

THE TIME OF GENOCIDE

By 2023, the 2.2 million people of Gaza had undergone nearly four decades of direct Israeli occupation, followed by nearly two decades of rule by Hamas during which Israel imposed a ruthless blockade and launched four major military offensives. Then came the genocide.



October 2023 Hamas leads armed attacks on southern Israel by Palestinian armed groups, who kill 1,200 Israelis and other nationals – mostly civilians – and take 251 people hostage. Israel launches massive military operations in Gaza and steps up the 16-year blockade, cutting off supplies of food, water, electricity, fuel and medicines. Amnesty International calls on all parties to the conflict to abide by international law and protect civilians: deliberately targeting civilians, carrying out disproportionate attacks, and indiscriminate attacks which kill or injure civilians are war crimes.

November 2023 A seven-day truce sees the release of 105 hostages (Israelis and other nationals) by Hamas and the release of 240 Palestinians, many of whom had been held without trial, by Israel.

December 2023 By the end of the year, the Israeli assault has killed 21,600 Palestinians in Gaza, a third of them children; wrecked 60 per cent of homes in the territory; and displaced 1.9 million of its 2.2 million people. The USA vetoes a UN Security Council resolution for an immediate ceasefire. South Africa takes Israel to the International Court of Justice, alleging breaches of the Genocide Convention.

January 2024 At least nine states, including the USA and the UK, suspend funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), after Israel claims that 12 of UNRWA's 30,000 staff were involved in the

7 October attacks. UNRWA had provided food, water, medical aid, shelter and education to the people of Gaza during Israel's military offensive. The International Court of Justice orders Israel to take measures to prevent genocide in Gaza.



March 2024 The UN Security Council calls for a ceasefire during Ramadan, release of the hostages, and greater humanitarian access to Gaza.

May 2024 Israel extends its ground offensive to Rafah, in southern Gaza, where 1.5 million people have taken shelter. The International Court of Justice rules that Israel, to conform with its obligations under the Genocide Convention, must halt its military offensive in Rafah Governorate, open the Rafah-Egypt border crossing to humanitarian aid, and provide unimpeded access to Gaza for UN investigators. The World Health Organisation reports that 727,909 people, particularly children, have been affected by water- and sanitation-related diseases.

June 2024 By the end of the month, all sewage treatment facilities in Gaza have been destroyed.

July 2024 Oxfam reports severe water shortages, caused by systematic destruction of Gaza's water and sanitation infrastructure. The International Court of Justice finds Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory unlawful: Israel should end its occupation as quickly as possible, cease settlement activities, evacuate settlers, and make reparations.

August 2024 The World Health Organisation reports the first confirmed case of polio in Gaza for 25 years.

September 2024 The UN General Assembly demands that Israel leave the Occupied Palestinian Territory within 12 months.

October 2024 Israel's parliament passes a law banning UNRWA from operating in Israel.

November 2024 The International Criminal Court issues arrest warrants for Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, its former defence minister Yoav Gallant, and a Hamas leader, Mohammed Diab Ibrahim al-Masri (known as Deif).



December 2024 An Amnesty International investigation reports that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. By the end of the year, Israeli attacks have caused 23,000 immediate deaths. About 60 per cent of those killed were women, children and older people. About 90 per cent of Gaza's population have been forcibly displaced, most of them multiple times in response to repeated evacuation orders from the Israeli military. Of Gaza's 36 hospitals, only 17 were still functional at the end of the year.

January 2025 A ceasefire goes into effect.

March 2025 The first phase of the ceasefire expires without agreement on the second phase. Israel bans the entry of aid and commercial goods into Gaza and resumes massive airstrikes, killing more than 400 people within the first few hours.

March-April 2025 Palestinians in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza, organise peaceful marches demanding an end to Israel's genocide and criticising Hamas. Hamas suppressed the protests with beatings, threats and interrogations. ■



June 2025 An Israel- and US-backed organisation, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, purports to replace UN relief operations, but scores of Palestinians are killed or injured when they try to obtain food from its distribution hubs.

July 2025 Two leading Israeli human rights organisations, B'Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights Israel, say that Israel is committing genocide.

August 2025 The UN declares famine in Gaza.

September 2025 Israel steps up its offensive in Gaza City with attacks on high-rise buildings, and then orders residents to vacate the entire city. The UK recognises the state of Palestine, joining more than 150 other countries that have already done so. The UN's Independent International Commission of Inquiry concludes that Israeli authorities and forces have committed and continue to commit genocide in the occupied Gaza Strip.



October 2025 A peace plan issued by US President Donald Trump is agreed, following negotiations between Israel and Hamas mediated by Qatar, Egypt and Turkey. Hamas releases all surviving hostages. Israel releases 250 Palestinian prisoners and 1,718 detainees from Gaza. The International Court of Justice rules that Israel must ensure that people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory have the essential supplies of daily life. ■

PHOTOS
Opposite Israeli airstrikes on Gaza City, 12 October 2023. UN Security Council discusses a motion on Gaza, March 2024

This page Devastation in Nuseirat, central Gaza, December 2024. Displaced Palestinians take relief supplies to their tents, May 2025. US President Donald Trump poses with the ceasefire agreement. All photos © Getty Images