

NO CONDITIONS FOR LIFE

WOMEN, GIRLS AND THE GENDERED DIMENSIONS OF ISRAEL'S GENOCIDE AGAINST PALESTINIANS IN GAZA

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← ***Women in Gaza***

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 22 October 2023, 29-year-old Sondos Al-Kurd, eight months pregnant, was baking bread with her family in Mashrou' Beit Lahia in North Gaza, a governorate in the occupied Gaza Strip (Gaza), when their building was struck by an explosive weapon amidst Israel's relentless bombardment of the area. Her three-year-old daughter, Habiba, along with her younger sister, aunt and cousin, were killed. Sondos was pulled from the rubble with serious injuries and rushed to Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City. Doctors stabilized her and performed an emergency caesarean section, saving both her and her baby, though she was left with severe long-term injuries and her baby had to be put in an incubator. While recovering in hospital, Sondos' mother and brother were killed in another Israeli attack.

Later, Israeli forces attacked and besieged Al-Shifa hospital. Sondos was evacuated on a stretcher. She explained:

"I was in the maternity ward, and it was targeted many times… I kept saying, 'My daughter, my daughter'. They told me: 'Leave her in the incubator.' They said I wouldn't be able to manage her condition."

Sondos was separated from her newborn, who remained in critical care in the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). As the Israeli forces' siege continued, she heard reports that premature babies were dying due to interruptions to their care. While several babies died after oxygen supplies ran out or after Israeli forces ordered staff to move the babies out of the equipped neonatal unit, Sondos's daughter survived. She was amongst 31 preterm and sick babies evacuated after eight days of siege, first to a hospital in Rafah in southern Gaza and then to Egypt for treatment. It took Sondos several months to learn her daughter was alive, and even then, restrictions on movement into and out of Gaza meant they were kept apart for over two years.

Sondos's account reflects many of the cumulative and compounded harms that women in Gaza have experienced and continue to experience: killings and serious injuries, pregnancy and childbirth under bombardment, attacks on healthcare, and the destruction of homes and family life – and illustrates how these harms do not occur in isolation but interact and reinforce one another across the life cycle of Palestinian women in Gaza.

OVERVIEW

This report provides a detailed gender-based analysis of Israel's genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, building on, strengthening and expanding the findings of Amnesty International's previous report published in December 2024 on Israel's genocide.

Israel's conduct in Gaza since 7 October 2023 has been devastating for the lives of women and girls. Israeli forces have killed thousands of women and girls, an average of 30 a day before the so-called ceasefire, many through attacks that violated international humanitarian law, and also indirectly caused the death of an unknown number of additional women and girls through its unlawful blockade. Women and girls have been forced into a daily struggle for survival marred by grief, trauma, violence, repeated displacement, extreme deprivation, fear and profound loss. They have been deprived of access to essential healthcare, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, and put at increased risk of gender-based violence. Israel's actions have also severely undermined Palestinians' ability to make decisions about if and when to have children, to conceive, carry pregnancies to term, and give birth safely.

Women and girls in Gaza have experienced these harms cumulatively and repeatedly, resulting in devastating levels of physical, mental and reproductive harm. Women's unmet reproductive health needs, gendered caregiving responsibilities and pre-existing inequalities have intensified the harm they have endured. These violations have been an integral part of Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

The evidence demonstrates that Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza has continued despite the October 2025 "ceasefire," at a minimum through the ongoing deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction and through causing serious bodily and mental harm to members of the group, and without any change in the required specific intent.

Amnesty International previously concluded in December 2024 that Israel had committed prohibited acts under the Genocide Convention Article II(a), (b) and (c) with the specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza as such.

The evidence collected by Amnesty International for this report reinforces the 2024 findings. It also demonstrates that Israel has imposed measures that have had, and continue to have, the effect of preventing births among Palestinians in Gaza, a genocidal act under Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention if committed with the requisite intent.

Amnesty International, however, is not in a position to categorically conclude that these measures were imposed with the intent to deter births required under Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention. Nevertheless, the pattern of conduct and the broader context in which the acts were committed raise serious concerns that the outcome was indeed intended. Amnesty International is therefore calling for Israel to also be investigated for the additional genocidal act of imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.

The research for this report included 228 in-depth interviews carried out remotely between 7 October 2023 and 1 October 2026 (the end of the reporting period), with the assistance of a trusted fieldworker in Gaza. This includes over 120 interviews with women and girls about their own experiences, 20 men who witnessed these harms or themselves suffered gender-based harms, over 60 Palestinian healthcare providers, and 20 staff of NGOs or UN agencies. The investigation also draws on tens of verified photographs or videos, medical records, satellite imagery and data, reports from Palestinian, Israeli and international sources, and expert review by an independent obstetrician-gynaecologist and an independent legal expert. Amnesty International wrote to Israeli authorities and the Hamas political bureau on 30 September 2026, sharing findings of the report and raising a number of questions, but as of publication had received no response.

CUMULATIVE GENDERED HARMS

Women and girls have experienced and endured the cumulative effects of killings, injuries, attacks and sieges of hospitals, the near-total dismantlement of reproductive healthcare, repeated forced displacement, deliberate starvation and food deprivation, and arbitrary detention.

