for Hamas' internal security forces. Hamas said that the school was designated for sheltering displaced civilians and that the Israeli strike killed three and injured 15 others. The IDF stated that it used precise munitions for the attack and took steps to reduce civilian casualties.'⁷⁷

8.7.21 The ISW and CTP 9 June 2024 Update stated: 'Israeli forces expanded clearing operations into northeast Rafah on June 9 [2024]. Local reports indicated that Israeli armor advanced into Khirbet al Adas and Musabeh, northeast of Rafah.'⁷⁸

8.7.22 The ISW and CTP 16 June 2024 Update stated:

'The IDF stated that it decided to suspend military activities daily between 0800 and 1900 local time along an approximately 10.5 kilometer route that leads from the Kerem Shalom crossing along Salah ad Din Road to al Fukkhari, south of Khan Younis [to increase humanitarian aid delivery into the southern Gaza Strip]... The new 11-hour daily tactical pauses are longer and cover a larger area than the IDF's previous pauses.

'... The IDF clarified that the fighting in Rafah will continue despite the tactical pauses east of the city.'⁷⁹

8.7.23 The ISW and CTP 25 June 2024 Update stated: 'Israel assesses that it will complete the intense phase of ground operation in the Gaza Strip within a few days.'⁸⁰

8.7.24 The ISW and CTP 26 June 2024 Update stated: 'Israeli forces advanced to positions northwest of Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip... The IDF reportedly advanced into new areas in Rafah.'⁸¹

8.7.25 The ISW and CTP 27 June 2024 Update stated: 'Israeli forces launched a raid into Shujaiya in Gaza City, according to local sources.'⁸²

8.7.26 The ISW and CTP 30 June 2024 Update stated: 'The Israel Defense Forces (IDF)... continued clearing operations in Shujaiya, Gaza City... The IDF... continued operations along the Netzarim corridor south of Gaza City... Israeli forces continued operations in several areas of Rafah...'⁸³

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⁷⁶ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, June 6, 2024'](#) (p6), 6 June 2024

⁷⁷ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, June 7, 2024'](#) (p5), 7 June 2024

⁷⁸ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, June 9, 2024'](#) (p3), 9 June 2024

⁷⁹ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, June 16, 2024'](#) (p3), 16 June 2024

⁸⁰ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, June 25, 2024'](#) (p2), 25 June 2024

⁸¹ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, June 26, 2024'](#) (p4), 26 June 2024

⁸² ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, June 27, 2024'](#) (p3), 27 June 2024

⁸³ ISW & CTP, ['Iran Update, June 30, 2024'](#) (p3), 30 June 2024

8.8 Key statistics

8.8.1 On 20 December 2023, BBC News published an article entitled 'Israel Gaza: What Gaza's death toll says about the war' which stated:

'On average, nearly 300 people have been killed each day since the start of the conflict, excluding the seven-day ceasefire, data from Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry indicates. The World Health Organization's [WHO's] regional emergency director Richard Brennan says he considers these casualty figures trustworthy.

'Counting the dead is a challenge in any war zone, and doctors in Gaza say the death toll is likely to be significantly higher as it does not include bodies buried under the rubble of destroyed buildings or those not taken to hospitals.

'BBC Verify has looked in detail at the figures, how they compare with other conflicts and the impact on Gaza's young population.

[...]

'... The 20,000 figure [those reported to have been killed (as of 20 December 2023) since the start of the current conflict] represents almost 1% of Gaza's 2.2 million population.

'... However, Hamas's figures do not distinguish between male civilians and combatants.

'The previous official breakdown of the deaths from Hamas's Government Media Office on 19 December [2023], which stood at 19,667, said that more than 8,000 children and 6,200 women had been killed. It also said that 310 medical personnel, 35 civil defence personnel and 97 journalists had been killed - all of them civilians.

'... There have been over 52,000 people injured in the conflict so far, the health ministry says. While there are no up-to-date figures for the number of children injured, on 3 November [2023] there were reportedly 24,173 injured - comprising 8,067 children, 5,960 women and 10,146 men.

'... "What we're seeing in terms of civilian deaths has already far outpaced rates of harm from any given conflict we have documented," said Emily Tripp, director of Airwars, an organisation which has monitored civilian deaths in wars and conflicts since 2014.

'[However] ... comparing casualty rates in different conflicts is difficult, in part because varying methodologies are used for estimating deaths.

'Israel... has not been clear how many... [Hamas] members it has killed. Officials have previously pointed to "thousands" and elsewhere "7,000".

'... [W]hen asked directly, the IDF said it "does not have an exact number on the number of Hamas terrorists killed".

'News agency AFP reported that senior Israeli officials had suggested Israel had killed two Palestinian civilians for every one Hamas fighter. That ratio was described by the IDF's spokesman Jonathan Conricus as "tremendously positive", to CNN.

