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GAZA REPORT Q&A

1. What is the definition of genocide?

[The Genocide Convention](#) states that genocide is “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such”:

- Killing members of the group,
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group,
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part,
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, and
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

To determine that certain conduct amounts to genocide, one or more of these five acts must be committed “with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.”

Genocidal intent may be assessed based on direct evidence or, in its absence, inferred from indirect or circumstantial evidence, including: the general context in which prohibited acts were committed; the existence of patterns of conduct; the scale and allegedly systematic nature of the prohibited acts; and the scale, nature, extent and degree of casualties and harm against the protected group.

2. What are Amnesty's findings and what are the key arguments backing them?

Amnesty International concludes based on the evidence gathered that Israel committed and is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza following 7 October 2023, through its policies, actions and omissions. The organization's documentation found that Israel committed acts prohibited under the Genocide Convention with specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza, as such, who form a substantial part of the Palestinian population, which constitutes a group protected under the Genocide Convention.

Amnesty International's report focused on three of the five acts prohibited under the Genocide Convention:

- Killing members of the group,
- Causing them serious mental and bodily harm, and
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.

The [report](#) highlights how Israel imposed conditions of life calculated to destroy Palestinians in Gaza through three patterns of events: the wide scale damage and destruction of critical infrastructure and other objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, repeated waves of mass forced displacement in unsafe and inhumane conditions and obstruction of or restrictions on the entry and delivery of life-saving supplies, including humanitarian aid, and essential services in Gaza – all of which occurred simultaneously, for months without respite, compounding each other's harmful effects. Through an analysis of 15 air strikes and a review of analysis by other organizations that focused, amongst others on Israel's use of heavy weapons in densely populated urban areas, it also highlights how Israel's bombardment of Gaza intentionally caused a very high number of fatalities and injuries among the civilian population.



3. How does Amnesty demonstrate that there is an “intent” to destroy the group?

Amnesty International’s report looks at the totality of available evidence in a holistic manner to assess whether Israel committed prohibited acts with the intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza as such. The report’s analysis follows the International Court of Justice’s (ICJ) jurisprudence on genocide, which in turn relies on the case law of international criminal tribunals. According to the jurisprudence, genocidal intent may be assessed based on direct evidence or, in its absence, inferred from indirect or circumstantial evidence. To establish Israel’s specific intent to physically destroy Palestinians in Gaza, Amnesty International considered:

- The overall pattern of Israel’s conduct in Gaza,
- Dehumanizing and genocidal statements by Israeli government and military officials,
- The context of Israel’s system of [apartheid](#), its inhumane blockade of Gaza and the unlawful 57-year-old [military occupation](#) of the Palestinian territory (which includes the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza).

Amnesty International analyzed the overall pattern of the state of Israel’s conduct in Gaza, notably the repeated direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects and deliberately indiscriminate strikes, the scale and speed of damage and destruction to Palestinian homes, shelters, health facilities, water and sanitation infrastructure, agricultural land and cultural property, the number of civilian casualties, the repeated use of explosive weapons with wide area effect in densely populated residential areas, the repeated use of sweeping and often misleading “evacuation” orders; the torture and incommunicado detention of Palestinians from Gaza and the continuous refusal to allow adequate humanitarian aid to enter Gaza. It considered all these factors within the wider context of Israel’s system of apartheid, unlawful occupation of the Palestinian territory and the unlawful blockade it has imposed on Gaza, which has oppressed Palestinians and caused immense human suffering.

Amnesty International reviewed 102 statements issued by Israeli government and military officials between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024 that dehumanized Palestinians, called for or justified genocidal acts or other crimes against them. Amongst these, we have identified 22 statements made by senior officials in charge of managing the offensive that appeared to call for, or justify, genocidal acts, providing direct evidence of genocidal intent.

The report applies the “only reasonable inference” standard employed by the ICJ to infer intent from a pattern of conduct. Despite Israel’s stated military aim to defeat Hamas and release the hostages, international law indicates that a state can act with genocidal intent while at the same time pursuing additional goals. Even if military goals were being pursued by Israel, the totality of evidence indicates that the only reasonable inference that can be drawn from the pattern of Israel’s conduct in Gaza is that it was also seeking to destroy Palestinians in Gaza as such, meaning its military offensive and related acts and omissions in Gaza have been conducted with genocidal intent.

4. How did Amnesty conduct this research?

Amnesty International’s determination and extensive report is based on our documentation of Israel’s pattern of conduct in Gaza, through both field and remote research. The organization interviewed 212 people, including Palestinian victims and witnesses of air strikes, displacement, detention, torture, destruction of farms, homes and agricultural land and civilian infrastructure, and individuals who faced the impact of Israel’s restrictions on humanitarian aid. To understand concerns related to humanitarian access and conditions of life in Gaza, Amnesty International also spoke with members of local authorities in Gaza, Palestinian healthcare workers operating in medical facilities in Gaza and individuals involved in the humanitarian response.

Amnesty International also analyzed an extensive range of visual and digital evidence, including satellite imagery, video footage and photos, and reviewed a huge range of statements, datasets and reports by Israeli



and Palestinian human rights groups, UN agencies and humanitarian organizations operating in Gaza. The organization also reviewed and analyzed statements by senior Israeli government and military officials and official Israeli bodies.

