ASSESSING THE ENVIRONMENTAL, HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF ISRAELI MILITARY OPERATIONS IN PALESTINE: IS ISRAEL IN VIOLATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF DISTINCTION, PROPORTIONALITY, AND PRECAUTION?

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Abstract

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict remains one of the most protracted and complex disputes in contemporary international relations. The current phase of hostilities commenced on 7 October 2023, when Hamas launched coordinated attacks against Israel, killing more than 1, 200 Israelis and foreign nationals and abducting 253 hostages. In response, Israel declared war with the stated objective of dismantling Hamas and asserting control over the Gaza Strip. A ceasefire agreement mediated by the United States, Egypt, and Qatar was concluded on 15 January 2025 and implemented on 19 January 2025. However, Israel resumed military operations on 17 March 2025, citing security concerns. A second ceasefire agreement, signed on 9 October 2025 and effective from 10 October 2025, has reportedly been marred by continued Israeli hostilities, with allegations of near-daily attacks resulting in significant Palestinian civilian casualties. This paper adopts a doctrinal research method to evaluate the environmental, humanitarian, and socio-economic impacts of Israeli military operations in Palestine on the Palestinian people in the ongoing Hamas-instigated Israeli-Palestinian armed conflict. It finds that Israeli military campaign has produced extensive environmental degradation, severe humanitarian distress, and profound socio-economic disruption in Palestine, particularly within the Gaza Strip. The paper argues that the scale and pattern of these impacts raise serious concerns regarding compliance with core principles of international humanitarian law–namely distinction, proportionality, and precaution, which regulate the conduct of hostilities. It concludes by recommending sustained diplomatic and political engagement by the international community, including the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and regional Arab states, to facilitate an end to the armed conflict.

Keywords: Israeli–Palestinian conflict, Israel–Hamas war, International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Impacts of armed conflict, Principles of IHL

1. INTRODUCTION

On 7 October 2023, Hamas, a Palestinian Sunni Islamist armed group operating from the Gaza Strip, launched a large-scale attack against Israel, resulting in the deaths of more than 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals and the capture of approximately 253 hostages.[118] Reports indicate that many of the hostages were held under inhumane conditions, including exposure to various forms of physical and psychological abuse.[119] In response, Israel formally declared war, articulating its primary objectives as the dismantling of Hamas and the reassertion of control over the Gaza Strip. This response was accompanied by the imposition of a comprehensive siege on Gaza, extensive aerial bombardments widely regarded as among the most intense in contemporary warfare, and the initiation of a full-scale ground invasion on 27 October 2023.[120]

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict, however, predates these events by several decades and remains one of the most protracted and complex disputes in modern international relations.[121] Its contemporary origins are commonly traced to 1947, when the United Nations adopted the Partition Plan for Palestine, proposing the division of the territory into separate Jewish and Arab states.[122] While the plan was accepted by Jewish leaders, it was rejected by Arab states and Palestinian representatives, leading to subsequent hostilities and competing territorial claims.[123] Since then, the status of Palestinian territory has remained a central and unresolved issue within the international community, attracting sustained global attention and repeated diplomatic interventions.[124]

Numerous peace initiatives have been undertaken in efforts to resolve the conflict. These include the Oslo peace process (1993–2000), comprising the Oslo I Accord (1993) and the Oslo II

[118] M K J Cohen, Humanitarian Betrayal: Israel's Impact on Humanitarian Aid Delivery in Gaza (Canadian Forces College, Department of National Defense, 2024) <https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/49/305/Cohen.pdf?> accessed 5 October 2025.
[119] P Greenland, O Lakser and L Lipschutz, 'Importance of a Broader View of the Hamas–Israel War' (2024) 9 (e014378) *BMJ Glob Health*, 2.
[120] M K J Cohen (n 1); A Singhal, 'The Role of UN in the Israel and Palestine Conflict' (2024) 6(1) *International Journal of Law, Policy and Social Review*, 70.
[121] Wang Yu, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Origins, Impacts, and Ways Forward (International Cooperation Centre, 16 April, 2024) <https://en.icc.org.cn/thinktank_theories/intl_observation/314.html> accessed 27 March 2026.
[122] ibid.
[123] E Rusanti, 'Israel-Palestine Conflict: Tracking Global Economic Responses and Fears' (2025) 10(1) *Shirkah: Journal of Economics and Business*, 2.
[124] See A Montero Orti, The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: An Analysis of Palestine's Bid for Statehood (CEI International Affairs, 2015) 2.

Interim Agreement (1995); the Camp David Summit convened by U.S. President Bill Clinton in 2000; the Middle East Quartet's Road Map to Peace (2003), involving the United States, the United Nations, the Russian Federation, and the European Union; the Arab Peace Initiative (2002); the Geneva Accord (2003); Israel's unilateral Gaza Disengagement Plan (2004); the Annapolis Peace Conference (2007); the Kerry Initiative (2013–2014); and the Paris Peace Conference (2017).[125] Despite these sustained diplomatic efforts, a comprehensive and lasting resolution to the conflict has remained elusive.[126]

In parallel with these unsuccessful peace initiatives, the conflict has been marked by recurrent episodes of violence for several decades.[127] Notable among these are the December 2008–January 2009 hostilities, which lasted over three weeks and resulted in approximately 1,400 Palestinian and 13 Israeli fatalities, alongside the destruction of tens of thousands of homes and the displacement of approximately 20,000 individuals.[128] Subsequent escalations occurred in November 2012, lasting one week and causing the deaths of 174 Palestinians and six Israelis, as well as significant infrastructural damage.[129] The 2014 conflict, spanning from July to August, was particularly devastating, resulting in 2,251 Palestinian deaths–many of whom were civilians and 71 Israeli fatalities, in addition to widespread destruction of residential infrastructure and the displacement of approximately 100,000 people.[130]

The most recent phase of the conflict, which commenced on 7 October 2023, has generated unprecedented environmental, humanitarian, and socio-economic consequences for the approximately 2.3 million residents of the Gaza Strip, a population that was already experiencing severe structural vulnerabilities.[131] Efforts to halt hostilities led to a ceasefire agreement on 15 January 2025, which came into effect on 19 January 2025. However, this cessation of hostilities

[125] P Lintl, 'Issues and Recommendations' in Peter Lintl (ed.), *Actors in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Interests, Narratives and the Reciprocal Effects of the Occupation* (German Institute for International and Security Affairs, 2018) 5.
[126] ibid.
[127] HN Nwefuru, 'Israeli – Palestinian Conflict and the United Nations' Peace Initiative' (2017) 10(1) *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies*, 34.
[128] United Nations Country Team, Gaza Ten Years Later: United Nations Country Team in the Occupied Palestinian Territory Report (United Nations, 2017) 12.
[129] ibid.
[130] ibid.
[131] Christina Bouri and Diana Roy, The Israel-Hamas War: The Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza (Council on Foreign Relations, 8 February 2024) <https://www.cfr.org/articles/israel-hamas-war-humanitarian-crisis-gaza?> accessed 27 March 2026.

proved short-lived, as Israel resumed military operations on 17 March 2025, effectively terminating the ceasefire.[132]

A subsequent ceasefire agreement was concluded on 9 October 2025 and entered into force on 10 October 2025. Notwithstanding its formal adoption, multiple reports have alleged persistent violations of the agreement.[133] According to the Government Media Office in Gaza, Israeli forces reportedly committed at least 1,620 violations between 10 October 2025 and 10 February 2026.[134] These alleged breaches have included continued aerial bombardments, artillery shelling, and small-arms fire, contributing to ongoing casualties and destruction.[135]

Against this backdrop, the military operations undertaken by Israel in response to the 7 October 2023 Hamas attacks have had far-reaching implications for the Palestinian population, particularly in Gaza. These implications extend beyond immediate security concerns to encompass profound environmental degradation, severe humanitarian distress, and the systematic disruption of socio-economic structures.[136] The persistence of hostilities, coupled with repeated ceasefire breakdowns, underscores the enduring volatility of the conflict and the urgent need for a sustainable and legally grounded resolution.

The article develops across five additional sections. Sections 2, 3 and 4 evaluate the environmental impacts, humanitarian impacts, and socio-economic impacts respectively of Israeli military operations in Palestine. Section 5 overview international humanitarian law governing military operations and their application to the Israeli-Palestinian armed conflict. Section 6 concludes.

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[132] S Wafaa, F Julia and M Samy, Israel's surprise bombardment plunged Palestinians back into 'hell' (18 March 2025) <https://apnews.com/article/gaza-airstrikes-ceasefire-israel-palestinians-war-34d2d174417e3f7caf3 41406bc7 61c0e> accessed 11 March 2025; Aljazeera Labs, Israel strikes Gaza, breaking ceasefire: Live tracker (18 March 2025) <https://www.aljazeera.co m/news /2025/3/18/gaza-tracker> accessed 25 March 2025.

