



SUFFERING BY DESIGN

THE HUMAN COST OF REPEATED DISPLACEMENT IN GAZA

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In the occupied Palestinian territory DRC implements humanitarian programming in partnership with local partners. DRC and partner programming includes Camp Coordination and Camp Management, Food Security, Humanitarian Mine Action and Protection.

Executive Summary

This joint report by Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Agricultural Development Association (PARC) and Women's Affairs Centre (WAC) provides a detailed analysis of the devastating impact of repeated displacement on Gaza's population, highlighting how Israel's military offensive and policies that include forcible displacement and the denial of aid systematically violate International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. The report is informed by discussions with 112 people across Gaza who are living in displacement sites as well as site management data from 19 displacement sites that shelter 32,000 people. It demonstrates the compounding harm caused by relentless bombardments, forced displacement orders, and systematic deprivation of essential services, pushing Gaza's civilians into worsening cycles of instability and suffering.

Key findings include:

- Since October 2023, **over 90% of Gaza's population has been displaced, with individuals displaced an average of six times, and some up to 19 times.** Forced displacement orders have been issued repeatedly, often with inadequate warning, while designated "safe zones" are subjected to bombardment and lack basic resources.
- Resource scarcity, overcrowding and lack of privacy have emerged as **new drivers of displacement.**
- Repeated displacement has devastated livelihoods, **with 70% of families reporting no income and 11% reliant on severely reduced salaries.** Resource scarcity and skyrocketing prices have forced families to sell aid to purchase essentials, while small businesses—predominantly women-led—struggle to survive due to repeated displacement and lack of raw materials.
- **Living conditions in displacement sites are inhumane.** Displacement sites are overcrowded, unsafe, and lack privacy, exacerbating the physical and emotional burdens people face. Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure has collapsed, with families enduring severe water shortages, reliance on unsafe water sources, and the proliferation of preventable diseases.
- **Access to essential services has been severely disrupted** and is further exacerbated by repeated displacement, as people have to re-orient themselves every time with regard to where and how to access aid in the new location. People spend hours walking and queuing for food, water, and humanitarian aid, often without success. The loss of documentation further impedes access to aid, housing, and employment opportunities.
- **The mental health crisis is catastrophic.** Civilians report severe anxiety, depression, and trauma, compounded by the constant threat of violence, loss of loved ones, and unrelenting hardship. Women are disproportionately impacted, bearing the overwhelming burden of caregiving and survival, while men report withdrawal and feelings of helplessness.

This report aims to examine repeated displacement as a distinct issue, emphasising how it differs from single displacement by continuously uprooting people and forcing them into progressively worsening conditions. Conversations with displaced individuals explored access to essential services, including basics such as food, water, and aid, as well as living standards and the mental health impacts of repeated displacement.

Introduction

This report examines the devastating impact of repeated displacement in Gaza, highlighting how it differs from single displacement by continuously forcing people to uproot and pushing them into worsening conditions. Families are forced to flee under life-threatening circumstances, only to find overcrowded, unsafe shelters that lack even the most basic essentials like food, water, and medical care.

Repeated displacement is a deliberate policy implemented by the Government of Israel that inflicts severe harm on a population already trapped amidst active warfare. It repeatedly severs people's access to essential services and basic necessities such as food and water, erodes living standards, destroys livelihoods, fractures social and family networks, and has devastating consequences for mental health.

The findings presented underscores grave violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), which mandates the protection of civilians and the provision of essential services during displacement. By denying these protections and forcing families into relentless instability, the Government of Israel's actions risk not only breaching IHL but also inflicting conditions that could amount to acts prohibited under the Genocide Convention.

This report amplifies the voices of those affected and calls for immediate action to ensure their safety, dignity, and access to essential humanitarian assistance.



Methodology

The Agricultural Development Association (PARC) and the Women's Affairs Centre (WAC) facilitated focus group discussions (FGDs) in October and November 2024 with 112 people across four governorates in Gaza, including 38 men and 74 women. In Gaza city, 12 men and 22 women participated; in Khan Younis, 26 men and 19 women participated; and in Deir al-Balah, 33 women participated. In addition, the Women's Affairs Centre conducted five in-depth key informant interviews with women. This report focuses on the gendered impact of repeated displacement on women, who made up 66% of the participants.

