

UN: 7 in 10 Killed in Gaza Are Women or Children, in “Grave Violations” of Law

Sharon Zhang : 7-9 minutes : 11/8/2024

Babies and toddlers aged 0 to 4 are among the most-represented age groups of those killed by Israel.

Children stare at the destruction following an Israeli strike in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip on November 7, 2024.
Eyad Baba / AFP via Getty Images

Women and children make up the vast majority of those slaughtered by Israeli forces in Gaza amid the genocide, the UN has found in an eye-opening report that warns that Israel is committing “grave violations of international law” in Gaza that “may also constitute genocide.”

In a 31-page [report](#) published Friday, the UN Human Rights Office found that, of the thousands of killings the office was able to verify between the beginning of Israel’s genocide and September of this year, 44 percent were killings of children, while 26 percent were women — adding up to 70 percent of the death toll.

In other words, the report found that children made up the largest single group of people killed by Israel. The three age categories most represented were children aged between 5 and 9 years old; children between 10 and 14; and babies and toddlers aged 0 to 4.

The report says that the proportion of women and children killed are an indication of Israel’s widespread killings of civilians and “failure to comply with fundamental principles of international humanitarian law.”

The civilian death toll is likely far higher than 70 percent, as Israeli forces [have also adopted a practice](#) of labeling all men in Gaza as affiliated with Hamas, without evidence, in order to justify their mass slaughter. On top of killing thousands of men, Israeli forces have rounded up Palestinian men and boys en masse — [including health care workers](#) — and abducted them to camps, where they face severe torture [before being released](#), indefinite imprisonment, or death.

The agency noted that it was not able to verify more deaths because Israel’s assault has made humanitarian activities “extremely challenging,” with Israeli authorities blocking access to UN monitors and killing UN personnel.

The findings further contradict Israeli forces’ and U.S. officials’ repeated insistence, not backed by evidence, that Israel is taking the necessary steps to protect civilians amid the genocide.

As the report notes, as of April, though Israeli forces had killed over 34,000 Palestinians (if not far more, according to some estimates), they had only announced the names of 75

Palestinians specifically targeted for death.

Within the verified killings, about 80 percent were killed in residential buildings or other housing, the report found. Among those deaths, 88 percent were killed in incidents that killed five or more Palestinians — further underscoring the indiscriminate nature of Israel's attacks.

The report contains some of the strongest UN-sanctioned language yet to describe Israel's assault, saying it is likely that the widespread disregard for civilian protections under international law amounts to genocide.

"In many instances, the violations documented in this report by the parties could amount to war crimes," the report says.

"If committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population, further to a State or organizational policy, they may constitute crimes against humanity. If committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, they may also constitute genocide," it goes on.

UN human rights chief Volker Türk called for Israel to immediately comply with numerous binding ICJ orders demanding an end to the Israeli military's assault.

"It is essential that there is due reckoning with respect to the allegations of serious violations of international law through credible and impartial judicial bodies and that, in the meantime, all relevant information and evidence are collected and preserved," said Türk.

Truthout Is Preparing to Meet Trump's Agenda With Resistance at Every Turn

Dear *Truthout* Community,

If you feel rage, despondency, confusion and deep fear today, you are not alone. We're feeling it too. We are heartsick. Facing down Trump's fascist agenda, we are desperately worried about the most vulnerable people among us, including our loved ones and everyone in the *Truthout* community, and our minds are racing a million miles a minute to try to map out all that needs to be done.

We must give ourselves space to grieve and feel our fear, feel our rage, and keep in the forefront of our mind the stark truth that millions of real human lives are on the line. And simultaneously, we've got to get to work, take stock of our resources, and prepare to throw ourselves full force into the movement.

Journalism is a linchpin of that movement. **Even as we are reeling, we're summoning up all the energy we can to face down what's coming, because we know that one of the sharpest weapons against fascism is publishing the truth.**

There are many terrifying planks to the Trump agenda, and we plan to devote ourselves to reporting thoroughly on each one and, crucially, covering the movements resisting them. We also recognize that Trump is a dire threat to journalism itself, and that we must take this seriously from the outset.

Last week, the four of us sat down to have some hard but necessary conversations about *Truthout* under a Trump presidency. How would we defend our publication from an

avalanche of far right lawsuits that seek to bankrupt us? How would we keep our reporters safe if they need to cover outbreaks of political violence, or if they are targeted by authorities? How will we urgently produce the practical analysis, tools and movement coverage that you need right now — breaking through our normal routines to meet a terrifying moment in ways that best serve you?

It will be a tough, scary four years to produce social justice-driven journalism. **We need to deliver news, strategy, liberatory ideas, tools and movement-sparking solutions with a force that we never have had to before.** And at the same time, we desperately need to protect our ability to do so.

We know this is such a painful moment and donations may understandably be the last thing on your mind. But we must ask for your support, which is needed in a new and urgent way.

We promise we will kick into an even higher gear to give you truthful news that cuts against the disinformation and vitriol and hate and violence. We promise to publish analyses that will serve the needs of the movements we all rely on to survive the next four years, and even build for the future. We promise to be responsive, to recognize you as members of our community with a vital stake and voice in this work.

Please dig deep if you can, but a donation of any amount will be a truly meaningful and tangible action in this cataclysmic historical moment.

We're with you. Let's do all we can to move forward together.

With love, rage, and solidarity,

Maya, Negin, Saima, and Ziggy