'The BBC has not been able to establish a clear method of verifying the number of fighters killed.

'Prof Michael Spagat, said he would "not be at all surprised" if around 80% of those killed were civilians [the article did not state on what basis Professor Spagat had reached this opinion, however].

'There are "no reliable figures" for the ratio of civilians to combatants killed in Gaza, say Hamit Dardagan and John Sloboda of Iraq Body Count, an organisation that examines the number of deaths in the Iraq war.'⁸⁴

- 8.8.2 The 'Freedom in the World 2024 – Gaza Strip' report stated: 'The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), citing data from Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry, reported that some 22,000 Palestinians had been killed by year's end [2023], with women and children accounting for nearly 70 percent of the total. Another 57,000 people were reportedly injured.'⁸⁵
- 8.8.3 On 29 February 2024, OCHA published a 'Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General – on Gaza' which stated: '... [A]n unknown number of people lie under rubble.'⁸⁶
- 8.8.4 In March 2024, Humanitarian Outcomes, a London-based specialist consultant team which provides research and policy advice for humanitarian aid agencies and donor governments⁸⁷, published a report entitled 'Humanitarian Access SCORE Report: Gaza - the first six months', citing various sources, which stated that civilian fatalities were 13.7 per 1,000⁸⁸. CPIT noted that while the source did provide some information regarding its general methodology for the report⁸⁹, it did not specify the basis upon which it provided this particular statistic.
- 8.8.5 On 20 April 2024, the World Health Organization (WHO) published an update entitled 'oPt Emergency Situation Update – Issue 28', covering the period 7 October 2023 to 20 April 2024 which indicated that, based on information from the Ministry of Health (MOH), in addition to the recorded 34,049 fatalities (72% of whom were said to be women and children) and 76,901 injuries, a further 7,780 people were reported missing, or under the rubble⁹⁰. However, it is noted that the 7,780 figure, of the number of people reported to be missing or under the rubble, remained unchanged since issue 23 of the WHO Emergency Situation Update containing information as of 1pm on 11 January 2024⁹¹.
- 8.8.6 Issue 29 of the WHO 'oPt Emergency Situation Update...', published on 30 April 2024, stated that, according to the Palestinian Civil Defense, 10,000 people were reported missing under the rubble⁹².

⁸⁴ BBC News, '[Israel Gaza: What Gaza's death toll says about the war](#)', 20 December 2023

⁸⁵ Freedom House, '[Freedom in the World 2024 – Gaza Strip](#)' (Section F3), 29 February 2024

⁸⁶ OCHA, '[... Spokesperson for the Secretary-General – on Gaza](#)', 29 February 2024

⁸⁷ Humanitarian Outcomes, '[About](#)', undated

⁸⁸ Humanitarian Outcomes, '[Humanitarian Access... Gaza - the first six months](#)' (p11), March 2024

⁸⁹ Humanitarian Outcomes, '[Humanitarian Access... Gaza - the first six months](#)' (p2), March 2024

⁹⁰ WHO, '[oPt Emergency Situation Update – Issue 28](#)' (p1), 20 April 2024

⁹¹ WHO, '[oPt Emergency Situation Update – Issue 20](#)' (p1), 11 January 2024

⁹² WHO, '[oPt Emergency Situation Update – Issue 29](#)' (p1), 30 April 2024

8.8.7 On 2 May 2024, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published a joint report providing an update on the expected socio-economic impacts of the Gaza War (original report published in November 2023). The report, which cited various sources, stated: ‘By 1 May 2024, at least 34,568 Palestinians had been killed, and an estimated 7,000 others remained missing in Gaza. Most of the fatalities (around 70 per cent) were women and children. Another 77,765 Palestinians were injured... The figures show that since 7 October 2023, approximately 5 per cent of the Gazan population have been either killed, missing or severely injured.’⁹³

8.8.8 The following table was produced by CPIT using the data collected by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) and extracted using their [Data Export Tool](#). According to this dataset (based on analysis of battles, explosions/remote violence, protests, riots, strategic developments, and violence against civilians in the Gaza Strip, referred to here collectively as ‘security events’) there was an estimated total of 10,400 security events across the Gaza Strip between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024⁹⁴:

	Battles	Explosions/ remote violence	Protests	Riots	Strategic developments	Violence against Civilians
Oct. 2023 (955)	40	903	1	0	8	3
Nov. 2023 (1,198)	156	994	0	0	11	37
Dec. 2023 (1,455)	234	1,158	0	0	33	30
Jan. 2024 (1,372)	215	1,073	0	0	65	19
Feb. 2024 (1,127)	100	926	5	1	62	33
Mar. 2024 (1,165)	80	1,010	0	0	42	33
Apr. 2024 (936)	46	834	0	0	48	8
May 2024 (1,195)	117	1,005	0	0	65	8
June 2024 (997)	73	849	0	0	70	5
TOTAL (10,400)	1,061	8,752	6	1	404	176

