



# Scholars' consensus: Genocide in Gaza marks turning point, Israel must be held accountable



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📍 Israel-Palestinian Territory

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**Geneva** – The characterisation of Israeli actions in Gaza as genocide by UN experts and international

legal scholars should mark a turning point, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor said today, in a call for Israel to be held accountable for its crimes.

“As scholars and practitioners of international law, conflict studies, and genocide studies, we are compelled to sound the alarm about the possibility of the crime of genocide being perpetrated by Israeli forces against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip,” reads the public statement signed by 880 scholars on 15 October. The statement was released one week after the Israeli aggression on Gaza began, with less than 20% of the current tally of deaths and destruction.

The public statement highlighted the overwhelming evidence that Israel had carried out genocide against civilians in the Gaza Strip, including disproportionate attacks and indiscriminate bombing, the destruction of residential neighbourhoods, the use of starvation as a weapon, and the complete cutoff of humanitarian supplies.

According to Euro-Med Monitor, the ongoing Israeli siege of Gaza—which began in 2006—is a slow-moving precursor to the crime of genocide, bolstered in recent years by calls for the commission of horrific crimes that are illegal under international law.

Israel’s war since 7 October 2023, in which over 11,000 Palestinian people have been killed or gone missing under the rubble in Gaza as of this publication, is unprecedented in terms of the indiscriminate

airstrikes and artillery attacks by Israeli forces, the human rights group added.

Euro-Med Monitor warned that Israel has wiped out entire Palestinian families and levelled entire residential neighbourhoods in a clear and brutal destructive attack, along with forcibly displacing 1.1 million residents of the Gaza City and northern Gaza areas. Not only has Israeli failed to provide those displaced with shelter, said the organisation, but it has targeted hundreds of individuals travelling to the central and southern regions of the Strip in the hopes of seeking safety.

Israel has denied the over 2.3 million people living in the Gaza Strip access to basic supplies, including food, water, electricity, medicine, and fuel, directly causing a severe humanitarian crisis and deliberately exposing the population to starvation. This constitutes a crime against humanity and amounts to amount to ethnic cleansing, Euro-Med Monitor contended, Euro-Med Monitor contended.

Israeli officials' inflammatory statements accompanying the aggression, such as "human animals", "we will not return to what it was before", and "the emphasis is on damage and not on accuracy", reflect their intentions to commit genocide crimes, said Euro-Med Monitor, by purposefully killing people and limiting their access to basic human needs.

Alongside the increased attacks and the dropping of over 25,000 tons on the roughly 365 square kilometre Gaza Strip, Israeli officials have released statements confirming that the destruction of civilian homes and neighbourhoods and the killing of civilians are deliberate actions based on prior decisions. These statements are wildly contradictory to previous Israeli utterances about “human shields”, asserted Euro-Med Monitor.

The aforementioned statements include one by Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant at the start of the war: “I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel; everything is closed. We are fighting human animals, and we are acting accordingly.” Israel’s President Isaac Herzog, meanwhile, stated, “It is an entire nation out there that is responsible. It is not true this rhetoric about civilians [being] not aware, not involved. It’s absolutely not true. We are in a state of war against them.”

For his part, the Representative of Israel to the United Nations, Dan Gillerman, has said quite clearly, “I am very puzzled by the constant concern which the world is showing for the Palestinian people and is actually showing for these horrible, inhuman animals.” Dror Eydar, Israel’s former ambassador to Italy, has voiced that “Israelis are not interested. For

us, there is a purpose: to destroy Gaza, to destroy the absolute evil.”

UN experts including the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, Francesca Albanese, confirmed on 2 November that the “Palestinian people are at risk of genocide”, and that “Israel’s allies also bear responsibility, and must act now to prevent the consequences of its disastrous course of action.”

Euro-Med Monitor stressed that Israel has relentlessly violated the international Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by collectively targeting the people of the Gaza Strip for just being Palestinians. This targeting, said the Geneva-based group, has included mass killing, physical and mental abuse, and undermining the basic living conditions for survival.

“The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish,” reads Article 1 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Article 2 of the Convention states that genocide means any of the following acts: 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.

The International Court of Justice has also stated that the prohibition of genocide is a peremptory norm of international law (or *ius cogens*) and, consequently, no derogation from it is allowed; persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials, or private individuals.

Israel has a long history of committing acts of genocide against the Palestinian people, including the 1948 murder and mass displacement of Palestinians (Nakba), as well as military occupation for more than 50 years, which has resulted in the establishment of an apartheid regime ruling the Palestinian people and repeated military assaults on Gaza, which sparked the Israel's ongoing, extremely violent chapter in Palestinian history.

Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor urged all countries across the world to take effective and concrete steps

to stop the Israeli genocide against the residents of the Gaza Strip, and to apply pressure in all international forums to put an end to this horrific crime, in accordance with their legal and moral duties.

The human rights organisation called on all relevant international bodies, including the Office for the Prevention of Genocide and the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, to intervene immediately to conduct the necessary investigations and to take the necessary measures to protect Palestinian civilians from genocide.



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