The FGDs employed open-ended questions to collect qualitative data, aiming to shed light on the daily realities of repeated displacement and survival during 13 months of military offensive. In addition, DRC and PARC carried out site assessments of 19 displacement sites in Deir al Balah and Khan Younis that shelter 32,000 people, data from these sites assessments have been utilised to further inform the report.

All names in the report have been changed to protect individuals' identities, and only their original governorate has been specified instead of their village, town, city, or refugee camp.



Background

Historical context

For decades Palestinians have been subjected to repeated, forced displacement, leaving them as an uprooted and scattered people. Further displaced by violence, blockades, and living under occupation in Palestine, they continue to face marginalisation, discriminatory laws¹, and deprivation while awaiting a resolution to their exile.

The UN Partition Plan (Resolution 181)² proposed dividing Palestine into Jewish and Palestinian states, allocating 56% of the territory to the Jewish State and dividing the land assigned to Palestinians in two parts, despite Palestinians comprising two-thirds of the population and owning 90% of the land. Disregarding Palestinian objections, this plan laid the groundwork for what became known as the Nakba (Arabic for "catastrophe"), during which over 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced due to actions by Jewish militias. There was widespread violence against a civilian population with multiples massacres, entire villages destroyed and lands confiscated, driving countless families to neighbouring areas, including Gaza, as well as neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. Far from a spontaneous coincidence of war, the Nakba was a part of a strategy to establish a Jewish state in Palestine³.

Before 1948, Gaza's population was 80,000, by the war's end, over 200,000 refugees from southern Palestine⁴ had fled there. Refugees sheltered in schools, mosques and other public spaces before UNRWA established eight camps to accommodate them. Meanwhile, the Government of Israel prohibited the return of Palestinians, violating UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948)⁵, which affirms the right of refugees to return to their homes.

The 1967 Arab-Israeli War⁶ marked another phase of mass displacement of Palestinians in what became known as the Naksa⁷ (Arabic for "setback"). Following Israel's occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza and the Golan Heights, more than 300,000 Palestinians were displaced⁸, many for the second time. Israeli policies of land confiscation, settlement expansion, and home demolitions continued the legacy of forced dispossession, creating conditions that persist today. The ongoing denial of Palestinians' right to return and the construction of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land reflects an enduring policy of demographic engineering, supported by discriminatory laws and military practices.

Current context

Approximately 6 million registered Palestinian refugees are scattered across the Middle East, with many living in overcrowded camps. 2.1 million people currently reside in Gaza, including more than 1.7 million registered refugees under UNRWA. Before the current military offensive in Gaza a significant proportion of these refugees live in densely populated camps, often with limited access to essential services.