8.8.9 ACLED provided the following definitions for each of the different security events:

‘1. Battles: Violent interactions between two organized armed groups;

⁹³ ESCWA & UNDP, ‘[Gaza war: expected socioeconomic impacts...](#)’ (p5), 2 May 2024

⁹⁴ ACLED, ‘[Data Export Tool - Palestine: 7 October 2023 – 30 June 2024](#)’ 16 August 2024

'2. Explosions/Remote violence: An event involving one side using remote weapons (e.g. artillery). These events can be against other armed actors, or used against civilians;

'3. Violence against civilians: Violent events where an organized armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants;

'4. Protests: Public demonstrations in which the participants are not violent;

'5. Riots: Violent events where demonstrators or mobs engage in destructive acts against property and/or disorganized acts of violence against people;

'6. Strategic developments: Strategically important instances of non-violent activity by conflict actors and other agents within the context of conflict or broader political disorder. These can include recruitment drives, incidents of looting, and arrests are some examples of what may be included under this event type. Note that strategic developments are coded differently from other event types, and hence users must remember that they should be used differently from other event types in analysis.⁹⁵

8.8.10 The following table, which shows the location, by governorate, of the security events to have taken place between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024, was also produced by CPIT using the data collected by ACLED and extracted using their [Data Export Tool](#). It should be noted that no governorate was specified for 3 of the 10,400 security events, as they took place off the coast of the Gaza Strip, therefore the total number of security events shown in the below table is 10,397⁹⁶:

	North Gaza	Gaza City	Deir al-Balah	Khan Younis	Rafah
October 2023 (954)	197	333	141	172	111
November 2023 (1,198)	270	473	171	187	97
December 2023 (1,455)	262	378	250	418	147
January 2024 (1,372)	166	300	333	453	120
February 2024 (1,125)	124	324	199	327	151
March 2024 (1,165)	174	339	228	290	134
April 2024 (936)	134	317	237	146	102
May 2024 (1,195)	242	357	194	89	313
June 2024 (997)	58	316	209	94	320
TOTAL (10,397)	1,627	3,137	1,962	2,176	1,495

8.8.11 The following table, which shows the number of fatalities caused by security events across the Gaza Strip between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024, was also produced by CPIT using the same data collected by ACLED and extracted using their [Data Export Tool](#). According to this dataset there was

⁹⁵ ACLED, ['Quick Guide to ACLED Data'](#), last updated March 2023

⁹⁶ ACLED, ['Data Export Tool - Palestine: 7 October 2023 – 30 June 2024'](#) 16 August 2024

an estimated total of 39,276 security event-caused fatalities between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024. The figures refer to all fatalities and therefore include combatants as well as civilians⁹⁷:

	North Gaza	Gaza City	Deir al-Balah	Khan Younis	Rafah
October 2023 (8,907)	1,472	3,954	1,325	1,076	1,080
November 2023 (6,173)	2,128	2,373	814	631	227
December 2023 (6,919)	1,299	1,996	1,421	1,670	533
January 2024 (5,021)	357	1,223	1,417	1,765	259
February 2024 (3,216)	87	1,082	838	666	543
March 2024 (2,778)	240	940	677	649	272
April 2024 (1,710)	257	399	568	191	295
May 2024 (2,546)	752	612	330	50	802
June 2024 (2,006)	41	596	614	79	676
TOTAL (39,276)	6,633	13,175	8,004	6,777	4,687

8.8.12 For more information on ACLED’s ‘Fatality Methodology’, see: [‘FAQs: ACLED Fatality Methodology’](#).

8.8.13 On 3 July 2024, the OCHA published a ‘Reported impact snapshot’ for day 271 of the hostilities which stated that, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health (MoH), the cumulative reported Palestinian casualties as of 3 July 2024 (since the conflict began on 7 October 2023) were 37,953 fatalities, 87,266 injured, and, separately, more than 10,000 missing or under the rubble. Of the reported Palestinian fatalities, as of 30 April 2024, 24,686 had been identified and included 10,006 men (40%), 4,959 women (20%), 7,797 children (32%), and 1,924 elderly (8%)⁹⁸.

8.8.14 The same report also stated the following disclaimer: ‘Figures that are yet-to-be verified by the UN are attributed to their source. Casualty numbers have been provided by the Ministry of Health (MoH) or the Government Media Office (GMO) in Gaza and the Israeli authorities... The fatality breakdowns currently cited are those that the MoH in Gaza has recently fully identified out of the higher number of casualties they report.’⁹⁹

8.8.15 For information about the methodology used by Gaza’s Ministry of Health in counting fatalities caused by the conflict, its reliability, and its limitations, see an article published on 7 November 2023 by PBS News Hour, a US media outlet¹⁰⁰, entitled [‘What is Gaza’s Ministry of Health and how does it calculate the war’s death toll?’](#).