KILLING, INJURIES AND THEIR GENDERED IMPACT

Israel's military offensive in Gaza since 7 October 2023 has led to the killing and injury of women and girls on a massive scale. According to data from the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza, which Amnesty International reviewed and considers reliable, 74,237 Palestinians were killed between 7 October 2023 and 1 October 2026, including 22,331 women and girls (13,299 adult women and 9,032 girls). According to these figures, women and girls constitute 30.1% of all fatalities.

Tens of thousands of other women and girls sustained life-changing injuries, while the killing or disappearance of husbands, children, parents and siblings left women carrying profound grief and trauma.

The scale of killing of women has been unprecedented in comparison to previous Israeli military offensives in Gaza and exceptional when compared to documented patterns of civilian harm affecting women in contemporary armed conflicts. According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), for example, seven out of every ten women killed in armed conflict globally in 2023-2024 were killed in Gaza.

Amnesty International has previously documented a pattern of unlawful air strikes by Israeli forces in Gaza since 7 October 2023 that wiped out entire multi-generational families, finding they were either direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects or indiscriminate attacks. This report documents further cases of women and

girls killed or injured in unlawful attacks – also including by live fire – in their homes, while seeking medical care, inside maternity wards, or while attempting to access food.

In addition, the repeated use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in one of the most densely populated places on earth, combined with decisions to frequently and systematically strike individuals in their homes – especially at night, when the presence of a high number of civilians was known, and without any warning – has contributed to the high proportion of women and girls casualties.



Palestinians search through the debris of damaged residential buildings in the Sabra neighborhood, south of Gaza City, October 2026. © Anadolu via Getty Images

One of the deadliest strikes documented by Amnesty International was the air strike on the Abu Nasr family home in Mashrou' Beit Lahia on 29 October 2024, where some 240 members of the extended Abu Nasr family had been staying in a five-story building. The Israeli air strike killed 137 people: 38 women, 44 men and 55 children, 24 of whom were girls. Hours earlier, an adjacent building belonging to the Odah family had been hit, and the debris collapsed onto the second floor of the Abu Nasr home, killing three children from the same family.

Afaf, 51, lost her mother, husband, five children and two grandchildren in the attack. She told Amnesty International:

"I woke up to a strike on my back. I found myself slipping into a hole. My daughter was next to me; her children were screaming, and my daughter-in-law was breathing her last. Only two of my children survived; the rest were all killed."

Hani, 40, Afaf's relative, was the sole survivor of his immediate family. He told Amnesty International:

"45 people were staying with me in the apartment; all of them were killed and I am the sole survivor. My wife was killed, as were all of my four children. My wife and I had been trying for eight years to give birth; we paid everything we had for fertility treatment. They were the most precious thing I had, and I lost them all."

This air strike is a rare instance in which the Israeli military has claimed it ordered an internal review. The Israeli military claimed that it struck the building after seeing a "spotter with binoculars" on its roof but has so far failed to provide any visual or other evidence to corroborate the claim. Amnesty International found nothing in the available evidence to indicate that anyone in the building was a legitimate military target. The organization's analysis of satellite imagery found that the close proximity and height of the surrounding

buildings would have made it challenging to clearly see the activities of the Israeli ground forces from the rooftop and therefore question its suitability as a lookout position for this purpose.

However, even if there had been a "spotter" on the rooftop, the strike destroyed a five-floor residential building sheltering hundreds of displaced civilians, including many children, without warning, before dawn when it was foreseeable they would all be at home. Even if there was a military objective in or near the targeted building, Amnesty International considers that the attack was unlawful because it failed to distinguish between civilians and military objectives or to meet the international humanitarian law requirements of proportionality and precautions in attack.

The scale of killings has decreased since the so-called ceasefire of October 2025. However, according to the Ministry of Health, by 1 October 2026, Israeli forces had killed 1,439 Palestinians, including 274 women and girls, and injured over 5,330, including 1,473 women and girls, since the agreement came into effect. This is despite the fact that no rockets have been successfully fired from Gaza towards Israel during this year.

OHCHR verified the killing of 331 Palestinians in the vicinity of the so-called Yellow Line between the ceasefire agreement and the end of July 2026, including 27 women and 66 children. The "Yellow Line" demarcates an ever-increasing area of Gaza which, along with the "Orange Line", constitutes over 65% of the territory, and over which Israeli forces violently impose access restrictions through drone strikes and live fire.

Women Amnesty International spoke to across Gaza described still living under a constant threat of death, with attacks perceived as unpredictable and inescapable.

Women often experienced killings and injuries both as direct victims of attacks and through their gendered social and economic roles, leaving many to navigate bereavement, injury and displacement while simultaneously assuming additional caregiving responsibilities. UN Women estimated that in late 2025, women headed nearly one in four households in Gaza, almost double the pre-October 2023 rate of around one in nine. These households often suffered extreme economic precarity and marginalisation, even within the wider context of severe deprivation.

Pregnancy, childbirth and maternal health were also deeply affected by the scale of killing and injury, with many women experiencing pregnancy or parenting newborns while injured, bereaved, traumatized and living under intense and frequent bombardment with the constant threat of death.

MATERNITY CARE UNDER ATTACK

The dangers of pregnancy and childbirth were compounded by attacks on healthcare facilities and those attempting to reach them. The WHO has reported 1,000 attacks on Gaza healthcare facilities, causing 1,007 reported deaths, since 7 October 2023.