Despite repeated efforts to reach out to Israeli ministries and branches of government over several months during the course of carrying out research, by the time of publication Amnesty International had not received a response from Israeli authorities.

5. Why are you releasing this now and what are you trying to accomplish with it?

Israel's brutal and relentless assault on Gaza has been going on for more than a year. In terms of casualties and destruction, it has been unprecedented in scale, speed and severity. Yet there is still no ceasefire on the horizon and no end in sight to the immense human suffering unfolding before our eyes.

Our findings must serve as a wake-up call to the international community: this is genocide, and it must stop now. By publishing this report now, Amnesty International's goal is to help stop the on-going genocide in Gaza and prevent further acts of genocide against Palestinians and reiterate the urgency of the need for a ceasefire. In the longer term, its aim is to support measures aimed at accountability for crimes under international law, including genocide, and other serious human rights violations, and justice and reparation for victims and survivors.

States that continue to transfer arms to Israel, particularly the U.S., must know they are violating their obligation to prevent genocide and are at risk of becoming complicit in genocide. Amnesty International has documented Israel's use of US-made weapons in attacks on Gaza during this conflict that have unlawfully killed and injured civilians.

6. Doesn't Israel have the right to defend itself? Can't Israel's conduct in Gaza be explained as aimed at destroying the threat posed by Hamas, rather than destroying Palestinians in Gaza?

Under international law, there can be no justification for international crimes, including genocide. Israel has an obligation under international law to protect all people subject to its jurisdiction or under its effective control, including in occupied territory – whether Palestinians or Israelis. However, acts taken in the name of security must comply with international law, and they must be proportionate to the threat posed.

Over the years, Israel has repeatedly used security to justify its serious human rights violations and war crimes against Palestinians. It has imposed an illegal blockade on Gaza, collectively punishing its civilian population, and sweeping, severe and long-term restrictions on freedom of movement of Palestinians in the West Bank, amongst other violations. Threats to its security can never justify committing genocide in Gaza or imposing a system of apartheid over Palestinians.

Israel claims that its actions in Gaza are lawful and can be justified by its military goal to eradicate Hamas. But regardless of whether Israel sees the destruction of Palestinians as instrumental to destroying Hamas or as an acceptable by-product of this goal, this view of Palestinians as disposable and not worthy of consideration is in itself evidence of genocidal intent. Indeed, viewing those targeted as subhuman, as not warranting protection, is a consistent feature of genocide.

The war crimes committed by Hamas and other armed groups on southern Israel on 7 October including deliberate mass killings and hostage-taking, can never justify Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.



7. What has Amnesty said about the war crimes committed by Hamas and other Palestinian groups on 7 October 2023?

Amnesty International unequivocally condemned the violations and atrocity crimes perpetrated by Hamas and other armed groups in Israel on 7-8 October 2023. In a [press release published just days after the attacks](#), the organization highlighted how Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups had flagrantly violated international law and displayed a chilling disregard for human life by carrying out cruel and brutal crimes, including deliberate killings, hostage-taking, and launching indiscriminate rocket attacks into Israel. It called for Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups to be held accountable for these crimes under international law. The organization verified chilling video footage showing armed men shooting at civilians and dragging people away as hostages. Amnesty International has consistently called for all civilians held hostage to be released immediately, unconditionally, and unharmed. It has also called for all other captives to be treated humanely and visited by international monitors.

The organization's wider investigation into the 7 October 2023 attacks and their aftermath is ongoing. Through this research we will examine the full scale and range of crimes carried out by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in southern Israel.

8. What should the international community do now?

Our findings must serve as a wake-up call to the international community: this is genocide, and it must stop now. We are releasing this report to help stop the ongoing genocide, prevent further acts of genocide against Palestinians, and reiterate the urgency of a ceasefire.

States that continue to transfer arms to Israel, must know they are violating their obligation to prevent genocide and are at risk of becoming complicit in genocide.

Amnesty calls on Israel to immediately stop its genocide in Gaza and to engage and cooperate fully with the proceedings before the ICJ. In particular, we call on Israel to immediately and fully comply with all provisional measures ordered by the ICJ since 26 January 2024, including by taking urgent steps to drastically improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza, granting immediate and unimpeded access to Gaza to independent international investigative bodies, and taking effective measures to ensure that all evidence related to genocide and other crimes under international law is preserved.

Meanwhile, states need to move beyond mere expressions of regret or dismay and take strong action to pressure Israel to stop all acts of genocide in Gaza and implement all provisional measures ordered by the ICJ since 26 January 2024.

States must immediately suspend all arms transfers to Israel and stop the provision of training and other military and security assistance. States must act to ensure justice and accountability for any alleged crimes under international law, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, by exercising universal or other forms of extraterritorial criminal jurisdiction.

States must also respond to the atrocities inflicted on Palestinians by pressuring Israel to end its unlawful occupation of Gaza and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory in line with the ICJ's advisory opinion of July 2024. Israel must lift its unlawful blockade of Gaza which had been slowly inflicting harmful conditions of life on Palestinians for 16 years before 7 October 2023. Such systemic change is imperative to put an end to Israel's crimes under international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and prevent the further commission of acts of genocide.