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⁹⁷ ACLED, [‘Data Export Tool’](#), accessed 16 August 2024

⁹⁸ OCHA, [‘Reported impact snapshot | Gaza Strip \(3 July 2024\)’](#), 3 July 2024

⁹⁹ OCHA, [‘Reported impact snapshot | Gaza Strip \(3 July 2024\)’](#), 3 July 2024

¹⁰⁰ PBS News Hour, [‘About Us’](#), undated

8.9 Law and order

8.9.1 The 24 February 2024 Axios article stated:

'... [A] "total breakdown of law and order" is significantly exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in the enclave, three U.S. and Israeli officials told Axios.

'... U.S. officials say they are increasingly concerned "that Gaza is turning into Mogadishu" as a security vacuum and desperation have opened the door for armed gangs to attack and loot aid trucks...

'... Mogadishu - the capital of Somalia, in the Horn of Africa - was once considered the most lawless and dangerous city in the world.

'... Members of the Hamas-run civilian police force had been operating in Rafah and on the Gaza side of the nearby Kerem Shalom crossing to ensure security for the aid trucks. But they left their posts earlier this month [February 2024] after being targeted by Israel.

'... As a result of the security vacuum many of the trucks that have recently entered Gaza have been overrun by criminal gangs, as well as Palestinians desperate for any kind of aid as the conditions in the enclave continue to increasingly deteriorate and hunger grows, McGoldrick [James McGoldrick, UN humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian Territory] said.

'The hopelessness and desperation in Gaza have created a "great deal of law and order challenges..." McGoldrick said.¹⁰¹

8.9.2 On 29 February 2024, Reuters published an article which stated:

'Gaza health authorities said Israeli forces on Thursday [29 February 2024] shot dead more than 100 Palestinians as they waited for an aid delivery, but Israel blamed the deaths on crowds that surrounded aid trucks, saying victims had been trampled or run over.

'At least 112 people were killed and more than 280 wounded in the incident near Gaza City, Palestinian health officials said.

'... One Israeli official said there had been two incidents, hundreds of metres apart. In the first, dozens were killed or injured as they tried to take aid from the trucks and were trampled or run over.

'He said there was a second, subsequent incident as the trucks moved off. Some people in the crowd approached troops who felt under threat and opened fire, killing an unknown number in a "limited response", he said. He dismissed the casualty toll given by Gaza authorities but gave no figure himself.

'In a later briefing, Israel Defense Forces spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari also said dozens had been trampled to death or injured in a fight to take supplies off the trucks.

'He said tanks escorting the trucks had subsequently fired warning shots to disperse the crowd and backed away when events began to get out of hand.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Axios, ["U.S. officials warn: Gaza "is turning into Mogadishu"](#), 24 February 2024

¹⁰² Reuters, ["More than 100 killed while seeking aid in Gaza..."](#), 29 February 2024

- 8.9.3 On 6 March 2024, the OCHA published its 'Humanitarian Access Snapshot - Gaza Strip - End-February 2024' report, which stated: 'As law and order deteriorated, Gaza saw an increase in violence targeting humanitarian workers... The stance of the Israeli army, which views police forces as combatants, further complicates the efforts to restore law and order - elements that are crucial for protection of civilians...'¹⁰³
- 8.9.4 On 6 April 2024, the OCHA published a 'Humanitarian Access Snapshot - Gaza Strip - 1-31 March 2024' which stated: 'Months of intense armed conflict have... resulted in a general breakdown of law and order within Gaza, generating additional security and protection risks for civilians and humanitarian organizations.'¹⁰⁴
- 8.9.5 On 19 June 2024, The New York Times published an article which stated:
 'In much of Gaza, there are no police officers to prevent chaos... Organized crime groups have filled the vacuum, their affiliations - whether to Gazan clans or armed groups like Hamas - are still unclear.
 '... Palestinians in Gaza endure widespread chaos...
 '... A person involved in the effort to distribute aid said that armed criminal gangs were operating with near-total freedom in the Israel-Gaza border area where trucks must pass and attacking them daily. The person described the attacks as coordinated and organized, not the spontaneous looting by desperate Gazan civilians that vexed aid convoys in earlier months of the war.
 'Armed attackers shoot at the trucks, force them to stop and sometimes beat the drivers before stripping the trucks of their contents, the person said.
 'And there is no one to call for help: The Hamas-run police force that helped secure the passage of aid earlier in the war melted away months ago after the Israeli military killed several officers. (The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was bound by confidentiality agreements.)
 'The "lack of any police or rule of law in the area" has rendered the roads surrounding the crossing highly dangerous, Mr. Haq [Farhan Haq, a United Nations spokesman] said.'
- 8.9.6 On 25 June 2024, UNRWA published a 'Press briefing by Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini during the meeting of the UNRWA Advisory Commission (AdCom) in Geneva' in which the Commissioner-General stated: '... [W]e are confronted nowadays to a near total breakdown of law and order...'¹⁰⁵
- 8.9.7 The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) 27 June 2024 Update, quoting its Education Officer in Gaza, stated: "'Here in Deir Al-Balah, we have two things to fear: Israeli attacks, and the near-total breakdown of law and order leading to community disputes. We don't feel safe; at night we stay inside, and only go out during the day to work or run some errands.'¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ OCHA, '[Humanitarian Access Snapshot - Gaza Strip | End-February 2024](#)' (p2), 6 March 2024