Sara (name changed) went into labour at a school where she was sheltering in northern Gaza on 6 December 2023. Because of Israeli military operations in the area, Sara had to walk several hundred metres from her shelter to Al-Awda hospital with the assistance of her mother-in-law, along with an injured man and his father, carrying a white flag together. However:

"Suddenly, I heard gunfire, and my mother-in-law fell to the ground. I looked at her and saw that a bullet had entered the back of her head and exited through her forehead. She died instantly. I froze for a moment, then I started running, all while having strong contractions… The medical staff received me while I was still in shock. … I did not feel the baby as he was delivered. I did not feel anything at all. I kept telling them that my mother-in-law was outside and asked if anyone could help her. I was still hoping she might be alive. They told me that no one could leave the hospital. The staff asked everyone to go inside, and they closed all the doors. They said the Israeli forces were getting closer and had taken positions in the houses surrounding the hospital."

Sara added that the danger continued even after she reached the hospital:

"Right after I gave birth, they placed me in a room to rest. About an hour later, snipers fired directly at the room. I remember five bullets hitting the room. It was a miracle that neither my baby nor I was hit… I had to remain in the hospital under total siege for 18 days… No one felt safe inside the hospital. Snipers were positioned all around it, shooting at anyone who moved. I saw a cleaner shot and killed in front of me…".

Israeli forces subjected at least scores of pregnant or post-partum women to attacks or compelled them to evacuate or flee as they besieged hospitals, interrupting or preventing access to essential medical care. They

forced maternity patients into circumstances in which life-saving medical assistance they required could not be provided safely or consistently.

A doctor in the maternity department at Kamal Adwan hospital in northern Gaza described carrying out a caesarean section to respond to an obstetric emergency just before the hospital was raided on 12 December 2023:

"A pregnant woman with her mother came into the hospital, and the situation was very bad with tanks close by … We told her we wouldn't be able to do the surgery; we had no electricity and no anaesthetist. The mother took her pregnant daughter and left towards Al-Awda [hospital]. Five minutes later they came back covered in dust… She said: 'The tank and snipers shot at us… you have to help.'"

The doctor explained that there was no option but to operate with the limited resources available:

"We gathered fuel from the whole hospital and houses around the hospital and were able to operate the generator for only half an hour. There was an anaesthetist displaced near the hospital but without any experience. Still, we called her and brought her."

The operation was carried out without sterilization and with the patient manually ventilated. Even then, the anaesthesia proved insufficient.

"We got the baby out and we were about to close the cut, but her abdominal muscles got tight and she was waking up."

Although she was eventually sedated, the doctor recalled how his patient later told him that the experience – including undergoing surgery without adequate anaesthesia – was so traumatizing it had convinced her never to have another child.

Other doctors and midwives from hospitals across Gaza gave Amnesty International similar accounts of performing surgeries or otherwise delivering babies while sheltering in the basement from attacks with explosive weapons.

Newborn babies were similarly exposed to life-threatening conditions. Amnesty International documented how at least seven newborn babies died and at least 28 other babies had life-sustaining treatment interrupted because of Israeli attacks and siege on Al-Shifa hospital in November 2023. In some cases, babies who survived were separated from their mothers – as Sondos referred to above – for more than two years.

Pregnant women and newborns continued to face serious risks seeking or obtaining medical care, even after the ceasefire agreement of October 2025, particularly close to the "Yellow Line". In March 2026, two paramedic colleagues described two incidents within the previous month several hundred metres from the "Yellow Line" in which a woman in advanced labour – and the ambulance sent to transport her – came under fire. In both cases, the woman gave birth shortly after finally reaching the ambulance, in one case only four minutes later.

Amnesty International found evidence of several instances of misuse of hospitals by Palestinian armed groups and Hamas-affiliated authorities, including one instance of the holding of several hostages for no medical reasons and the use of hospital premises for interrogation, detention and even torture of Palestinians. However, it did not find evidence substantiating Israeli claims that hospitals were being used as Hamas "command and control centres", and Israeli authorities have not provided sufficient information to support these allegations.

Regardless, misuse does not release Israel of its obligations under international humanitarian law to take all feasible precautions to avoid, and in any event to minimize, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects, and not to launch indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks.

DISMANTLING OF MATERNITY HEALTHCARE

Throughout the genocide, as scores of healthcare facilities were rendered non-functional, many through Israeli attacks or military operations, those that remained operational were overwhelmed and severely under-resourced.

In July 2026, UNFPA stated that 94% of Gaza's hospitals were either destroyed or only partially functional, fewer than half of the health facilities were able to operate at any level, and only 15% of facilities were able to provide emergency obstetric care. Medical staff and maternity patients described women giving birth on

shared beds, or on the floor in overwhelmed wards, while some women were unable to reach healthcare facilities at all.

Israel's severe and unpredictable restrictions on humanitarian aid and essential supplies left health facilities often unable to provide even minimum standards of care. Doctors, nurses and midwives described chronic shortages of medicines, equipment and other basic supplies. Life-saving machines frequently failed due to fuel shortages or lack of spare parts. As of the beginning of October 2026, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, 44% of essential medicines were at zero stock and over half of medical consumables and 83% of laboratory testing materials were unavailable – with maternal and child health being one of the health sectors most badly hit by deficits in 2026. While shortages of medical supplies and equipment may be partially attributed to underfunding and possible diversion, the main obstacle remains restrictions and lengthy delays imposed by Israel, particularly affecting diagnostic and medical imaging services.