[133] Stephen Quillen, 'Israeli cabinet ratifies Gaza ceasefire, captive exchange deal with Hamas' *Aljazeera* (9 October 2025) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/10/9/israel-confirms-signing-phase-one-of-gaza-ceasefire-deal-with-hamas> accessed 27 March 2026.

[134] Aljazeera Labs, 'How many times has Israel violated the Gaza ceasefire? Here are the numbers' *Aljazeera* (25 February 2026) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/11/11/how-many-times-has-israel-violated-the-gaza-ceasefire-here-are-the-numbers> accessed 1 March 2026.

[135] ibid.

[136] United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The Economic Impact of the Israeli Military Operation in Gaza from October 2023 to May 2024 (UNGA, 2024) 5.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF ISRAELI MILITARY OPERATIONS IN PALESTINE

The effects of the Israeli-Palestinian war on the Palestinian environment are grave and come in multiple dimensions. This section examines the environmental effects of Israeli military operations in Palestine in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian war.

2.1 Sewage-Induced Water Pollution and Scarcity of Potable Drinking Water in Palestine

One of the most severe environmental consequences of the 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli–Palestinian war is the proliferation of sewage-induced water pollution and the intensification of potable water scarcity in the Gaza Strip. Extensive aerial bombardments and ground operations have caused large-scale destruction of water and sanitation infrastructure, thereby undermining already fragile systems. Within the first 89 days of the conflict, approximately 65,000 tons of explosives were deployed, resulting in widespread infrastructural damage.[137] By 23 October 2023, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that about 55 percent of Gaza's water infrastructure required repair or reconstruction.[138] This damage worsened over time, with reports indicating that by July 2024 more than 59 percent of water and sanitation infrastructure across Palestine had been affected.[139] Notably, a significant proportion of the damaged facilities—109 out of 290 identified water infrastructure objects were linked to wastewater management systems, including treatment plants and sewage networks.[140]

The destruction of wastewater infrastructure has led to the large-scale discharge of untreated sewage into the environment. Estimates suggest that approximately 34 million gallons of untreated sewage have been released daily into the Mediterranean Sea, contaminating coastal ecosystems and infiltrating inland areas, including shelters for displaced persons and public spaces.[141] Untreated sewage typically contains pathogenic microorganisms, organic pollutants, nutrients, hazardous chemicals, and plastics, all of which pose serious environmental and public

[137] M A E Hay, The Environmental-Humanitarian Impacts of the Israel-Hamas War in Gaza (Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, 2024) 4.
[138] ibid.
[139] UN OCHA, Reported Impact Snapshot: Gaza Strip (17 July 2024) <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-17-july-2024> accessed 11 December 2025.
[140] M Buheji and K Al-Muhannadi, 'Mitigating Risks of Environmental Impacts on Gaza - Review of Precautions & Solutions Post (2023 War)' (2023) 14(7) *International Journal of Advanced Research in Engineering and Technology*, 21.
[141] ibid.

health risks.[142] Direct human exposure to such contaminants has significantly increased the incidence of communicable diseases in Gaza.[143]

Empirical data underscore the magnitude of this public health crisis. An analysis by Oxfam, drawing on World Health Organization (WHO) data from February 2024, indicated that approximately 26 percent of Gaza's population had contracted largely preventable diseases due to inadequate water and sanitation conditions.[144] By May 2024, WHO reported approximately 800,000 cases of acute respiratory infections and over 400,000 cases of diarrhoeal diseases, including more than 100,000 cases among children of less than five years.[145] Additional reported conditions included over 92,000 cases of scabies and lice infestations, more than 55,000 instances of skin rashes, approximately 8,000 cases of chickenpox, and over 67,000 cases of acute jaundice syndrome.[146] These trends reflect the direct correlation between sewage contamination, water scarcity, and disease transmission.

Water scarcity in Gaza has been further exacerbated by both infrastructural destruction and restrictions on essential supplies. Damage to desalination plants, storage facilities, water wells, and distribution networks has drastically reduced water availability. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the degradation of water and sanitation systems has severely limited access to safe drinking water, forcing residents to rely on contaminated sources, heightening the risk of waterborne diseases.[147] Attacks between October 2023 and February 2025 reportedly damaged up to 89 percent of Gaza's water and sanitation infrastructure.[148] Concurrently, the closure imposed on 9 October 2023, which included the suspension of water and

[142] Xiaobo Zheng, 'The Environmental Impact of Sewage Dumping: A Comprehensive Examination' (2024) 13(4) *Int. Res. J. Res. Sci. Toxicol*, 1-2; United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Wastewater, Sewage and Sanitation <https://www.unep.org/cep/wastewater-sewage-and-sanitation> accessed 28 March 2026.
[143] United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Environmental Impact of the Conflict in Gaza: Preliminary Assessment of Environmental Impacts (UNEP, 2024) 20, 18.
[144] Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins, The Human Toll: Indirect Deaths from War in Gaza and the West Bank, October 7, 2023 Forward (Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, 2024) 21.
[145] ibid; World Health Organization, Opt Emergency Situation Update. Issue 31:7 Oct 2023 - 18 May 2024, p. 2. <https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/Sitrep.pdf> accessed 28 March 2026.
[146] ibid, 21-22.
[147] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), State of Palestine: Humanitarian Situation Report, No. 29, 1-31 July 2024 <https://www.unicef.org/media/160286/file/SOP-Humanitarian-SitRep-31-July-2024.pdf> accessed 28 March 2026.
[148] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), Report: Humanitarian Response by the UN and Humanitarian Partners during Phase One of the Ceasefire (17 March 2025) <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/report-humanitarian-response-un-and-humanitarian-partners-during-phase-one-ceasefire accessed 11 December 2025.

electricity supplies, significantly constrained water production and distribution.[149] As a result, water availability declined by approximately 94 percent to an average of 4.74 litres per person per day for all uses—far below the internationally recognized emergency minimum of 15 litres per day. In some displacement shelters, access dropped to between 0 and 0.6 litres per person per day, representing an extreme humanitarian deficit.[150]

The quality of the limited water supply is equally concerning. Even prior to the current conflict, Gaza faced chronic water insecurity;[151] with a 2012 projections indicating that by 2020 Gaza would have virtually no safe drinking water.[152] The ongoing conflict has exacerbated this condition, as repeated damage to infrastructure estimated at approximately five facilities every three days between October 2023 and July 2024 has further degraded water quality.[153] In addition, restrictions on the entry of materials necessary for infrastructure repair and limitations on access to external water sources, including the Mekorot Bani Sa'id water line, have hindered recovery efforts.[154]

Gaza's reliance on the Coastal Aquifer, its primary water source, compounds the crisis. Long-standing over-extraction and contamination from untreated sewage have rendered approximately 97 percent of the aquifer's water unfit for human consumption, with increasing salinity levels further diminishing its usability.[155] A reports by the the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have characterized Gaza's environmental conditions as approaching uninhabitability, particularly due to insufficient access to clean water and

[149] World Bank, Impacts of the Conflict in the Middle East on the Palestinian Economy (World Bank, 2024).
[150] L A Samad, M Butcher and B Khalidi, Water War Crimes: How Israel has Weaponized Water in its Military Campaign in Gaza (Oxfam International, 2024) 5; UN OCHA, Report: Humanitarian Response by the UN (n 31); S Stamatopoulou-Robbins (n 27) 13-14.
[151] Médecins Sans Frontières, Gaza: Life in a Death Trap (19 December 2024) 24 <https://www.msf.org/life-death-trap-gaza-palestine> accessed 11 February 2025; L A Samad, M Butcher and B Khalidi, ibid, 5.
[152] United Nations Country Team (UNCT), *Gaza in 2020: A Liveable Place?* (2012), projecting that by 2020 Gaza would have virtually no safe drinking water <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-195081> accessed 5 April 2026; See also, Mohammed Samhouri, Three Years After the 2014 Gaza Hostilities Beyond Survival: Challenges to Economic Recovery and Long Term Development (UNDP, 2017).
[153] L A Samad, M Butcher and B Khalidi, ibid.
[154] UN OCHA, Report: Humanitarian Response by the UN (n 31); Oxfam, Israel Government Continues to Block Aid Response despite ICJ Genocide Court Ruling, Says Oxfam (17 March 2024) <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/israel-government-continues-block-aid-response-despite-icj -genocide-court-ruling> accessed 13 December 2025.
[155] M Abdelraouf and Y Ruizi, Environmental Impacts of the Current War in Gaza (Gulf Research Centre Commentary & Analysis, November 2023); M A E Hay (n 20) 4.

sanitation.[156] The World Health Organization has also warned that water-related infectious diseases may pose a greater threat to life than direct military violence.[157]