¹⁰⁴ OCHA, '[Humanitarian Access Snapshot - Gaza Strip | 1-31 March 2024](#)' (p2), 6 April 2024

¹⁰⁵ UNRWA, '[Press briefing by Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini... in Geneva](#)', 25 June 2024

¹⁰⁶ NRC, '[On-the-record update #4 on situation in Gaza, Palestine](#)', 27 June 2024

8.10 Displacement

8.10.1 On 16 November 2023, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) published a report which stated:

'[The] Population residing in Gaza and North Gaza governorates as of the evening of 11/11/2023 was estimated at 807 thousand, representing approximately 152 thousand households, out of 1.2 million Palestinians who resided in those governorates (448 thousand were in the North Gaza governorate, and 754 thousand in Gaza Governorate) before the beginning [of the current conflict, starting on 7 October 2023]... meaning that... about a third of the population of the northern governorates comprising approximately 400 thousand individuals were displaced to the central and southern governorates of Gaza Strip (Deir Al-Balah, Khan Yunis, Rafah). The population... currently residing in the central and southern governorates of Gaza Strip is 1.43 million people.

'... The [PCBS] prepared estimates on the number of citizens residing in Gaza and North Gaza governorates based on actual data sets that monitored the reality in Gaza Strip before and during the aggression on Gaza Strip, using data from the Palestinian telecommunications companies and the Ministry of Telecom and Information Technology, the Palestinian Household Expenditure and Consumption Survey (first three quarters, 2023) and the Household Survey on Information and Communications Technology (third quarter, 2023) in addition to demographic projections.'¹⁰⁷

8.10.2 On 1 December 2023, the OCHA published a report entitled 'Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel - Flash Update #56' which stated:

- 'Up to 1.8 million people in Gaza, or nearly 80 per cent of the population, are estimated to be internally displaced. However, obtaining an accurate count is challenging; including because of difficulties in tracking IDPs staying with host families and accounting for those who returned to their homes during the pause [a week-long humanitarian pause to the conflict which took place between 24 November and 1 December 2023, see [Key security events](#)] but remain registered in UNRWA and other shelters.
- 'Nearly 1.1 million IDPs are registered in 156 UNRWA facilities across Gaza, of whom about 86 per cent (958,000) are registered in 99 UNRWA shelters in the south. Another 191,000 IDPs are estimated to be staying in 124 public schools and hospitals, as well as in other venues such as wedding halls, offices, and community centres. The rest are hosted by families.'¹⁰⁸

8.10.3 On 8 December 2023, the OCHA published '... Flash Update #63' which stated: 'Since 3 December [2023], tens of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have arrived in Rafah, the majority coming from the adjacent Khan Younis governorate, following evacuation orders issued by Israeli forces and ongoing bombardments and fighting. For many IDPs, this is the second or third displacement they have experienced since 7 October

¹⁰⁷ PCBS, '[... 807 thousand Palestinians still reside in Gaza and North Gaza...](#)', 16 November 2023

¹⁰⁸ OCHA, '[Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #56](#)', 1 December 2023

[2023].¹⁰⁹

8.10.4 On 8 February 2024, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) published an article which stated:

‘Rafah, 63 square kilometres in size, is now the most overcrowded governorate in the Gaza Strip with an average density of over 22,200 per square kilometre...

- ‘... According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Rafah Governorate’s population stood at 263,876 in early 2022. Since the hostilities, the population has increased to 1.4 million [two-thirds of Gaza’s population], an increase of 5.3 times.
- ‘While the number of people displaced is estimated to be 1.7 million, reports show people have been displaced repeatedly. NRC teams have reported families displaced five or six times since the start of the hostilities.’¹¹⁰

8.10.5 The ‘Freedom in the World 2024 – Gaza Strip’ report stated:

‘... [A]bout 1.9 million people - 85 percent of Gaza’s population - were internally displaced [during the last 3 months of 2023] as they fled areas of heavy fighting or were ordered by Israeli forces to evacuate. The evacuation orders confined them to less than one-third of the Gaza Strip’s territory, according to the OHCHR, and few had adequate access to shelter or life-sustaining supplies. More than two-thirds of Gaza’s population were already registered as refugees before the war, as many descended from Palestinians who were originally displaced in 1948.’¹¹¹

8.10.6 Humanitarian Outcomes’ March 2024 ‘Gaza Humanitarian Access Report’ stated that 77% of Gazans had been displaced¹¹².