These conditions affected pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period. Limited diagnostic capacity meant complications went undetected, which exacerbated their negative impact on women and their pregnancies. Essential medicines, such as Anti-D immunoglobulin (given to prevent complications when a pregnant woman and her fetus have incompatible blood groups), were frequently unavailable. Healthcare professionals linked these shortages to miscarriages and other adverse pregnancy outcomes, including in subsequent pregnancies. Shortages of anaesthesia, medicines to manage labour and haemorrhage, and blood products compromised care during delivery and in critical cases, proved fatal. Newborns were forced to share incubators and other life-saving equipment, leading to increased infections and neonatal deaths.

Hanaa (name changed) described how her son died from a congenital heart disease after sharing an incubator and contracting an infection in Nasser hospital in November 2025.

"He died after 20 days… On the first day [after his birth], he was put in the incubator with another baby. Someone who worked in the NICU and knew my husband told him that the other baby had a blood infection and should not be with other babies… 4-5 days later, doctors told us that our son caught a blood infection."

Hanaa also described how during those 20 days "[Doctors] said they could not keep him on the oxygen machine enough time because of the shortages in oxygen".

As of 1 October 2026, Israel's ongoing arbitrary restrictions on the entry of goods and equipment into Gaza – including based on the "dual use" policy – continued to cause severe shortages of essential medication leading to preventable deaths, suffering and devastating conditions of life for Palestinians in Gaza. One healthcare professional, for example, told Amnesty International that shortages of an essential medicine used to treat premature babies forced staff to subject infants to additional invasive procedures, causing avoidable pain and complicating their care and recovery. The Israeli Ministry of Defense's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) classifies thousands of essential goods, including medical supplies and diagnostic equipment, as "dual use". Vague and unpredictable, the "dual use" policy grants COGAT broad discretion, with little to no oversight or transparency, to reject or delay the entry of life-saving items into Gaza.

FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND THE DESTRUCTION OF HOMES: ACCRUED IMPACT ON WOMEN

Israeli forces have forcibly displaced over 90% of Gaza's population, many repeatedly and under life-threatening conditions. As of October 2026, 86% of Gaza's population remain displaced, according to the Danish Refugee Council and Agricultural Development Association.

Between October 2023 and October 2025, the Israeli military issued at least 161 "evacuation" orders in shifting, overlapping and at times contradictory patterns, directing civilians to places that were themselves unsafe or later attacked. Displacement tore apart families, with relatives separated during evacuations, detained at checkpoints, trapped in different parts of Gaza, or unable to reunite due to hostilities and movement restrictions.

For pregnant and post-partum women, displacement often became an ordeal of physical survival. Thirty-seven-year-old Ola told Amnesty International how, shortly after giving birth in November 2023 in Gaza City, her family members, including her 14-year-old son, were killed in an air strike, and the surviving family were forcibly displaced:

"I was recovering from a caesarean section. I walked toward al-Falah School but left shortly before it was hit. We then went to another relative's home near the school that was struck. We spent a night of terror and were then displaced to the south… I walked about 14 km on foot while recovering from the caesarean. I would walk

two steps, then sit down to rest. I left with my husband's brother's children; they had lost both parents, and I had to take care of them. I, so in need of care myself, had to care for orphans and my own children and to walk with them."

Women described displacement as deeply humiliating, forcing them into overcrowded, unsanitary and precarious conditions. They struggled to care for children and maintain personal and menstrual hygiene, amid acute shortages of water, sanitation, and basic supplies.

According to the UN, World Bank, and European Union in April 2026, 76.6% of homes in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. For women, the loss of home was not only material, but also the loss of privacy, dignity, autonomy and control over daily life. Amal Siyyam, Director of the Women's Affairs Centre in Gaza, explained:

"A home is not just walls. It is not just a sofa, furniture, table; for women, it's a place where we feel safe, where we feel comfortable… Losing our home is losing part of our history, part of our body. It is our pictures, our memories. It is where we got married, had children, where our children grew up, where we would sit and talk. For all of us, our homes kept our memories. When we remember them, we cry; it was our life."



A displaced Palestinian woman looks at a portrait of her father as she sits amid debris at her destroyed home, in the Bureij refugee camp, in the central Gaza Strip, October 2025. © EYAD BABA/AFP via Getty Images

The forced evacuation of Gaza's two domestic violence shelters in Gaza City, combined with the broader collapse of existing protection systems, also left many women with nowhere to seek safety and protection. One of the shelters was run by a women's NGO in Gaza City. Residents were forced to leave following a mass "evacuation" order issued by Israeli forces on 13 October 2023 to residents of the north of Wadi Gaza, in the context of intense bombardment and military operations, with less than 24 hours' notice. The following month, the shelter was destroyed amid an Israeli military operation. Despite the conditions they face, women's organizations across Gaza continued to work under extraordinary constraints, including by reopening one domestic violence shelter in July 2024 and establishing other makeshift structures.

As of 1 October 2026, Israel's expansion of access-restricted zones to cover over 65% of Gaza had driven further displacement, confined Palestinians to an ever-shrinking area, and prevented many from returning to their homes and land. Ongoing Israeli restrictions on the entry of shelter and reconstruction materials further obstructed return.