As of February 2026, water availability in Gaza remains critically below emergency standards, with many households receiving less than six litres per person per day. Humanitarian interventions, including water trucking, groundwater extraction, and the distribution of hygiene kits, have provided partial relief but remain insufficient to meet population-wide needs. Similarly, emergency sanitation measures have not adequately addressed the collapse of wastewater systems.[158]

In sum, the combined effects of infrastructural destruction, untreated sewage discharge, fuel shortages, and restricted repair capacity have precipitated a dual crisis of severe water scarcity and sewage-induced pollution. This crisis poses immediate risks to public health while simultaneously undermining long-term environmental sustainability in Gaza.[159]

2.2 Air Pollution in Palestine

The 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli–Palestinian conflict has significantly exacerbated air pollution in the Gaza Strip through multiple interrelated pathways, including emissions from military operations, infrastructural destruction, and coping mechanisms adopted by affected populations.[160] Intensive aerial bombardments and ground offensives by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have released substantial quantities of hazardous substances into the atmosphere. The destruction of residential and industrial structures generates clouds of noxious smoke, toxic dust, and chemical fumes, often containing heavy metals, asbestos, and other hazardous particulates.[161] Explosive munitions further contribute to environmental degradation by producing fine particulate

[156] C Bouri, 'The Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza and Its International Repercussions' (2024) *IEMed. Mediterranean Yearbook*, 163.
[157] M A E Hay (n 20) 13.
[158] UN OCHA, Gaza Humanitarian Response | Situation Report No. 69 (27 February 2026) <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-humanitarian-response-situation-report-no-69> accessed 1 March 2026.
[159] Water Crisis in Gaza: 85% Infrastructure Damaged (19 March 2025) <https://www.bnews.ps/ar/node/24844> accessed 4 March 2025; Reem T. Abu Shomar, Beyond Survival: The WASH Crisis in Gaza and the Need for Ceasefire and International Action (Institute for Palestine Studies, 9 December, 2024) 1-12.
[160] M Ahmad, B A Sheikh and A A Sheikh, 'The Environmental Fallout of the Israel-Palestine Conflict: A Deep Dive into the Ecological Impact of Ongoing Hostilities' (2022) 8(3) *Journal of Survey in Fisheries Sciences*, 626.
[161] M Abdelraouf and Y Ruizi (n 38).

matter, which poses serious risks during and after conflict, particularly in clean-up and reconstruction phases.[162]

Exposure to such pollutants has significant public health implications. Fine particulate matter can penetrate deep into the respiratory system, increasing the incidence of respiratory illnesses and other health complications.[163] Vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions, are disproportionately affected by prolonged exposure to degraded air quality.[164]

In addition, the scarcity of essential resources, particularly cooking gas, has compelled households to burn alternative fuels such as wood, plastics, and general waste, thereby intensifying indoor and outdoor air pollution.[165] Fires resulting from damaged fuel storage facilities, as well as the combustion of debris from destroyed infrastructure, have further compounded air contamination. Collectively, these factors have created a severe and persistent air pollution crisis in Gaza.[166]

2.3 Solid Waste Pollution in Palestine

The 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli–Palestinian war has precipitated a severe solid waste management crisis in the Gaza Strip, marked by the near-total collapse of waste collection and disposal systems. By April 2024, over 270,000 tons of solid waste remained uncollected,[167] leading to the widespread accumulation of refuse across urban areas. The breakdown of formal waste management infrastructure has resulted in the proliferation of informal dumpsites, which have significantly contributed to soil and groundwater contamination, as well as eutrophication and algal blooms along coastal waters, thereby adversely affecting marine ecosystems.[168]

The environmental burden is further compounded by the unprecedented volume of conflict-generated debris. Estimates indicate that approximately 42 million tons of debris have been

[162] UNEP (n 26) 37.
[163] M Ahmad, B A Sheikh and A A Sheikh (n 43) 626.
[164] ibid.
[165] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Gaza War: Expected Socioeconomic Impacts on the State of Palestine: Preliminary Estimations until 5 November 2023 (UNDP, 2024) 7.
[166] ibid; G Paché, 'Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Towards a Major Logistical and Environmental Crisis?' (2024) 53 *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 255.
[167] UNDP (n 48) 7.
[168] M A E Hay (n 20) 12; By Ola Al-Asi, 'Gaza's tent life between illness and daily despair' *Aljazeera* (25 January 2026) <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2026/1/25/gaza-tent-life-pollution-illness-daily-despair> accessed 4 March 2026.

produced, largely from the destruction of more than 46,000 residential buildings and numerous public infrastructures, including hospitals, schools, and universities. This debris, consisting primarily of pulverized concrete, steel, and other construction materials, presents substantial challenges for safe handling, disposal, and potential recycling.[169] Projections suggest that clearing tens of millions of tons of debris could take over a decade, underscoring the long-term environmental implications of the conflict.[170]

The collapse of waste management services has forced approximately 1.7 million residents to live in close proximity to accumulating waste. Such conditions facilitate the proliferation of disease vectors, including rodents and insects, thereby increasing the incidence of infectious diseases.[171] Additionally, decomposing waste contributes to the contamination of air, soil, and water resources, exacerbating already critical environmental and public health conditions. In response to mounting waste, residents have resorted to open burning, which releases hazardous pollutants, including dioxins and particulate matter, further degrading air quality and heightening respiratory health risks.[172]

Moreover, the destruction of maritime assets, including fishing vessels, has introduced additional solid waste into the marine environment, compounding ecological degradation.[173] As of February 2026, solid waste conditions in Gaza remain at crisis levels, with ongoing humanitarian interventions insufficient to address the scale of accumulated waste.[174] This situation illustrates the profound and enduring environmental consequences of protracted conflict on essential municipal services and ecosystem integrity.[175]

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[169] M B Qumsiyeh, 'Impact of the Israeli Military Activities on the Environment' (2024) 81(2) *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, 6-7.
[170] P Al-Riffai, The Economic and Social Costs of the War in Gaza (The Atlantic Council of the United States, 2024) 13.
[171] S Stamatopoulou-Robbins (n 27) 22-23.
[172] ibid.
[173] M B Qumsiyeh (n 52) 6-7.
[174] Nidal Al-Mughrabi and Dawoud Abu Alkas 'UN agency begins clearing huge Gaza City waste dump as health risks mount' *Reuters* (12 February 2026) <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/un-agency-begins-clearing-huge-gaza-city-waste-dump-health-risks-mount-2026-02-11/> accessed 4 February 2026.
[175] The Palestinian Information Centre, Gaza Municipality warns of worsening waste crisis amid shrinking resources (27 February 2026) <https://english.palinfo.com/news/2026/02/27/358673/> accessed 4 March 2026; Anadolu Agency, 'Garbage problem continues in Gaza' *Reuters Connect* (28 January 2026) <https://www.reutersconnect.com/item/garbage-problem-continues-in-gaza/dGFnOnJldXRlcnMuY29tLDIwMjY6bmV3c21sX01UMUFOQURMMDAwVjZHMEZ X> accessed 4 March 2026.

2.4 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

The 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli–Palestinian war has contributed to a marked increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, largely driven by intensive military activities and the anticipated demands of post-conflict reconstruction. Estimates indicate that within the first two months of the conflict, GHG emissions exceeded the annual carbon footprints of more than twenty climate-vulnerable countries.[176] During the initial 60 days alone, approximately 281,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2) was emitted, primarily as a result of sustained aerial bombardments and ground operations in the Gaza Strip.[177] This volume is broadly comparable to emissions generated by the combustion of roughly 150,000 tons of coal.[178]

Additional emissions arose from the 7 October 2023 attacks by Hamas, which produced an estimated 646 metric tons of CO_2, excluding other potent greenhouse gases such as methane. The principal sources of these emissions include the production, deployment, and detonation of explosives, as well as fuel consumption associated with aircraft, armored vehicles, and other military logistics.[179] Notably, nearly 89,000 tons of explosives were reportedly deployed over Gaza between October and December 2023, further contributing to atmospheric pollution.[180]

Looking ahead, reconstruction efforts present a significant future emissions burden. It is projected that rebuilding approximately 100,000 destroyed structures could generate up to 30 million metric tons of GHGs. Consequently, both wartime activities and post-war recovery are likely to have enduring implications for regional and global climate systems.[181]

2.5 Destruction of Palestinian Natural Habitats and Agricultural Lands

Israel's military operations in the 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli–Palestinian war have resulted in extensive destruction of natural habitats, including forests, wetlands, and coastal ecosystems.[182] Such large-scale environmental disruption has significantly altered ecological balance, threatened biodiversity, and undermined the survival of numerous plant and animal species. The degradation and fragmentation of habitats reduce the availability of ecological

[176] M A E Hay (n 20) 18.
[177] ibid.
[178] ibid.
[179] ibid.
[180] ibid.
[181] ibid.
[182] UNEP, Environmental damage in Gaza Strip harming human health, threatening long-term food and water security - new UNEP report (UNEP, 23 September 2025).