8.10.7 On 25 March 2024, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) published an advance, unedited, version of a report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, which stated: ‘Eighty percent of the whole population has been forcibly displaced.’¹¹³

8.10.8 The WHO Emergency Situation Updates have also reported the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), according to the Ministry of Health since 18 October 2023. The below chart shows each date upon which WHO reported a change in the number of IDPs in one of its situation updates, up to and including the final number captured in issue 28, published on 20 April 2024 (afterwhich the WHO no longer reported on the overall numbers of displaced persons within Gaza in its situation updates). The reported numbers of displaced persons should be considered in context of the WHO estimate of the total population of Gaza having been between approximately 2.24 and 2.27 million (calculations by CPIT, based on WHO’s statements that 1.7 million IDPs represented 75% of the population, while 1.9 and 1.93

¹⁰⁹ OCHA, ‘[Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #63](#)’, 8 December 2023

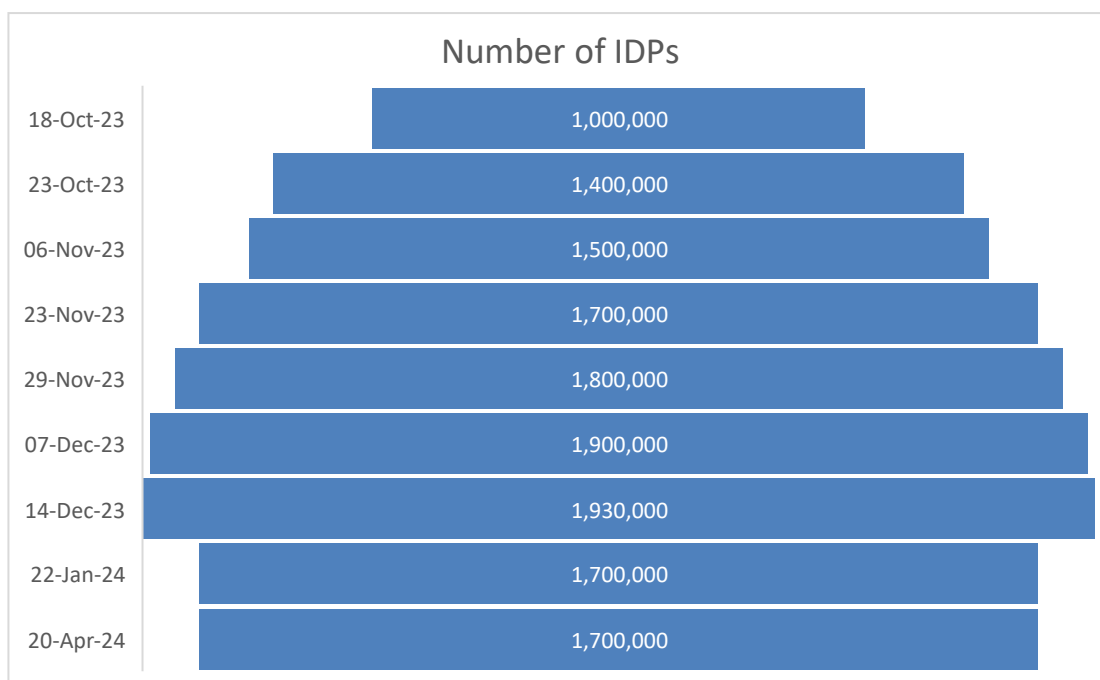
¹¹⁰ NRC, ‘[Gaza...](#)’, 8 February 2024

¹¹¹ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2024 – Gaza Strip](#)’ (Section G1), 29 February 2024

¹¹² Humanitarian Outcomes, ‘[Humanitarian Access... Gaza - the first six months](#)’ (p11), March 2024

¹¹³ HRC, ‘[Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#)’ (Summary), 25 March 2024

million IDPs represented 85% of the population)¹¹⁴:



8.10.9 On 23 April 2024, the United States Department of State (USSD) published the '2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Israel, West Bank and Gaza; West Bank and Gaza' which stated: 'On October 13 [2023], the Israeli government ordered 1.1 million Palestinians living in the north of Gaza and humanitarian relief organizations to move south of Wadi Gaza within 24 hours, including those sheltered in UN facilities who had evacuated their homes in the first few days of the war... Subsequently Israel issued evacuation orders in other areas throughout Gaza...'¹¹⁵

8.10.10 On 13 May 2024, the OCHA published a report entitled 'Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel - reported impact - Day 220', citing various sources, which stated that 150 to 155 UNRWA installations were sheltering IDPs¹¹⁶. CPIT noted that the same figure was provided by the OCHA in the 18 reported impact reports it published since (and including) its day 175 reported impact report, published on 29 March 2024¹¹⁷.