GENDERED IMPACT OF STARVATION, DEPRIVATION AND EXPLOITATION

Since 7 October 2023, Israel's severe restrictions on the entry and distribution of food and other essential supplies into and across Gaza, combined with the destruction of local food production, have led to people throughout Gaza enduring acute hunger for prolonged periods and to waves of starvation. This was particularly severe during periods of full or near-total Israeli military sieges, including as imposed north of Wadi Gaza from January to April 2024, north Gaza governorate from October to December 2024, and all of Gaza from March to May 2025.

In July 2025, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) – the international food insecurity assessment system – stated that famine thresholds had been reached for food consumption in most of Gaza. WHO reported 421 malnutrition-related deaths in Gaza during that year.

Israel's deliberate restrictions have led to entirely foreseeable hunger and malnutrition, causing severe suffering, forcing people to survive on animal fodder, wild plants or irregular meals from community kitchens, or to go days without food. Women also described the daily reality of being unable to feed their children. They were often the last to eat and the first to sacrifice, giving their own portions to their children.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as infants, were particularly at risk. Malnutrition caused anaemia, weakened immunity, exhaustion and increased susceptibility to illness among pregnant women. It also increased the likelihood of adverse pregnancy outcomes, including fetal loss, premature birth, and low birth weight. Many women reported being unable to breastfeed because they themselves were malnourished, while infant formula was often unavailable or unaffordable.

While there has been an increase in the quantities of food entering Gaza since the so-called ceasefire of October 2025, restrictions and deprivation persisted. Women interviewed by Amnesty International in mid-2026 consistently said that on the occasions when nutritious food, baby formula and supplements were available, they were often unaffordable or irregularly distributed. Many said they continued to skip meals or sacrifice so their children could eat.

An IPC assessment published in July 2026 found that more than 1.2 million people were facing crisis-level or worse food insecurity and reported continuing risks of acute malnutrition among children and pregnant and breastfeeding women, while projecting a further deterioration in conditions through the end of 2026.

Amina (name changed), whose family were farmers before they were forcibly displaced, and whose husband went missing during an Israeli raid on Al-Shifa hospital on 15 November 2023, described trying to feed her children in March 2026:

"My situation is so miserable. We depend on the community kitchens to eat. I line up to fill water and I collect wood and cardboard to set fire to heat water to shower my kids. I can't afford to buy food, new clothes, or any necessities for my children... I stopped going to look for aid so that I don't get exploited or harassed. Instead, I go late and collect whatever is left over at the distribution sites. Sometimes, when I am in pain and can't walk, my daughter goes out to collect the leftovers of vegetables and fruits after the market closes. She has to go out and beg for money. One time, a man held her for the whole day because he caught her collecting the leftovers of his fruits and vegetables. He accused her of stealing. I looked for her the whole day until someone told me where she was. I had to go and beg him to let her go."

Amina was one of several women, all women-headed households, who told Amnesty International that she felt compelled to risk being shot at the militarized aid distribution sites established by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), rather than endure continued exploitation, harassment or starvation. The GHF was a US- and Israel-backed aid distribution mechanism operating in four militarized sites fully controlled by the Israeli military from May to October 2025, to circumvent the existing UN-led aid distribution system. Amina witnessed people around her shot dead or injured by Israeli military or US security contractors. Dozens of women were reportedly killed while seeking aid at these sites, as were hundreds of men and boys.

The catastrophic levels of hunger and poverty, resulting from policies and practices that Amnesty International has found to form part of Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, exacerbated pre-existing gender inequalities and exposed some women and girls to heightened risks of gender-based violence, exploitation and harmful practices.

UN agencies and local women's groups reported that deprivation and repeated displacement contributed to increased child marriage as families struggled to cope with extreme hardship. One 15-year-old girl and her mother told Amnesty International in May 2026 that forced displacement and deprivation caused by the Israeli blockade had left their family feeling they had no option but to compel the girl into marriage a year

earlier, when she was 14. She described being subjected to sexual and other forms of violence by her "husband".

REPRODUCTIVE AUTONOMY

The cumulative impact of Israel's attacks on healthcare, restrictions on essential supplies, forced displacement and starvation has been particularly devastating, leaving many women with little or no control over decisions relating to pregnancy, childbirth and their reproductive health.

Israeli attacks and its unlawful blockade have resulted in the near-total collapse of assisted reproductive services in Gaza. Before October 2023, Gaza had an advanced fertility sector, with at least nine clinics providing IVF and related services. By mid-2026, only one of those clinics remained partially functional, offering limited services but not IVF. Three fertility doctors told Amnesty International at this time that IVF services were now completely unavailable in Gaza.

Amnesty International documented that two IVF facilities were damaged because of attacks and were unable to recover or resume operating as a result of the Israeli blockade on essential items entering Gaza. According to three fertility doctors Amnesty International spoke to, other clinics were also forced to close because of damage from attacks and the unlawful blockade. Thousands of stored embryos, sperm and eggs were destroyed, representing not only years of medical effort and financial investment but, for many, their only opportunity to conceive. These losses were compounded by restrictions preventing Palestinians from leaving Gaza to access fertility care elsewhere.