resources, thereby intensifying biodiversity loss and weakening ecosystem resilience in the region.[183]

Agricultural lands and green spaces have been similarly affected, with profound implications for both environmental sustainability and local livelihoods. Historically, Israeli military activities have contributed to deforestation and land degradation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Reports indicate that between 1967 and October 2023, over 2.5 million trees, including more than one million olive trees, were uprooted.[184] Given the economic and cultural importance of olive cultivation, such losses have had enduring consequences for rural communities. The continued destruction of agricultural assets during the ongoing conflict has further accelerated desertification processes, particularly in the Gaza Strip.[185]

In addition, military activities have introduced a range of pollutants into the environment. Residues from rockets, missiles, and other munitions comprising metals, plastics, and electronic waste have contaminated soils, rendering large areas of farmland unsuitable for cultivation.[186] The intense heat generated by explosions and fires can alter soil structure and chemical composition, reduce fertility, and increase susceptibility to soil-borne diseases.[187] Combined with mechanical damage caused by military vehicles and active combat, these factors have significantly degraded agricultural productivity.[188]

Empirical evidence highlights the scale of this impact. Satellite analyses suggest that between 15 and 29 percent of Gaza's agricultural land has been damaged, while estimates indicate that up to 82 percent of croplands and 68 percent of agricultural wells were affected between October 2023 and March 2025.[189] The resulting loss of arable land has disrupted food production, increased dependence on humanitarian aid, and heightened food insecurity. Overall, the

[183] M Ahmad, B A Sheikh and A A Sheikh (n 43) 626.
[184] M B Qumsiyeh and M A Abusarhan, 'Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation in Palestine' in M Öztürk and others (ed.), *Biodiversity, Conservation and Sustainability in Asia* (Springer Nature, 2021) 3, 6, & 9; Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Gaza's agricultural infrastructure continues to deteriorate at alarming rate (FAO, 26 May 2025).
[185] ibid.
[186] M Abdelraouf and Y Ruizi (n 38).
[187] ibid.
[188] M A E Hay (n 20) 17; Kimberly M. S. Cartier, Satellite Data Shows 98 Percent of Gaza's Tree Crops Are Now Destroyed By Israel (4 December 2025) <https://www.zmescience.com/science/news-science/satellite-data-shows-98-percent-of-gazas-tree-crops-are-now-destroyed-by-israel/> accessed 5 March 2025.
[189] UN OCHA), Report: Humanitarian Response by the UN (n 31).

destruction of natural habitats and agricultural systems represents a critical dimension of the environmental and socio-economic consequences of the conflict.[190]

3. HUMANITARIAN IMPACTS OF ISRAELI MILITARY OPERATIONS IN PALESTINE

Armed conflicts account for almost all humanitarian emergency globally,[191] and the 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli-Palestinian war is not an exception. This part of the paper examines the humanitarian effects of Israeli military operations in Palestine in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian war.

3.1 Loss of Human Lives (Civilian Casualties) in Palestine

The human toll of the 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli–Palestinian war has been extensive, with civilians bearing the overwhelming burden of fatalities and injuries.[192] According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH), as of 12 August 2024, approximately 39,897 Palestinians had been killed in the Gaza Strip, the majority of whom were women and children, while about 92,152 individuals sustained injuries.[193] In addition, thousands of persons were reported missing and are presumed to be trapped beneath the rubble of destroyed structures.[194] Notably, within the first three weeks of hostilities, the number of children reportedly killed in Gaza exceeded the cumulative annual total of children killed in armed conflicts across more than twenty-two countries since 2019, underscoring the exceptional severity of the humanitarian crisis.[195]

Between 7 October 2023 and 1 May 2024, it was estimated that approximately five percent of Gaza's population had been killed, injured, or remained missing. This scale of harm represents one of the most acute concentrations of civilian casualties in a contemporary armed conflict.[196] A study published in *The Lancet* in June 2024 further suggested that total deaths–both direct and

[190] ibid.
[191] A Stoddard and others, Collateral Violence: Managing Risks for Aid Operations in Major Conflict, Aid Worker Security Report 2022 (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2022) 3.
[192] H M Syarifah, 'The Impact of Ongoing Israel-Palestine War on China National Interest: Between Benefit and Expectation' (2024) 11(1) *Journal of Middle East and Islamic Studies*, 5.
[193] UNGA (n 19) 5.
[194] ibid.
[195] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Preliminary Assessment of the Economic Impact of the Destruction in Gaza and Prospects for Economic Recovery (UNCTAD Rapid Assessment, January 2024) 5.
[196] UNDP (n 48).

indirect could reach as high as 186,000, reflecting not only fatalities from hostilities but also deaths attributable to starvation, disease, and the collapse of healthcare systems.[197] Complementary estimates by the American physicians indicate that tens of thousands of additional deaths have resulted from lack of access to medical care for chronic conditions and severe shortages of essential resources.[198]

Casualty figures continued to rise throughout 2024 and 2025. By 15 October 2024, reports indicated that approximately 42,500 Palestinians had been killed and more than 99,000 injured.[199] By January 2025, following a ceasefire agreement mediated between Israel and Hamas,[200] Palestinian authorities reported over 46,600 fatalities.[201] Subsequent data from March 2025 recorded 48,543 deaths and 111,981 injuries, with later estimates exceeding 61,700 deaths when accounting for individuals presumed dead under debris.[202] The termination of the ceasefire on 17 March 2025 led to renewed hostilities, resulting in at least 404 additional civilian deaths and approximately 660 injuries in a single escalation.[203]

As of 7 May 2025, the Palestinian MoH reported approximately 52,653 deaths and 118,897 injuries in Gaza,[204] alongside more than 896 fatalities in the West Bank,[205] indicating a broader geographical spread of violence. By August 2025, cumulative figures had risen to approximately 61,158 deaths and 151,442 injuries.[206] The escalation persisted into late 2025 and early 2026. Following the second ceasefire in October 2025, additional casualties were reported, and by 25

[197] R Khatib, M McKee and S Yusuf, Counting the Dead in Gaza: Difficult but Essential (20 July 2024) <https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)01169-3/fulltext> accessed 11 February 2025.
[198] Letter to President Biden and Vice President Harris: Open Letter from American Medical Professionals who served in Gaza (2 October 2024) <https://www.gazahealthcareletters.org/usa-letter-oct-2-2024> accessed 27 December 2025.
[199] UNDP (n 48) 4.
[200] Center for Preventive Action, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (22 January 2025) <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict> accessed 15 March 2025.
[201] E Farge and N Al-Mughrabi, Gaza Death Toll: How Many Palestinians has Israel's Offensive Killed? (15 January 2025) <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/how-many-palestinians-has-israels-gaza-offensive-killed-2025-01-15/> accessed 25 March 2025.
[202] Israel kills at Least Nine Palestinians, including Journalists, in Gaza (15 March 2025) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/15/israel-kills-at-least-nine-palestinians-including-journalists-in-gaza> accessed 25 March 2025.
[203] The Associated Press, Israel Breaks Ceasefire with Surprise Airstrike, Killing More than 400 Palestinians (18 March 2025) <https://apnews.com/live/latest-updates-israel-launches-new-wave-of-airstrikes-across-gaza-after-ceasefi re-talks-stall> accessed 25 March 2025.
[204] UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #286: Gaza Strip (7 May 2025) <https://reliefweb.int/report/occu pied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-286-gaza-strip-enar> accessed 9 May 2025.
[205] H Al-Shalchi, A Baba and D Estrin, Palestinian deaths in Gaza rise above 50,000 as Israel expands its military campaign (23 March 2025) <https://www.wusf.org/2025-03-23/palestinian-deaths-in-gaza-rise-above-50-000-as-israel-expands-its-military-campaign> accessed 28 March 2025.
[206] UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #311|Gaza Strip (6 August 2025) <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-311-gaza-strip> accessed 7 August 2025.

February 2026, official figures indicated at least 72,082 deaths, including over 20,000 children, and more than 171,761 injuries.[207] These figures remain fluid due to ongoing hostilities and continued recovery of bodies from destroyed areas.[208]

It is also important to note contested aspects of casualty attribution. Israeli authorities have attributed some civilian deaths in Gaza to misfired rockets launched by Hamas,[209] reporting over 1,900 such incidents between October and December 2023.[210] One widely cited example is the explosion at Al-Ahli Hospital on 17 October 2023,[211] where casualty figures remain disputed. While Palestinian sources reported hundreds of deaths, alternative assessments by Western intelligence agencies have suggested lower figures.[212]

Overall, the scale and persistence of civilian casualties in the Gaza Strip highlight the profound humanitarian consequences of the conflict, raising significant concerns under international humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilian populations during armed hostilities.