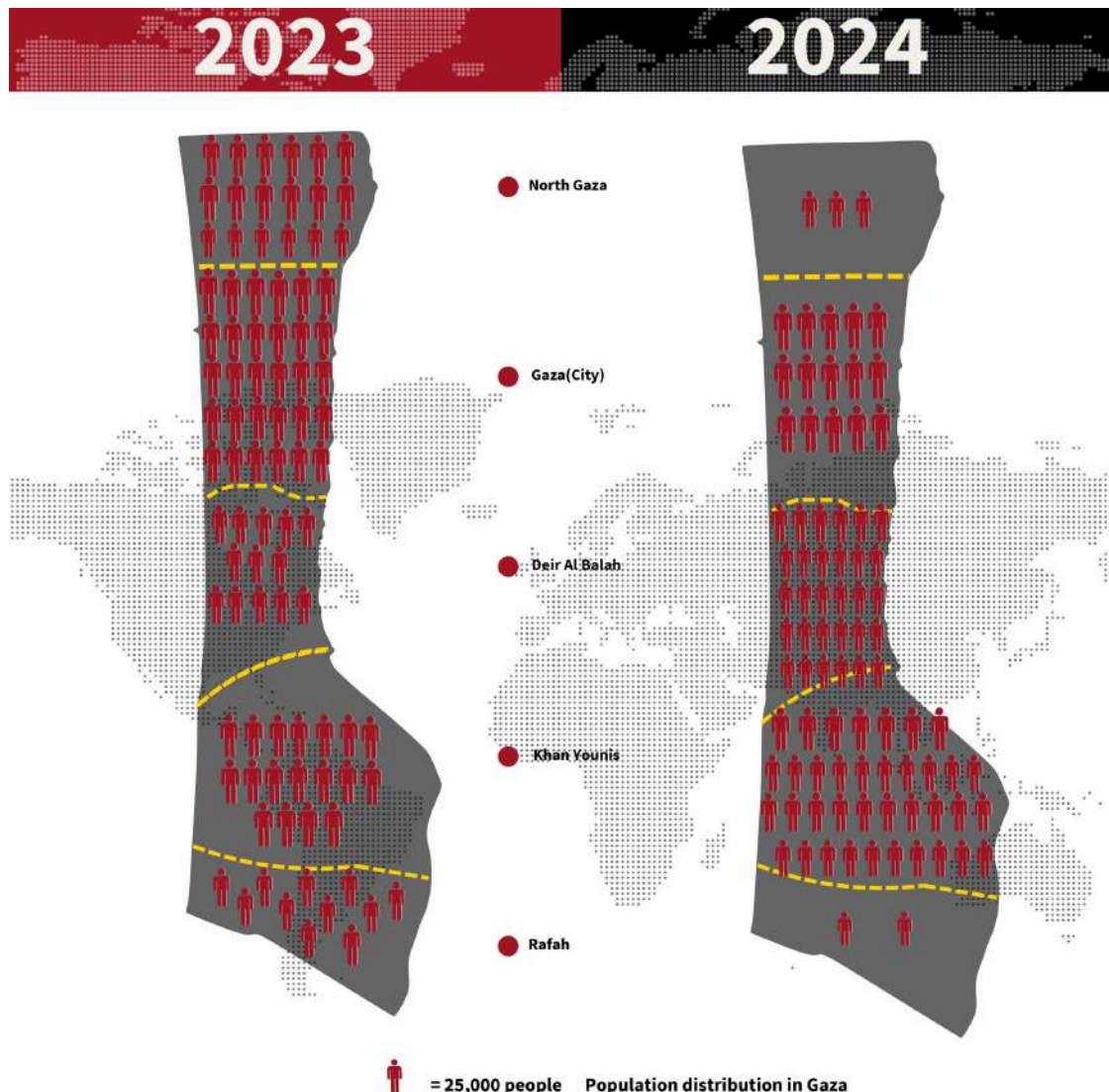
The Gaza Strip has endured repeated cycles of violence, including major escalations in 2008-2009, 2012, 2014 and 2021, as well as the ongoing Israeli military offensive. The periods of violence, compounded by occupation, discriminatory laws and policies together with a 17-year-blockade have resulted in significant civilian casualties, widespread destruction, a developmental setback of nearly 70 years⁹, an ongoing protection and humanitarian crises, including aid dependency of an estimated 80% of the population in 2022¹⁰ as well as repeated displacement.

The latest Israeli military offensive, following attacks by Palestinian armed groups on 7th October, has resulted in the death of at least 45,059 and the injury of 107,041 people in Gaza. Over 90% of the population has been displaced¹¹. Each individual whom DRC, PARC and WAC spoke with for this research had been displaced multiple times. On average, **people had been displaced an average of six times, once every two months, and up to 19 times from October 2023 to October 2024**. The United Nations has recorded 70 forced displacement orders between 7 October 2023 and 14 December 2024, averaging approximately one order per week¹². Forced displacement from active warfare and repeated displacement orders have drastically altered the population distribution across governorates.

Displacement in Gaza is not a straightforward escape but an unending cycle of departures and returns within a strictly confined area. People are trapped, enduring repeated displacement yet never finding safety.

Gaza is composed of five governorates, northern Gaza, Gaza (city), Deir al Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah. United Nations data on population numbers per governorate as of November 2024¹³ reveals that:

- North Gaza has experienced an 83% decrease in its population since October 2023, shrinking from 444,000 to around 75,000.
- Gaza (city) has seen a 50% reduction, with its population halved from 750,000 to 375,000.
- Deir al Balah, in stark contrast, has witnessed a 134% increase in population, growing from 320,000 to 749,000.
- Khan Younis also shelters a substantial number of displaced people, with its population increasing by 109%, from 439,000 to 916,000.
- Rafah, like North Gaza, has suffered a significant 84% decrease in its population, dropping from 275,000 to 44,000.