Azza (name changed), 27, had undergone IVF treatment before October 2023 and became pregnant with twins. However, she was forced to endure a complex last trimester of pregnancy amid bombardment, displacement and immense barriers to medical treatment. She described experiencing cramps and bleeding after a nearby air strike, and that a few weeks later, on 30 December 2023, she experienced a medical emergency:

"We went to Al-Sahaba hospital and delivered both babies, but they needed to be immediately taken to the NICU, which the hospital did not have. They died half an hour later… They did not let me see the babies.

After the babies died, my husband went to check on the [Al-Basma IVF] clinic as we lost contact with them. He saw it destroyed. After many tries, I managed to talk to the nurse on the phone and asked her if they were able to save the embryos; she said everything was destroyed.

At this point, I felt I had lost everything and felt hopeless… I live in a tent with my husband, my mother-in-law, her daughter and granddaughter. I often sit by myself crying or sleeping… My heart breaks every time I see children around me."

The ongoing violence, hunger, repeated displacement, destruction of healthcare services, and profound uncertainty about whether they could safely carry a pregnancy, give birth, or care for a child, also left other women feeling unable or unwilling to pursue pregnancy.

A total of 13 women told Amnesty International that, because of what they had endured, they were too traumatized or did not feel able to have a child or further children. Two doctors and two case managers with a women's NGO likewise described a pattern among their patients or clients of women delaying or abandoning plans to have children for similar reasons.

DETENTION AND GENDER-BASED HARMS

Dozens of women were detained and subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, while hundreds of others were left searching for disappeared husbands, sons, fathers and brothers.

Amnesty International has estimated that at least 85 women from Gaza were detained for weeks or months, or in a smaller number of cases, over a year, by Israeli forces between 7 October 2023 and early 2026, most in late 2023 or early 2024. The 12 released women Amnesty International interviewed described being held incommunicado, and consistently described threats, beatings, invasive strip-searches, denial of menstrual hygiene products, and humiliation by Israeli guards or security personnel. None were charged with or tried for any offence. Their accounts suggest that some were detained in connection with the alleged actions or perceived affiliations of male relatives or others, or as potential sources of intelligence or pressure, which would constitute collective punishment and gender-based discrimination.

Ohood (name changed) told Amnesty International that she was strip-searched at least ten times during her 50 days in detention. She described the first instance, in December 2024, while being initially detained:

"It was by female soldiers, but there were ten or so male soldiers around the door. At the time, there were snipers pointing towards my head and heart… They forced me to take all of [my clothes] off, including my abaya, including my underwear. The doors and windows in the room were all open… They asked me to turn around slowly. Everyone could see me."

Several women reported that Israeli forces had threatened them with rape, sexualized insults and severe psychological abuse, including threats to kill their children at the point of detention, or taunting them that their children would be killed or were already dead during interrogations. Amnesty International is also among a number of organizations – including the UN Commission of Inquiry, and Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations – that have documented rape and other sexual assault against Palestinian men in detention.

GENOCIDE

This report finds that Israel is continuing to commit genocide against Palestinians in Gaza (as of October 2026, the end of the review period of this report), at a minimum through the ongoing deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction and through causing serious bodily and mental harm to members of the group. In addition, the report raises serious concerns that Israel has committed genocide through the imposition of measures intended to prevent births of Palestinians in Gaza, and calls for Israel to also be investigated for this crime.

CONDITIONS OF LIFE CALCULATED TO PHYSICALLY DESTROY PALESTINIANS

In December 2024, Amnesty International concluded that between October 2023 and June 2024, Israel deliberately inflicted conditions of life calculated to physically destroy Palestinians in Gaza through a combination of damage to and destruction of objects indispensable for the survival of the civilian population, mass forced displacement in inhumane conditions, and the denial and obstruction of essential services and life-saving supplies.

The evidence documented throughout this report further demonstrates Israel's systematic and ongoing destruction of conditions necessary for life in Gaza, through Israeli attacks on healthcare facilities, mass "evacuation" orders and ongoing forced displacement, house destructions, and severe illegal restrictions on the entry of aid and essential services. It demonstrates how Israeli conduct deprived pregnant and post-partum women of maternity care, food and other essentials; left women unable to meet their own and their families' basic needs; denied newborns life-saving treatment; and imposed conditions that ultimately led to the foreseeable increase of gender-based violence while dismantling systems of protection. Cumulative conditions imposed and maintained by Israel also caused preventable deaths of women, newborns and people with chronic illnesses, through the destruction of healthcare infrastructure and severe restrictions on the entry and delivery of humanitarian aid and essential supplies.

The evidence documented in this report also demonstrates that, through October 2026, Israel continued to inflict such conditions, particularly through the ongoing deprivation of goods and essential services through its unlawful blockade, the almost blanket denial of Palestinians entering or exiting Gaza, and the violent expansion and maintenance of access-restricted zones across over 65% of Gaza, forcing Palestinians into an ever-shrinking, overcrowded area and exacerbating already inhumane living conditions.

CAUSING SERIOUS BODILY AND MENTAL HARM

The evidence in this report likewise adds to Amnesty International's earlier findings to further demonstrate how Israel caused serious bodily and mental harm on a massive scale.