3.2 Food Insecurity in Palestine

The 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli–Palestinian war has precipitated a severe and widespread food insecurity crisis across the Gaza Strip, affecting all socio-economic groups. The disruption of economic activity and livelihoods has significantly reduced household consumption, with middle-class consumption levels projected to have declined by approximately 35.6 percent within the first six months of the conflict.[213] This deterioration has been compounded by restrictions on the entry of humanitarian assistance and essential goods. Following the imposition of a blockade on 9 October 2023, access to food, water, fuel, and other basic necessities was

[207] Aljazeera Labs (n 86); Aljazeera Labs (n 17); See Gaza Civil Defense Says Israeli Strikes Kill at Least 5 (27 February 2026) <https:// english.aawsat.com/arab-world/5245339-gaza-civil-defense-says-israeli-strikes-kill-least-5> accessed 1 March 2026.
[208] Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), Palestine End of Ceasefire and Blockade in Gaza (ACAPS Briefing Note, 25 March 2025) 2 <https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20250325_ACAPS_Briefing_note_Palestine_End_of_the_ceasefire_and_blockade_in_Gaza.pdf> accessed 28 March 2025.
[209] SIMFA, Israel-Hamas Conflict 2023: Humanitarian Efforts (State of Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 14 December 2023) 1.
[210] ibid.
[211] A Fox, Questionable Counting: Analysing the Death Toll from the Hamas-Run Ministry of Health in Gaza (The Henry Jackson Society, 2024) 26.
[212] ibid.
[213] Gaza Supplies and Dispatch Tracking Database <www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/gaza-supplies-and-dispatch-tracking> accessed 10 January 2025.

severely constrained. Although limited humanitarian access was later permitted, the volume of aid entering Gaza remained substantially below population needs.[214] Reports indicate that between October 2023 and May 2024, the number of authorized aid trucks declined by approximately 80 percent, with only about 5,300 food trucks entering Gaza compared to an estimated requirement of 17,400 to 20,880 under normal conditions.[215]

The restricted flow of humanitarian supplies has significantly intensified food insecurity. During the ceasefire period between January and March 2025, only about 70 percent of the allowable daily quota of 600 aid trucks were permitted entry, further limiting access to food.[216] As a consequence, approximately 96 percent of Gaza's population estimated at 2.15 million people has been classified as experiencing severe food insecurity.[217] According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and the World Food Programme (WFP), around 77 percent of the population faces high levels of acute food insecurity, with many areas classified as being in crisis or worse conditions.[218]

The nutritional implications of this crisis are particularly severe among vulnerable populations. Data from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) indicate that, as of June 2024, approximately one in three children under the age of two in northern Gaza suffered from acute malnutrition,[219] compared to about 10 percent in Rafah, reflecting disparities in humanitarian access.[220] Adults have reportedly been forced to skip meals to prioritize children's nutrition, highlighting the severity of household-level deprivation.[221] Medical data further reveal rising cases of severe acute malnutrition, with hospital admissions and mortality linked to nutritional

[214] ibid.
[215] Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), Gaza Strip: Famine Review of the IPC Analysis (21 December 2023 <https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Famine_Review_Report__Gaza._pdf> accessed 27 January 2025.
[216] Aljazeera Lab, Israel Strikes Gaza, Breaking Ceasefire: Live Tracker (18 March 2026) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/18/gaza-tracker> accessed 25 March 2025.
[217] S Stamatopoulou-Robbins (n 27) 11.
[218] World Food Programme, State of Palestine <https://www.wfp.org/emergencies/palestine-emergency> accessed 1 March 2026.
[219] L A Samad, M Butcher and B Khalidi (n 33) 9.
[220] UNGA (n 19) 7.
[221] B Tselem, Manufacturing Famine: Israel is committing the War Crime of Starvation in the Gaza Strip (April 2024) p. 3 <https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/202404_manufacturing_famine_eng.pdf> accessed 27 December 2025.

deficiencies.[222] Screening conducted between January and March 2025 identified thousands of children requiring treatment for moderate and severe acute malnutrition.[223]

The crisis is further exacerbated by structural factors, including the destruction of agricultural lands, limited market functionality, and high unemployment rates. The collapse of local food production systems and restricted supply chains has undermined both immediate food availability and long-term food system resilience.[224] Consequently, the ongoing conflict has created a protracted food security emergency, with heightened risks of famine and long-term public health consequences across the Gaza Strip.[225]

3.3 Refugee Crisis (Displacement of People) in Palestine

The 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli–Palestinian war has generated a large-scale displacement crisis in the Gaza Strip, characterized by its rapid onset, repeated patterns, and severe humanitarian consequences. Population displacement has occurred in a highly volatile and fragmented manner, with some phases of the conflict witnessing the displacement of up to 150,000 individuals within a single day.[226] By 30 March 2024, more than 1.7 million Palestinians–representing over 75 percent of Gaza's population had been displaced, many of them multiple times.[227] This figure increased further over the course of the conflict, with estimates indicating that by September 2024 approximately 90 percent of the population, or over 1.9 million people, had experienced displacement, in some cases up to ten times.[228]

The scale of displacement has disproportionately affected vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. As of January 2024, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the

[222] UNDP (n 48) 5; See Doctors without Borders, How we are responding to the War in Gaza (11 September 2024) <https://www.doctors withoutborders.org/latest/our-response-israel-gaza-war> accessed 17 January 2025.
[223] WHO oPt Emergency Situation Update, Issue 56, 7 October 2023 - 28 February 2025 (12 March 2025) <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/who-opt-emergency-situation-update-56-7-oct-2023-28-feb-2025/> accessed 28 March 2025.
[224] Islamic Organization for Food Security, Arab News: How Gaza war has set back Palestinian agriculture, deepened hunger crisis (22 August 2024) <https://iofs.org/news/arab-news-how-gaza-war-has-set-back-palestinian-agriculture%2C-deepened-hunger-crisis> accessed 1 March 2026.
[225] See S Stamatopoulou-Robbins (n 27) 11; L A Samad, M Butcher and B Khalidi (n 33) 9.
[226] S Stamatopoulou-Robbins, ibid, 8-9.
[227] UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report, No. 107 on the Situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (14 May 2024) <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-107-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-Jerusalem> accessed 5 March 2025.
[228] UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #224: Gaza Strip (30 September 2024) <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-224-gaza-strip-enarhe> accessed 5 March 2025.

Empowerment of Women (UN Women) estimated that approximately one million women and girls had been displaced.[229] Many have sought refuge in overcrowded and inadequate shelters, including health facilities, public buildings, and schools operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), while others have resorted to makeshift encampments in open spaces.[230] These conditions have significantly strained already limited humanitarian resources and heightened exposure to health, safety, and protection risks.

In addition to conflict-related displacement within Gaza, destruction of homes and land appropriation has contributed to forced displacement in other parts of the Palestinian territories. By September 2024, thousands of Palestinians had been displaced due to the destruction of residential structures and the conversion of lands into Israeli settlements.[231] The termination of the ceasefire in March 2025 triggered renewed hostilities and further displacement,[232] with approximately 124,000 individuals newly displaced within a few days.[233]

As of February 2026, displacement in Gaza remains widespread and protracted.[234] Internally displaced persons continue to reside in temporary shelters, including tents and overcrowded public facilities, often lacking access to adequate food, clean water, healthcare, and sanitation.[235] The persistence of displacement underscores the profound humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of the ongoing conflict.

[229] UN-Women, Gender Alert: The Gendered Impact of the Crisis in Gaza, 2024 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/01/gender-alert-the-gendered-impact-of-the-crisis-in-gaza> accessed 5 March 2025.
[230] ibid.
[231] UNDP (n 48) 4.
[232] UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #273: Gaza Strip (18 March 2025) <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hu manitarian-situation-update-273-gaza-strip> accessed 28 March 2025.
[233] L Tondo and J Burke, Israel to 'seize more ground' and warns Hamas it will annex parts of Gaza (21 March 2025) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/mar/21/israel-katz-warns-hamas-gaza-annex-war> accessed 28 March 2025.
[234] See Gaza Herald, Heavy Rains Flood Displacement Camps Deepen Gaza's Humanitarian Crisis (24 February 2026) <https://gazaherald.com/2026/02/24/rainfall-2> accessed 2 March 2026; Jean Shaoul, UN report warns of ethnic cleansing in Gaza, West Bank (26 February 2026) <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2026/02/26/gxiq-f26.ht ml> accessed 2 March 2026.
[235] UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #224 (n 111).

4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF ISRAELI MILITARY OPERATIONS IN PALESTINE

Israel's military operations in Palestine have gravely affected the Palestinian economy. This section of the paper examines the socio-economic impacts of Israeli military operations in Palestine in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian war.