This clearly shows a north-to-south displacement trend, as civilians have been repeatedly ordered to move towards the unilaterally declared “humanitarian zone” a small slither of land located along the coast of Deir al Balah and Khan Younis. Yet this zone, whilst declared safe by Israel, is frequently subjected to bombardments and military action. The result has been a humanitarian catastrophe where people are not only endangered by ongoing warfare, but by a lack of ability to meet their basic needs in overcrowded displacement sites. The entry of aid and commercial goods remains so inadequate the entire population is food insecure, more than 90 percent of the population are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above and many at imminent risk of starvation¹⁴.

Despite this north to south trend, nearly half a million civilians remain in Gaza city and North Gaza trapped amidst intense military bombardment with little to no aid or basic necessities due to the near-total blockade of goods entering the north since October 2024. The towns of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia as well as Jabalia Refugee Camp remain besieged with frequent military attacks in these small areas and severe risks to Palestinian civilians' protection and rights. DRC partners confirm that men and boys are being taken for questioning in northern Gaza, with some women reporting they do not know where their male relatives have gone.





Entry of goods

Before the most recent Israeli military offensive, Gaza received around 500 trucks of aid and commercial goods per day carrying basic necessities, an amount essential to maintaining at least a minimal standard of living. Before the current escalation the majority of Palestinians in Gaza depended on aid. In stark contrast, this critical supply line has dwindled to a fraction of its former volume despite rising needs due to the persistent threat to life from ongoing bombardments, decimation of essential infrastructure and loss of livelihoods which have created an even greater demand for goods to meet basic needs. Yet fewer than 65 trucks per day¹⁵ have entered since October. The number of trucks entering Gaza does not reflect the true extent of the issue, as in many instances, the goods on these trucks do not reach those in desperate need due to a myriad of issues including trucks being held just inside the border of Gaza and looting that is driven by desperation, with reports highlighting that looting gangs potentially receiving either indirect or direct support, and possibly even protection, from the Israeli military¹⁶. Such an extreme reduction of goods in Gaza directly undermines the population's capacity to meet basic dietary requirements and access vital commodities.

Israeli-imposed restrictions render the meaningful deliverance of humanitarian aid impossible, through a combination of overly complicated approval processes, lengthy delays, and the broad interpretation of items deemed to be dual-use, meaning they are prohibited due to their perceived potential for being used for military purposes¹⁷. The overly expansive interpretation of dual-use items, which includes basic goods such as castor oil, wooden planks and communications equipment, severely curtails the ability of humanitarian actors to deliver much-needed aid to Gaza's population. Meanwhile, bureaucratic requirements often create extensive waiting periods for aid entry. When fresh produce is transported in regular vehicles, it frequently spoils before reaching Gaza as a direct result of access restrictions set by the Government of Israel, a problem that has been consistently documented¹⁸. Aid actors, constrained by these restrictions, cannot adequately meet specific needs and must import whatever they can, despite knowing it will fall far short of need.

Site management

Gaza currently hosts over 2,000 displacement sites, yet only around 160¹⁹ benefit from essential site management services including around 80 by UNRWA and 80 by non-governmental organisations. Site management is crucial in contexts such as Gaza, where repeated displacements occur, as it enhances the effective delivery of assistance, protection, and services to internally displaced persons. Proper camp management facilitates equitable access to basic human rights, coordinates service provision, and maintains camp infrastructure, all of which are vital for the safety and dignity of displaced populations.



Legal Framework

Protection of civilians

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) prioritises the protection of civilians during armed conflict, prohibiting violence, harm, and discrimination against civilians. The Geneva Convention IV²⁰ obliges all parties to safeguard civilians from violence and ensure their access to medical care and essential services. Acts such as starvation, targeted violence against civilians, and denial of access to humanitarian aid are considered grave breaches of IHL.

Forced displacement

The forcible transfer or deportation of civilians is strictly prohibited under IHL, except in cases where such measures are essential for their safety or dictated by imperative military necessity. Article 49 of the Geneva Convention IV explicitly forbids the forced displacement of civilians in occupied territories, reinforcing that such actions must not be used as a method of warfare. Furthermore, Rule 129 of Customary IHL²¹ reiterates that displacement must be avoided unless absolutely necessary, and displaced civilians must be provided with adequate living conditions and safeguards to minimise harm. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court²² classifies forced displacement as a crime against humanity when carried out as part of a widespread or systematic attack, underscoring its severe illegality under international law.