As a result of Israel's unlawful conduct, women have suffered severe and life-changing physical injuries, severe hunger and malnutrition, reproductive harms including miscarriage and pregnancy loss, unsafe childbirth, and severe post-partum complications. They have also been subjected to trauma through killings, arbitrary detention and disappearances of family members, mass and repeated forced displacement and the

destruction of their homes and livelihoods – often suffered cumulatively. Israeli security forces also subjected women in detention to ill-treatment, including sexual violence.

These harms have had grave and long-term disadvantages on women in Gaza and their ability to lead "a normal and constructive life", the relevant threshold of harm for this prohibited act as established by international jurisprudence.

This also did not end with the so-called ceasefire. Through at least October 2026, women and girls continued to suffer severe physical and psychological harm from unlawful Israeli conduct, including suffering caused by the deprivation of medical supplies and other essential goods, the near-blanket prohibitions on exit and entry to Gaza, including for many patients with urgent medical needs, and the pain and uncertainty of ongoing, protracted and indefinite forced displacement in uninhabitable conditions. For many women, these harms accumulated over time, compounding the long-term consequences of injuries, trauma and deprivation already endured. In addition to the over 5,000 injuries reported from attacks after the "ceasefire", available data on mental health among the population of Gaza in 2025 and 2026 shows high rates of psychiatric disorders. Several women described suffering severe trauma symptoms to Amnesty International.

KILLING MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

In December 2024, Amnesty International concluded that, between October 2023 and June 2024, Israel carried out unlawful attacks that deliberately killed and seriously injured many civilians in Gaza.

This current report shows how during the same time period and until October 2025, Israeli forces killed Palestinian women and girls in unlawful attacks in their homes or displacement shelters, while seeking medical care, inside maternity departments, or while attempting to access food.

Israel's repeated attacks on residential buildings and the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in densely populated urban areas contributed to both the high number of civilian casualties and the significant proportion of women among those killed, at least until the so-called ceasefire.

Beyond those directly killed in military attacks, women and newborn babies also died as a result of Israel's destruction of healthcare infrastructure, repeated forced displacement in inhumane conditions, severe restrictions on humanitarian aid and essential supplies, and the resulting malnutrition, disease and collapse of medical services, particularly as a result of the cumulative harm imposed.

MEASURES INTENDED TO PREVENT BIRTH

Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention prohibits measures intended to prevent births within a protected group. The evidence collected by Amnesty International provides a substantial basis to conclude that Israel imposed measures that had and continue to have the effect of preventing births among Palestinians in Gaza.

Israeli measures prevented conception. Israel's attacks and blockade led to the closure of all IVF facilities that had existed in Gaza before October 2023 and prevented doctors from re-establishing IVF services. Thousands of embryos and other reproductive material were destroyed. Opportunities for Palestinians to travel outside Gaza for IVF treatment continue to be severely constrained by Israel's blockade. The cumulative effect of Israel's conduct is the effective denial of access to IVF treatment.

In addition, Israeli measures have impaired gestation and childbirth. Israeli attacks devastated maternity hospitals and maternal healthcare services and deprived many women of access to essential antenatal and obstetric care. Pregnant women, including those with high-risk pregnancies, were repeatedly forcibly displaced, sometimes under fire, to locations not fit for human habitation, away from their healthcare providers. Israel's blockade and restrictions on medical items, fuel and adequate food further undermined maternity care, and along with the destruction of food production across Gaza, contributed to malnutrition. In some instances, these measures, alone or cumulatively, led to fetal loss and other adverse pregnancy outcomes.

Conditions imposed by Israel also contributed to a broader pattern in which some women abandoned plans for future pregnancies, including because of severe trauma, fear and uncertainty they had been forced to endure. International jurisprudence recognizes that measures intended to prevent births within a group may be physical or mental in nature, including where members of a group are led through trauma not to procreate.

Available data from 2025 and 2026 indicate a marked increase in miscarriages, stillbirths and other adverse pregnancy outcomes, alongside a marked decrease in birth rates among Palestinians in Gaza in 2024 and 2025. According to Palestinian Ministry of Health data, for example, the number of live births recorded during the first six months of 2025 was approximately 41% lower than during the same period in 2022. OCHA also reported a decline in deliveries during the first half of 2026 compared to the first half of 2025.

SPECIFIC INTENT

Genocide is distinguished from other international crimes by its additional specific intent requirement (*dolus specialis*): the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a protected group as such.

Amnesty International previously concluded in December 2024 that Israel had committed prohibited acts under the Genocide Convention Article II(a), (b) and (c) with the specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza as such, and that this intent could be inferred from the pattern of Israel's conduct in Gaza, statements by senior Israeli officials and other contextual evidence.

This report provides additional evidence to our 2024 analysis by demonstrating Israel's deliberate course of conduct continuing through October 2026, as well as statements from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other senior Israeli officials involved in decision-making referring to or advocating for these policies and decisions. These include the forcible transfer of population, the concentration of the population into limited, heavily surveilled pockets of land, restrictions on or suspension of humanitarian aid, large-scale destruction, prevention of reconstruction, maintaining and expanding access-restricted zones and trapping Gaza in a protracted limbo of displacement.

The genocidal act of Article II(d) of the Genocide Convention, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, has an additional intent requisite: *the intent to prevent births* within the protected group.

While Amnesty International did not identify any policy, order or statement expressly stating an intention to prevent births on the part of Israeli authorities, international jurisprudence has consistently held that the requisite intent may be inferred from a pattern of conduct and the broader context in which the acts were committed.