4.1 Destruction of Palestinian Socio-Economic Infrastructures: Housing, Education, Healthcare, and Electricity

The 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli–Palestinian war has resulted in the extensive destruction of socio-economic infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, with profound implications for housing, education, healthcare, and electricity systems. The scale of damage is unprecedented in recent history. A joint interim assessment conducted in January 2024 by the World Bank, the United Nations, and the European Union estimated total physical infrastructure damage at approximately $18.5 billion–an amount equivalent to the combined 2022 GDP of Gaza and the West Bank.[236] This highlights the magnitude of infrastructural devastation and its long-term implications for economic recovery and human development.

Housing infrastructure has been particularly affected. Satellite-based assessments by the United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) indicate a rapid escalation in the destruction of buildings over time. Between October and November 2023, over 37,000 structures were damaged, representing approximately 18 percent of Gaza's total buildings. By January 2024, this figure had risen to more than 69,000 (35 percent), and by May 2024, over 137,000 buildings had been damaged or destroyed.[237] Subsequent assessments suggest that by mid-2024, only 179,000 of approximately 470,000 housing units remained intact.[238] By March 2025, more than 92 percent of homes had reportedly been either severely damaged or completely destroyed.[239] Similarly,

[236] P Al-Riffai (n 53).
[237] UNCTAD (n 78) 5; UNGA (n 19) 6; See also, M Bahlali, The Israel-Palestine Conflict and the Effects of Trade Sanctions (15 July 2024) <https://www.e-ir.inf mo/2024/07/15/the-israel-palestine-conflict-and-the-effects-of-trade-sanctions/#google_vignette> accessed 1 March 2025.
[238] Stamatopoulou-Robbins (n 27) 8-9; See also, Amnesty International, Israel/OPT: Israeli Military Must be Investigated for War Crime of Wanton Destruction in Gaza – New Investigation (5 September 2024) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/09/israel-opt-israeli-military-must-be-investigated-for-war-crime-of-wanton-destruction-in-gaza-new-investigation/> accessed 11 January 2025.
[239] UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #163 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (15 March 2025) <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-163-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem> accessed 28 March 2025.

humanitarian data from late 2025 indicate that approximately 436,000 housing units in the Gaza Strip–around 92 percent of the total were either destroyed or damaged**,** leaving millions in urgent need of shelter.[240] The destruction of residential infrastructure has resulted in widespread displacement and severely constrained living conditions for the civilian population.

The education sector has also suffered near-total collapse. Educational institutions at all levels, including primary schools, secondary schools, and universities, have been extensively damaged. By September 2024, approximately 93 percent of school buildings had been destroyed or rendered unusable.[241] Earlier estimates from March 2024 suggested that around 88 percent of schools had sustained damage. All twelve higher education institutions in Gaza were either damaged or destroyed by May 2024, disrupting the education of approximately 90,000 university students.[242] By early 2026, assessments by the European Training Foundation indicated that up to 95 percent of educational facilities had been damaged or destroyed, with many surviving structures repurposed as shelters for internally displaced persons. This has effectively halted formal education and undermined long-term human capital development.[243]

Healthcare infrastructure has similarly experienced extensive damage, significantly impairing access to essential medical services.[244] By July 2024, 21 out of 36 hospitals were non-functional, while approximately 43 percent (45 out of 105) of primary healthcare facilities were no longer operational.[245] Continued hostilities and restrictions on humanitarian access further disrupted healthcare provision.[246] By March 2025, it was reported that up to 94 percent of medical facilities had been damaged or destroyed, with only a limited number of hospitals and field facilities partially operational.[247] As of early 2026, the healthcare system remains critically overstretched, with medical personnel operating in makeshift conditions, often lacking essential

[240] UN OCHA, Reported Impact Snapshot|Gaza Strip (10 September 2025) <https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/Gaza_Reported_Impact_Snapshot_10_September_2025%20final.pdf> accessed 2 March 2026.
[241] Assessment Capacities Project (ACAP), Palestine-One Year of Hostilities: Impact on Education in Gaza, Thematic Report (4 October 2024) 3<https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20241004_ACAPS_Palestine-One_year_of_hostilities__Impact_on_education_in_Gaza_.pdf> accessed 5 March 2025.
[242] ibid.
[243] European Training Foundation, Education and Employment in Gaza: Fact and Figures (February 2026 update) <https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026-02/ETF%20Education%20and%20employment%20in%20Ga_za%20Report%20Feb%202026.pdf> accessed 2 March 2026.
[244] T Farhat and others, 'Responding to the Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza: Damned if you do… Damned if you don't' (2023) 89(1) *Annals of Global Health*, 3.
[245] UNGA (n 19) 6-7.
[246] ibid.
[247] UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #273: Gaza Strip (n 108).

supplies, equipment, and sanitation.[248] These constraints have severely limited the capacity to treat injuries, manage chronic illnesses, and respond to public health emergencies.[249]

The electricity sector has also been devastated, compounding the broader humanitarian crisis. As of January 2024, approximately 61.5 percent of Gaza's electricity distribution network–equivalent to about 510 kilometres had been damaged or destroyed.[250] The conflict disrupted nearly all electrical feeder lines, severely limiting power transmission across the territory.[251] The situation worsened when electricity supply from Israel, which previously provided approximately 120 megawatts, was halted following the outbreak of hostilities.[252] Gaza's sole power plant ceased operations on 11 October 2023 due to fuel shortages, effectively eliminating any stable source of electricity.[253] By 2025, the territory had no reliable grid-based electricity, forcing reliance on limited alternative sources such as solar energy.[254]

The absence of stable electricity has had cascading effects on critical services. Hospitals and healthcare facilities have become dependent on backup generators, which are constrained by fuel shortages and limited maintenance capacity.[255] Interruptions in power supply have adversely affected intensive care units, dialysis services, surgical operations, and laboratory functions.[256] Additionally, electricity shortages have disrupted water pumping, desalination, and wastewater treatment processes, thereby exacerbating water scarcity and sanitation challenges.[257]

Overall, the destruction of socio-economic infrastructure in Gaza reflects a systemic collapse of essential services, with far-reaching consequences for public health, education, housing, electricity, economic stability, and long-term development.

[248] ReliefWeb, Gaza Humanitarian Response/Situation Report No. 69 (2 March 2026) <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-humanitarian-response-situation-report-no-69> accessed 4 March 2026; UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #273: Gaza Strip (n 108).
[249] See UN OCHA, Gaza Humanitarian Response | Situation Report No. 69 (n 41).
[250] ReliefWeb, Gaza Humanitarian Response/Situation Report No. 69 (131); UNEP (n 26) 28.
[251] World Bank, Gaza Damage Assessment Bi-Weekly: Gaza Strip Bi-Weekly Damage Summary: 28 December 2023 to 10 January 2024 (World Bank, 2024); UNGA (n 19) 7. .
[252] Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), Palestine End of Ceasefire (n 91) 2.
[253] ibid.
[254] ibid.
[255] UN OCHA, Gaza Humanitarian Response | Situation Report No. 69 (n 41).
[256] ibid.
[257] ibid.

4.2 Human Capital Destruction through Unemployment in Palestine

The 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli–Palestinian war has precipitated significant human capital destruction in Palestine, primarily manifested through widespread unemployment and labour market disruption.[258] The already fragile Palestinian labour market has deteriorated sharply; with unemployment rates in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) rising to approximately 51.1 percent.[259] This increase has been particularly severe in the Gaza Strip, where unemployment has reached an estimated 79.7 percent, compared to 34.9 percent in the West Bank.[260] Prior to the conflict, Gaza was already experiencing structural labour market challenges, including an unemployment rate of about 45 percent and youth unemployment exceeding 60 percent in 2022.[261] The current crisis has therefore exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities.

A key driver of rising unemployment has been the suspension of work permits that previously enabled approximately 160,000 Palestinians to access employment opportunities in Israel and Israeli settlements. Following the outbreak of hostilities, Israeli authorities imposed restrictions that effectively barred Palestinian workers from entering Israeli territory.[262] In addition, an estimated 50,000 informal workers without permits were similarly unable to access their places of employment.[263] The sudden loss of these employment opportunities resulted in a substantial decline in household incomes, accounting for nearly 50 percent of total wages earned by the Palestinian labour force.[264] Furthermore, the cessation of cross-border employment led to the loss of over US$100 million in weekly income that had previously been injected into the Palestinian economy, thereby compounding economic contraction and well-being of Palestinians.[265]

The labour market crisis has been further intensified by the destruction of physical infrastructure, internal displacement, personal injuries, and the general suspension of economic activities across the region. According to estimates by the International Labour Organization

[258] International Labour Organization (ILO) Brief, Impact of the War in Gaza on the Labour Market and Livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (ILO Bulletin No. 4, June 2024) 3.
[259] ILO Brief, A Year of War in Gaza: Impacts on Employment and Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (ILO Bulletin No. 5, October 2024) 1.
[260] ibid.
[261] UNDP (n 48) 7-8.
[262] ibid.
[263] ibid.
[264] ibid.
[265] ibid.