For civilians who are displaced, IHL mandates that they must be treated humanely and provided with the resources necessary for survival and dignity. According to Article 55 and Article 56 of the Geneva Convention IV²³, occupying powers must ensure displaced populations have continuous access to food, safe water, medical care, and public health. The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement²⁴ further emphasise the importance of humanitarian assistance, stating in Principle 18 that displaced persons must receive adequate food, shelter, medical care, sanitation, and other essentials. Any deliberate denial of humanitarian aid or destruction of resources indispensable to civilian survival, as prohibited under Article 54 of Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Convention²⁵, constitutes a serious violation of IHL. These provisions highlight the urgent need for accountability and humanitarian access in addressing the plight of displaced populations.

Prevention of genocide

In addition, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide²⁶, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948 in the wake of the Holocaust. Its purpose is to define genocide and establish the legal obligation of states to prevent and punish this crime. There are four key ways be responsible for genocide under international law²⁷, including where a state may be held legally responsible for (1) committing genocide or attempting to do so, (2) conspiring to commit genocide, (3) directly and publicly inciting genocide, (4) failing to prevent genocide that can amount to “complicity in genocide”, particularly when a state has the capacity and resources to act. This responsibility may arise in particular where a state provides weapons, funding or other support to a state which that state then uses to commit genocide. For genocide to be recognised three key elements need to be established, (1) there must be a specific group being targeted based on their nationality, ethnicity, race or religion, (2) there must be certain acts that have been committed against the group, and (3) there must be intent to destroy the target group, in whole or in part. The ICJ has already confirmed that Palestinians qualify as a protected group under the Genocide Convention, with Palestinians in Gaza recognised as a significant part of that group.

Many of the acts laid out in Article II²⁸ have been well-evidenced²⁹ over the past year, (a) Killing members of the group; 45,936 people have been killed with upwards of 10,000 considered dead and buried beneath rubble, the majority of these deaths have been civilians; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; 109,274 people have been injured with estimates that 25% of these injuries are lifechanging, the majority of these injuries have been civilians, (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; as this report will go on to argue, the large-scale forcible displacement and prohibitive measures on goods entering and being distributed across Gaza have created abhorrent conditions in displacement sites where Palestinians struggle to meet their most basic needs.

Israel's military actions, including widespread bombing campaigns and significant civilian casualties could, according to the ICJ³⁰, amount to genocide. Multiple experts and INGOs³¹ have concluded that Israel's actions, including widespread bombing campaigns, significant civilian casualties, as well as the purposeful deprivation of necessities risk or confirm that Israel is committing genocide. Whilst this report does not look into the intent behind Israel's policies and therefore does not seek to ascertain whether genocide is being committed in Gaza, findings within this report, as well as DRC's previous report, *Killing Long After they Fall*, confirms that Israel is blatantly violating IHL and committing multiple acts outlined in Article II of the Genocide Convention.



Drivers of displacement

DRC, PARC and WAC data reveals that for the majority of people, their **initial decision to flee their homes was one of survival**. The escalation of violence in Gaza meant that most people were displaced within the first few months of this latest Israeli military offensive. Overwhelmingly, initial displacement was driven by shelling, bombardments or other military actions, with many people reporting repeated displacements due to active warfare. People were often forced to flee at very short notice, in a state of panic and fear. Many people report running to the streets amidst crowds of petrified neighbours, with no safe route identified for them and no clarity on which direction would lead them away from the violence. These displacements often occur at night, in the dark, surrounded by the sound and light of bombardments.

Fleeing requires resources such as transport, financial means, and safe routes free from active fighting. However, DRC's previous research³² found substantial barriers to people's ability to flee. From a survey of 103 people, DRC found that:

- Only one respondent believed they had adequate means to flee during an attack.
- 58% of people reported no access to transport, forcing many to flee on foot through lengthy, dangerous journeys without the ability to carry essential resources.
- 22% cited impassable roads due to destruction and debris as a major barrier, further hindering their ability to escape to safety.
- Financial constraints were critical, 23% stated the high cost of prevented them from fleeing.
- Among 13 vehicle owners, fuel costs and damaged roads were significant obstacles. Two respondents relied on animals for transport but also faced substantial road damage as a barrier.