8.10.11 On 13 May 2024, BBC News published an article entitled 'Gaza war: UN hopes for new Western Erez aid crossing' which stated:

'Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have heeded Israel's warnings to evacuate eastern Rafah and have begun their journey to what Israel has called an "expanded humanitarian zone".

'This includes al-Mawasi, a coastal area largely made up of sand dunes, and parts of Khan Younis, which only recently was the focus of Israel's operations in Gaza.

'Mr Anderson [Scott Anderson, deputy head of UNRWA] said neither area

¹¹⁴ WHO, '[... Emergency Situation Reports](#)' (Issue 5,7,11,14-17,21,28), 8 October 2023-20 April 2024

¹¹⁵ USSD, '[2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices...](#)' (Section 11), 23 April 2024

¹¹⁶ OCHA, '[Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel - reported impact | Day 175](#)', 29 March 2024

¹¹⁷ OCHA, '[Updates](#)' (reported impact reports from day 175 to day 220), 27 March 2024-13 May 2024

had the infrastructure to support the masses seeking shelter.¹¹⁸

8.10.12 On 14 May 2024, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the NRC published a joint 'Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2024', covering 2023. Citing various sources, the report stated:

'Evacuation calls, airstrikes and shelling triggered 3.4 million internal displacements in the last quarter of the year [2023] as people fled in search of safety and humanitarian assistance [‘This figure represents the sum of people’s movements to and between UNRWA shelters between governorates of the Gaza Strip from 7 October to 31 December 2023. It does not include movements between UNRWA shelters within such governorates.’¹¹⁹]. This figure should be considered conservative, because many people were displaced within governorates before moving across them, but such movements were unaccounted for. Repeated displacement heightened IDPs’ vulnerabilities, including increased protection risks... Around 1.7 million people were living in internal displacement in the Gaza Strip as of the end of the year [2023], all of them facing acute humanitarian needs.¹²⁰

8.10.13 On 3 June 2024, UN News published an article which stated: ‘According to UNRWA [in a post on X, formerly Twitter], thousands of families have been forced to seek shelter in badly damaged buildings in Khan Younis. The city, which is just north of Rafah, is estimated to be home to some 1.7 million people. All 36 of UNRWA’s shelters in Rafah are now empty, it reported.’¹²¹

8.10.14 On 4 June 2024, Oxfam published an article which stated: ‘Over one million people have fled Rafah into Al Mawasi, Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis. 1.7 million people, more than two-thirds of Gaza’s population, are now estimated to be crammed into an area of 69 km² – less than a fifth of the Strip.’¹²²

8.10.15 On 13 June 2024, the NRC published ‘On-the-record update #3 on situation in Gaza, Palestine’, shortly after its Head of Operations left Gaza. It stated:

- ‘Approximately 1 million Palestinians have been displaced from Rafah since Israel announced operations there earlier this month [June 2024]. A further 100,000 [over a third of the remaining population in the northern governorates¹²³] have been displaced due to hostilities in northern Gaza as well.
- ‘... Displaced individuals often arrive in new towns with nowhere to go, forcing them to create makeshift shelters wherever they can find space.’¹²⁴

8.10.16 The UNRWA Situation Report #117, with information valid as of 1 July 2024, stated that the confirmed numbers of IDPs since 7 October 2023 was 1,700,000, including around 1 million people living in or near emergency or informal shelters. However, it was noted that around 160,000 IDPs were

¹¹⁸ BBC News, [‘Gaza war: UN hopes for new Western Erez aid crossing’](#), 13 May 2024

¹¹⁹ IDMC & NRC, [‘Global Report on... Displacement \(GRID\) 2024’](#) (footnote 130(p111)), 14 May 2024

¹²⁰ IDMC & NRC, [‘Global Report on Internal Displacement \(GRID\) 2024’](#) (p49), 14 May 2024

¹²¹ UN News, [‘Conditions in Gaza are “unspeakable” as one million people flee Rafah...’](#), 3 June 2024

¹²² Oxfam, [‘... Gaza aid responded virtually impossible’](#), 4 June 2024

¹²³ IPC, [‘Gaza Strip: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Special Snapshot...’](#) (p1), 25 June 2024

¹²⁴ NRC, [‘On-the-record update #3 on situation in Gaza, Palestine’](#), 13 June 2024

recorded in UNRWA shelters in the Gaza and North Gaza governorates as of 13 October 2023, but that UNRWA's ability to provide updated data for these areas had been severely restricted. It was also noted that some people were displaced multiple times, registered in multiple shelters due to fluid population movement, and/or moved away from the shelters where they were initially registered due to the continued escalation of fighting and evacuation orders¹²⁵.