(ILO), approximately 507,000 jobs were lost across the OPT by January 2024, including about 201,000 in Gaza and 306,000 in the West Bank.[266] These losses translated into daily labour income reductions of approximately US$20.5 million.[267] Earlier estimates also suggested that over 66 percent of Gaza's labour force had lost employment within the initial months of the conflict, reflecting the near-total collapse of economic activity in the territory.[268]

As of March 2026, unemployment levels in Palestine remain exceptionally high, particularly in Gaza, where economic recovery remains constrained by ongoing hostilities, infrastructural destruction, and limited access to external labour markets.[269] The persistence of widespread unemployment has not only reduced household income and increased poverty but has also undermined the development and retention of human capital. Consequently, the conflict has produced long-term socio-economic consequences, weakening labour productivity, eroding skills, and impeding prospects for sustainable economic recovery in the Palestinian territories.

5. INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW: PRINCIPLES OF DISTINCTION, PROPORTIONALITY, AND PRECAUTION AND THEIR APPLICATION TO THE ISRAELI–PALESTINIAN ARMED CONFLICT

International humanitarian law (IHL), also referred to as the law of armed conflict, establishes a comprehensive legal framework governing the conduct of hostilities during armed conflicts. Central to this framework are three cardinal principles–distinction, proportionality, and precaution, which collectively regulate the means and methods of warfare. These principles are of particular relevance in the context of the ongoing 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli–Palestinian armed conflict, where concerns about the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure have assumed heightened urgency. As foundational norms of IHL, they are designed to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of war by limiting the effects of hostilities on civilian populations and civilian objects, while permitting the pursuit of legitimate military objectives.[270]

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[266] ibid.
[267] ILO and PCBS, Impact of the escalation of hostilities in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Bulletin No. 2, (20 December 2023) p. 2 <https://www.ilo.org/publications/impact-escalation-hostilities-gaza-labour-market-and-livelihoods-occupied> accessed 5 June 2025.
[268] ibid.
[269] World Bank, Impacts of the Conflict in the Middle East on the Palestinian Economy (September 2025) <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/88b250e19a55174787bafafd5322360e-0280012025/original/Palestinian-Economic-Update-Sept2025-FINAL.pdf> accessed 4 March 2026.
[270] M K J Cohen (n 1).

The Principle of Distinction (PoD) constitutes a cornerstone of IHL and governs the lawful targeting of persons and objects during armed conflict. It obliges parties to a conflict to distinguish at all times between combatants and civilians, as well as between military objectives and civilian objects, and to direct military operations exclusively against lawful military targets.[271] Military objectives are narrowly defined as those objects which, by their nature, location, purpose, or use, effectively contribute to military action and whose destruction, capture, or neutralisation offers a definite military advantage under the prevailing circumstances.[272] In contrast, civilian objects encompass all objects that do not meet this definition.[273] Accordingly, direct or indiscriminate attacks against civilians or civilian objects are strictly prohibited by the PoD.[274] While combatants may lawfully be targeted, civilians are protected from direct attack unless and for such time as they directly participate in hostilities.[275] Importantly, in cases of doubt regarding the status of an object such as residential buildings, schools, or hospitals, IHL requires that such objects be presumed to retain their civilian character.[276]

Closely related to the principle of distinction is the principle of proportionality, which operates as a constraint on attacks, directed at legitimate military objectives. Under this principle, an attack is prohibited if it is expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, or damage to civilian objects that would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.[277] The assessment of proportionality requires a careful balancing of military necessity against humanitarian considerations.[278] The anticipated military advantage must be specific, direct, and tangible, arising from a particular operation rather than from broader strategic goals.[279] Consequently, speculative or indirect advantages cannot justify incidental harm to civilians. The principle of proportionality thus seeks to limit collateral damage and ensure that the

[271] Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts 1977 (AP I) Article 48; J Henckaerts and L Doswald-Beck, Customary International Humanitarian Law, Volume I: Rules (ICRC, 2005) Rules 1 & 7 (hereinafter, ICRC CIHL Study).
[272] H Rought-Brooks, Gaza: The Impact of Conflict on Women (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015) 14; ICRC CIHL Study, Rule 8.
[273] H Rought-Brooks, ibid; ICRC CIHL Study, Rule 9.
[274] S B Shinerock and A Bedrosyan, 'International Humanitarian Law and the Israel-Palestinian Conflict' (2024) *New York Law Journal*; AP I, Articles 48 & 51(1); ICRC CIHL Study, Rules 1, 7, 8 & 9.
[275] W Leatemia, 'Violations Committed by Israel in Armed Conflicts under International Humanitarian Law' (2024) 4(2) *Balobe Law Journal*, 86.
[276] H Rought-Brooks (n 156); AP I, Article 52(3).
[277] M K J Cohen (n 1) 6; AP I, Articles 51(5)(b) & 57(2)(a)(iii) & (b); ICRC CIHL Study, Rules 14, 18 & 19.
[278] See N Melzer and E Kuster, International Humanitarian Law: A Comprehensive Introduction (ICRC, 2016) 101.
[279] H S Okorie, Law of Armed Conflict: Principles and Concepts (Princeton & Associates Publishing Co. Ltd, 2021) 116.

use of force remains commensurate with the military objective pursued.[280] It reinforces the broader humanitarian objective of IHL by preventing excessive harm to protected persons and objects, even in situations where attacks are directed at legitimate military targets.[281]

The principle of precaution complements and reinforces the principles of distinction and proportionality by imposing a positive obligation on parties to an armed conflict to take all feasible measures to avoid, or at least minimise, incidental harm to civilians and civilian objects.[282] This obligation applies to both attacking and defending parties. For the attacking party, the duty of precaution requires the verification of targets, the selection of means and methods of warfare that minimise civilian harm, and, where feasible, the provision of effective advance warnings prior to attacks that may affect civilian populations.[283] It also entails the obligation to cancel or suspend an attack if it becomes apparent that the target is not a military objective or that the attack would be disproportionate.[284] For the defending party, precautionary obligations include taking practicable steps to protect civilians under its control, such as avoiding the placement of military objectives within or near densely populated areas and civilian infrastructure.[285] Collectively, these measures are intended to reduce the humanitarian impact of hostilities and ensure that civilian protection remains a central consideration in military decision-making.[286]

Applying these principles to the Israeli–Palestinian armed conflict reveals significant legal and humanitarian concerns. There is widespread international debate regarding the extent to which the conduct of hostilities complies with the requirements of IHL, particularly in relation to the protection of civilians in Gaza Strip and the West Bank. One of the most contentious issues relates to the principle of distinction.[287] Reports from international organisations, including the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), indicate a high number of civilian casualties resulting from Israeli military operations.[288] As of February 2026, about 72,082

[280] S B Shinerock and A Bedrosyan (n 157) 4.
[281] H S Okorie (n 162) 116; N Melzer and E Kuster (n 161).
[282] AP I, Articles 57 & 58; ICRC CIHL Study, Rule 15.
[283] The Principle of Precautions in Attacks: The Obligations of Attackers and Defenders Prior to an Attack <https://www.diakonia.se/ihl/resources/international-humanitarian-law/ihl-principle-of-precautions-in-attack/> accessed 26 March 2026.
[284] ibid.
[285] ibid.
[286] ibid.
[287] AP I, Article 48, 13 & 2(2); ICRC CIHL Study, Rules 1 and 7.
[288] H Al-Shalchi, A Baba and D Estrin (n 63).

Palestinians had reportedly been killed and over 171,761 injured in Gaza and West Bank.[289] And the figures of deaths and injuries are constantly increasing due to ongoing clashes and violence.[290] These figures of deaths and injuries, coupled with the scale of destruction inflicted on civilian infrastructure, have raised concerns regarding the adequacy of measures taken by the Israel's Defence Force (IDF) to distinguish between Hamas combatants and Palestinian civilians in its military attacks.

In addition to the loss of civilian life, there is substantial evidence indicating widespread damage to civilian objects. Residential buildings, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and essential service infrastructure–including electricity, water, and sanitation systems, have been extensively damaged or destroyed. Reports suggest that a significant proportion of housing units in Gaza have been rendered uninhabitable, with destruction levels exceeding 92 percent as of March 2025 in certain assessments.[291] Similarly, a large percentage of schools (approximately 95% as of February 2026)[292] and medical facilities (about 94% as of March 2025)[293] have been damaged or rendered non-operational, severely undermining access to education and healthcare.[294] The destruction of critical infrastructure, such as power grids and water systems, has further exacerbated the humanitarian crisis by disrupting essential services necessary for civilian survival.[295] These developments raise serious questions regarding compliance with the obligation to distinguish between civilian objects and military objectives.