The evidence set out in this report – when considered in its totality – indicates a widespread and systematic dismantling of the conditions necessary for many Palestinians in Gaza to conceive, carry pregnancies to term, and give birth to living children. Israel's actions prevented access to fertility treatment necessary for some Palestinians to conceive and they contributed to pregnancy complications, including miscarriages and stillbirths, thereby preventing pregnancies from resulting in live births.

The International Court of Justice required Israel, in three binding orders it issued in 2024, to take all measures within its power to prevent acts falling within Article II of the Genocide Convention, including "imposing measures intended to prevent births." International fact-finding bodies, UN agencies, human rights and humanitarian organizations repeatedly warned about the devastating impact of Israeli policies and practices on reproductive health, pregnancy outcomes and birth rates in Gaza.

Despite these orders and warnings, Israel continued and, in some cases, intensified the measures causing these harms over a period of three years through the unlawful blockade and its associated restrictions, while actions that could have alleviated or mitigated some of these harms were not implemented.

Thus, the evidence presented in this report demonstrates that the prevention of births was not an isolated, peripheral or unexpected consequence of Israel's overall pattern of conduct. Instead, it was the foreseeable outcome of policies and practices maintained and repeated by Israel over a three-year period, despite extensive notice of their effects.

However, the measures resulting in the prevention of births have been imposed while Israel concurrently inflicts conditions of life calculated to physically destroy Palestinians in Gaza. It is therefore difficult to infer from these circumstances whether there was a separate and distinct intent on the part of Israeli authorities to prevent births among Palestinians in Gaza through these measures. Amnesty International could thus not reach a definitive conclusion regarding the requisite intent to prevent births. However, Amnesty International considers that the pattern of conduct documented in this report raises serious concerns that Israel intended to prevent births among Palestinians in Gaza, and that this conduct should therefore be investigated as genocide through imposing measures intended to prevent births.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Israel must immediately end its genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and urgently facilitate humanitarian action and reconstruction, including by allowing the entry into Gaza of medical items, including those essential for reproductive health and autonomy, and other equipment and material necessary for the repair of life-sustaining infrastructure. These efforts must be carried out in a manner responsive to all Palestinians in Gaza, including women and girls, and ensure their full, equal and meaningful participation in shaping humanitarian, recovery, reconstruction and accountability processes.

In the face of Israel's disregard for these legal obligations, third states must live up to their own obligations under international law to prevent and punish genocide, including by taking all bilateral and multilateral measures to bring Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, its system of apartheid imposed against Palestinians and unlawful occupation of Palestinian territory to an end. This must include an immediate ban on arms trade with Israel, targeted sanctions on Israeli officials implicated in the commission of genocide and other crimes under international law and the regulation of the private sector to prevent any form of contribution that would lend further sustainability to Israel's violations of international law, including those uniquely or disproportionately harming women and girls as documented in this report. To end the long cycle of impunity for Israel's crimes against Palestinians, states must also urgently ensure justice and accountability for any alleged crimes under international law, including genocide, perpetrated in Gaza since 7 October 2023 by exercising domestic, universal or other forms of extraterritorial criminal jurisdiction and by supporting the investigation of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) into the situation in the State of Palestine, including through the execution of any ICC arrest warrants.

Amnesty International calls on states that are members of the USA-led Board of Peace to place human rights, including women's rights, and international law at the absolute centre of their actions, and to refrain from making any decision or measure designed to undermine existing UN mechanisms, including UNRWA, or any step that risks fragmenting Gaza or isolating it from the rest of the OPT. Amnesty International also warns member states of the Board of Peace from engaging in any action that may result in destroying evidence of crimes under international law, including genocide.

Third states, intergovernmental organizations and other donors should urgently support Palestinian women's rights activists and women's groups operating in Gaza, as well as Palestinian and international organizations providing humanitarian support, including reproductive healthcare, protection from gender-based violence and support to women-headed households. Finally, Amnesty International calls on the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC to consider the commission of the crime of genocide by Israeli officials since October 2023 and ensure that its ongoing investigations adequately examine gender-based crimes and reproductive harms.

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NO CONDITIONS FOR LIFE

WOMEN, GIRLS AND THE GENDERED DIMENSIONS OF ISRAEL'S GENOCIDE AGAINST PALESTINIANS IN GAZA

Since the start of Israel's military offensive on the occupied Gaza Strip in October 2023, Israeli violations of unprecedented magnitude and duration have devastated the lives of Palestinian women and girls in Gaza.

Israeli forces have killed thousands of women and girls, many through attacks that violated international humanitarian law. Women and girls have been forced into a daily struggle for survival marred by grief, trauma, violence, repeated displacement, extreme deprivation, fear and loss. They have been deprived of access to essential healthcare, stripped of the conditions to support themselves and their families, and put at increased risk of gender-based violence. Israel's actions have also severely undermined Palestinians' ability to decide if and when to have children, carry pregnancies to term, and give birth safely.

Amnesty International found that these harms form part of Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. It concludes that Israel's genocide has continued despite the so-called October 2025 ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and that the cumulative harms inflicted on women and girls have been integral to Israel's pattern of conduct. States must pressure Israel to end its genocide, address gendered harms and urgently facilitate humanitarian action and reconstruction.

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