8.10.17 The 3 July 2024 OCHA 'Reported impact snapshot' for day 271 of the hostilities stated that the UN estimated there to be approximately 1.9 million IDPs, which it stated was 90% of Gaza¹²⁶.

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8.11 Freedom of movement

8.11.1 The 'Freedom in the World 2024 – Gaza Strip' report stated: 'Freedom of movement for Gaza residents has long been severely limited... During the last three months of 2023, Israeli forces prohibited access to the sea and to areas near Israel's perimeter fence, and border crossings were only open in practice for a limited amount of searched and approved goods, as well as a very limited number of people such as aid workers, foreign nationals, and critically ill or injured civilians.'¹²⁷

8.11.2 The joint EU, UN, and The World Bank preliminary damage assessment report stated: 'Transport sector damages... [are] affecting 62% of roads, including 92% of primary roads, and a significant proportion of vehicles. This has a profound effect... on the mobility of the population...'¹²⁸

8.11.3 On 1 April 2024, Human Rights Watch (HRW) published an article entitled 'No Exit in Gaza' which stated:

'Since Oct. 7 [2024], Israeli authorities have continued to block Palestinians in Gaza from fleeing into neighboring Israel to seek even temporary refuge from the hostilities...

'Neighboring Egypt's borders are mostly closed, too. Only a relatively few Gaza residents have been allowed to enter Egypt through the Rafah crossing, including foreign passport holders, the wounded and their companions, and some who have paid exorbitant sums to flee via Egypt. Not wanting a wave of refugees flooding into his country, especially given the prospect that the Israeli authorities might bar them from returning, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi declared Egypt's "vehement rejection of the forced displacement of the Palestinians and their transfer to Egyptian lands in Sinai."¹²⁹

8.11.4 Issue 27 of the WHO Emergency Situation Update stated that since the start of the conflict 4,373 patients were approved for medical evacuation abroad, through Rafah, representing a 47% approval rate. Of those, 3,528 were successfully evacuated [just under 81% - CPIT's calculation], with the

¹²⁵ UNRWA, '[UNRWA Situation Report #117 on the Situation in the Gaza Strip...](#)' (p6), 3 July 2024

¹²⁶ OCHA, '[Reported impact snapshot | Gaza Strip \(3 July 2024\)](#)', 3 July 2024

¹²⁷ Freedom House, '[Freedom in the World 2024 – Gaza Strip](#)' (Section G1), 29 February 2024

¹²⁸ EU, UN & The World Bank, '[Gaza Strip Interim Damage Assessment...](#)' (p3,15,16), 29 March 2024

¹²⁹ HRW, '[No Exit in Gaza](#)', 1 April 2024

difference ‘... attributed to patients passing away while awaiting approval, patients not being timely informed, or encountering access restrictions.’¹³⁰

- 8.11.5 The USSD ‘2023 Country Report’ stated: ‘... Hamas interfered with the movement of civilian and humanitarian workers inside Gaza, setting up roadblocks... At times during the conflict, Hamas interfered with international efforts to evacuate Palestinians... out of Gaza.’¹³¹
- 8.11.6 On 29 May 2024, the OCHA published a report entitled ‘Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel - Flash Update #172’ which stated: ‘WHO noted that the destruction of roads, lack of safe access and shortages of fuel continue to impede movement to the north.’¹³²
- 8.11.7 The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) 13 June 2024 Update stated: ‘The cost of transport has surged six-fold, making it difficult for many to afford relocation.’¹³³

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¹³⁰ WHO, [‘oPt Emergency Situation Update – Issue 27’](#) (p1), 2 April 2024

¹³¹ USSD, [‘2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices...’](#) (Section 11), 23 April 2024

¹³² OCHA, [‘Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #172’](#), 29 May 2024

¹³³ NRC, [‘On-the-record update #3 on situation in Gaza, Palestine’](#), 13 June 2024

Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2024. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Commentary may be provided on source(s) and information to help readers understand the meaning and limits of the COI.

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

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Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) provides a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- actors in conflict – number, size, intent and capacity
- geographical scope of conflict
- nature of violence - methods and tactics, including targeting of groups (age, sex, ethnicity, religion, disability, etc)
- number of security incidents
 - frequency and density in relation to local population
 - variation by place, time and groups affected
- number of civilian casualties, including
 - fatalities and injuries (also as a proportion of total population)
 - variation by place, time and group
- conflict-induced displacement
- indirect impact of violence on law and order

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Version control and feedback

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **1.0**
- valid from **13 November 2024**

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

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Changes from last version of this note

First version of this note.

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Feedback to the Home Office

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the Country Policy and Information Team.

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The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support them in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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