The principle of proportionality is also implicated in the context of the conflict. The scale and intensity of Israeli military operations, combined with the resulting civilian harm, have prompted concerns that certain attacks may have caused incidental damage that is excessive in relation to the anticipated military advantage.[296] While IHL permits incidental harm to civilians under specific conditions, such harm must not exceed what is considered proportionate to the

[289] Aljazeera Labs (n 99); Aljazeera Labs (n 17); See Gaza Civil Defense Says Israeli Strikes Kill at Least 5 (27 February 2026) <https:// english.aawsat.com/arab-world/5245339-gaza-civil-defense-says-israeli-strikes-kill-least-5> accessed 1 March 2026.
[290] Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), Palestine End of Ceasefire (n 91) 2.
[291] UNRWA, UNRWA Situation Report #163 (n 122).
[291] UN OCHA, Reported Impact Snapshot|Gaza Strip (n 123).
[292] European Training Foundation, Education and Employment in Gaza (126).
[293] UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #273 (n 115).
[294] European Training Foundation, Education and Employment in Gaza (n 126).
[294] UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #273 (115); European Training Foundation, Education and Employment in Gaza (n 126).
[295] UNGA (n 19) 7; UN OCHA, Report: Humanitarian Response (n 31).
[296] M K J Cohen (n 1) 6; AP I, Articles 51(5)(b) & 57(2)(a)(iii) & (b); ICRC CIHL Study, Rules 14, 18 & 19.

military objective pursued. The high incidence of Palestinian civilian casualties and the extensive destruction of Palestinian civilian infrastructure suggest that, in some instances, the proportionality threshold may have been exceeded.[297] This raises complex legal questions regarding the assessment of Israeli military advantage and the evaluation of collateral damage in densely populated urban environments such as Gaza.

The principle of precaution further underscores the importance of adopting measures to minimise civilian harm. Evidence from the conflict indicates that, in many cases, the level of destruction and civilian suffering may reflect insufficient precautionary measures. The obligation to take feasible precautions requires continuous assessment and adaptation of military tactics to reduce harm to civilians. This includes the careful selection of targets, the use of precision-guided munitions where possible, and the avoidance of attacks in areas with high civilian concentrations.[298] At the same time, the obligations of the defending party must also be considered. Allegations that Hamas has operated within civilian areas and utilised civilian infrastructure for military purposes, including the use of human shields, further complicate the application of IHL principles. However, it is well established under IHL that violations by one party do not absolve the opposing party of its legal obligations. Even in situations involving unlawful conduct by an adversary, all parties remain bound by the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution.

The issue of human shielding is particularly relevant in this context. While the use of civilians to shield military objectives is prohibited under IHL, such conduct does not negate the obligation of the attacking party to take all feasible precautions to minimise civilian harm.[299] As emphasised by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the presence of human shields does not render otherwise unlawful attacks permissible. Instead, it necessitates heightened caution and stricter adherence to proportionality assessments.[300] Recent scholarly analyses further

[297] M K J Cohen, ibid; AP I, Articles 51(5)(b) & 57(2)(a)(iii) & (b); ICRC CIHL Study, Rules 14, 18 & 19.
[298] API, Articles 57 & 58; ICRC CIHL Study, Rule 15.
[299] Zoi Lafazani, Human shields under IHL: a path towards excessive legalization (ICRC Humanitarian Law and Policy Blog, 16 November 2021) <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2021/11/16/hu man-shields-ihl> accessed 4 April 2026.
[300] ibid; Neve Gordon and Nicola Perugini, Proximate 'human shields' and the challenge for humanitarian organizations (ICRC Humanitarian Law and Policy Blog, 18 November 2021) <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2021/11/18/proximate-human-shields/> accessed 4 April 2026.

underscore the importance of selecting means and methods of warfare that reduce incidental harm, even in complex operational environments.[301]

Finally, it is important to recognise that violations of the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution may constitute breaches of core IHL norms and give rise to international legal responsibility. These principles are codified in key international legal instruments, including the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War 1949,[302] the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions 1949 and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts 1977[303] the Hague Convention IV 1907 with Its Annexed Regulations Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land 1907,[304] and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998.[305] Collectively, these instruments establish binding rules governing the conduct of hostilities and provide mechanisms for accountability in cases of serious violations. Breaches of these principles may amount to war crimes, particularly where they involve intentional attacks against civilians, indiscriminate attacks, or disproportionate use of force.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution remain fundamental to regulating armed conflict and protecting civilians under international humanitarian law (IHL). Their application to the 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli–Palestinian armed conflict reveals the acute difficulties of conducting military operations in densely populated areas, while reinforcing the necessity of strict adherence to these rules. The scale and nature of civilian casualties and destruction of infrastructure in Palestine in the 7 October 2023 Hamas-instigated Israeli-Palestinian ongoing war raises serious concerns about whether the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution have been adequately observed by Israel in its military operations in Palestine.

[301] Beth Van Schaack, 'Human Shields: Complementary Duties under IHL' (2016) 110 *American Journal of International Law Unbound*, 317–322; Michael N. Schmitt, 'Human Shields in International Humanitarian Law' (2008) 38 *Israel Yearbook of Human Rights*, 17–59; Stephanie Bouchie′ de Belle 'Chained to cannons or wearing targets on their t-shirts: human shields in international humanitarian law' (2008) 90(872) *International Review of the Red Cross*, 883-906.
[302] See Fourth Geneva Convention, Articles 147 & 53.
[303] See AP I, Articles 57(1), 52, 85(3)(b) & 12.
[304] See AP I, Articles 23(b)(g), 25 & 27 of the Fourth Hague Convention 1907.
[305] See Rome Statute of the ICC, Articles 8(2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv) & 8(2)(b)(i)(ii)(v)(ix)(xi) & (xiii).

The analysis further finds that Israel's military operations following the 7 October 2023 Hamas attacks have produced significant environmental, humanitarian, and socio-economic consequences in Palestine. These impacts underscore the protective purpose of IHL principles, which are intended to limit harm to civilians and civilian objects by governing the means and methods of warfare. However, the study identifies substantial evidence suggesting that the conduct of Israeli military operations in Palestine may fall short of IHL requirements, particularly regarding distinction, proportionality, and precaution. In light of these concerns, the conclusion emphasizes the urgent need for accountability and stronger compliance mechanisms to mitigate humanitarian harm and uphold the rule of law in armed conflict situations.

Against this backdrop, and in light of the urgent need to bring an end to the armed conflict initiated on 7 October 2023, to prevent the recurrence of hostilities between Israel and Palestine, and to facilitate the comprehensive reconstruction of Palestine, particularly the Gaza Strip–so as to secure its environmental integrity, humanitarian conditions, and socio-economic stability, the authors advance the following recommendations.

1. The international community–including the United Nations, the United States, Member States of the European Union, and regional Arab countries should intensify coordinated diplomatic, political, and humanitarian efforts to secure an immediate cessation of hostilities arising from the Hamas-initiated attacks on Israel and the ensuing armed conflict.

2. In the event that the Israeli–Palestinian war comes to an end, the international community should be prepared to provide comprehensive support to Palestine in restoring its degraded environment through the application of environmentally sustainable and scientifically sound remediation techniques. Such support should also extend to the restoration of natural habitats through reforestation initiatives and habitat rehabilitation programmes aimed at enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services. The protection and restoration of natural habitats can contribute to mitigating soil pollution, supporting the recovery of local fauna, and strengthening ecological resilience. A coordinated international commitment to post-war environmental restoration would therefore play a crucial role in fostering a sustainable and resilient future for the Palestinian population.

3. The international community should also expand and strengthen the provision of humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in order to mitigate the severe humanitarian consequences of the ongoing conflict. Humanitarian interventions must be inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of affected populations. In particular, assistance programmes should adequately address the specific needs of women, girls, men, boys, older persons, and persons with disabilities, as well as individuals belonging to vulnerable and marginalised groups, in order to ensure equitable access to essential relief and protection services.

4. Furthermore, the international community should be prepared to support Palestine in rebuilding its socio-economic infrastructure through a comprehensive recovery and reconstruction programme. Such a programme should prioritise the rebuilding and rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure, including residential housing, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, water supply systems, sewage treatment plants, and electricity transmission and distribution networks, while ensuring the restoration of reliable public access to electricity. In addition, reconstruction efforts should promote environmentally sustainable approaches, including the adoption of green building standards and energy-efficient technologies in the rebuilding of Gaza's damaged infrastructure, particularly residential and public buildings. The integration of eco-friendly construction techniques would help reduce the environmental impacts associated with infrastructure development while promoting long-term sustainability.

5. Finally, the international community should lend support to Israel's efforts aimed at removing Hamas from political and military control in the Gaza Strip, while exercising caution against actors who may seek to instrumentalise international humanitarian law primarily as a political tool for denouncing Israel rather than for promoting accountability, balanced legal assessment, and genuine protection of civilians during armed conflict.