“**Samia, 53, originally from Khan Younis, displaced three times:** Samia vividly recalls the terror that forced her family to flee her home. Samia and her family were suddenly surrounded by shelling from Israeli navy boats off the coast.

"The sound was terrifying; it felt like a scene from the end of the world. There were over 60 people, including elderly people and children. We walked in the dark at around midnight, not knowing where to go, running in every direction. We got separated from one another and began searching for each other. People were asking us where we were heading. We didn't know, but we managed to gather ourselves and escape to an area that the Israeli army claimed was safe in the Mawasi area of Khan Younis, but the conditions were dangerous."

Samia and her family were forced to leave again, just twelve days later, when the military came into the university grounds in which they were sheltering. Again, the displacement was marked by scenes of fear and panic with Samia and her family able to take nothing but their clothes.

"There were more than 40 of us running through the streets not knowing where to go. At that moment, I felt like I was living the Palestinian Nakba, which I had only read about in books but was now experiencing firsthand. Our faces were all filled with fear and panic as we walked without knowing our destination, with the children carrying only blankets on their shoulders and small bags. We walked under heavy shelling for four hours at night. It was one of the worst nights I have ever lived through."

“

Layla, 36, originally from Rafah, displaced five times: Layla was forced to flee her home when the Israeli military launched an offensive in eastern Rafah, targeting an area sheltering approximately 1.4 million Palestinians in May 2023. Israel also took control of and sealed the Rafah border crossing with Egypt, cutting off vital humanitarian aid, fuel, and medical supplies. UN experts condemned³³ the invasion as a violation of international law, highlighting the grave humanitarian crisis caused by the forcible displacement of civilians, including over 600,000 children, into an unprepared and resource-scarce ‘expanded humanitarian area’ in Al Mawasi.

“I had to displace to Khan Younis, to the house of my mother-in-law's relatives. Due to overcrowding, I had to move again to the center of Khan Younis to stay with my sisters. Then, when the Israeli ground invasion operation began in Khan Younis in December 2023, we were forced to displace for the third time to the Mawasi area of Khan Younis, on Al-Nus Street, where my family was staying. This was one of the areas that the occupation described as a safe zone, and they urged people to move there. My uncles and sisters also displaced with us to the same location, which quickly became overcrowded, making the situation extremely difficult. There was not enough space to live, no safety, and no privacy, especially for women.

My husband decided to displace for the fourth time to Rafah, where he rented a part of a house for us. I was pregnant and about to give birth, so I felt some relief to have a bit of privacy and space. We remained in this tent until the Rafah ground invasion. This was the fifth and most difficult displacement I experienced, we had to displace quickly, moving our belongings without any means of transportation.

It felt it was like the Day of Judgment; people were in a complete state of panic and fear, with hundreds of thousands experiencing mass displacement. It was a harsh night, with bombardments and explosions everywhere in Rafah, and I couldn't believe that daylight had come while we are still alive. At that moment, I felt helpless, overwhelmed, and humiliated by our continuous suffering; I couldn't bear the successive traumas. I wished that death would take us and relieve us from this torment. Our entire life is filled with humiliation, and there is no dignity in it.”

Such bombardments in civilian areas cause devastating casualties and widespread destruction. Many people report witnessing the injury or death of loved ones, neighbours, and other civilians. In some cases, families were struck directly, leaving survivors trapped under rubble or rushing to save those critically wounded. For many, these moments were not only traumatic but life-altering, as people endured the immediate loss of family members, suffered injuries themselves, or bore the traumatic memory of such violent scenes.

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Tuleen, 27, originally from Gaza city, displaced four times: Tuleen faced an unimaginable ordeal just days after giving birth. On 27 October 2023, while she was nursing her newborn daughter, only seven days old, a bomb struck their neighbourhood, collapsing the roof of her house. *“I used to live in Gaza. On October 27th, one of our neighbours' houses was bombed, causing the roof of our house to collapse on us while I was nursing my baby. At that moment, I was completely traumatised, in a state of severe shock, unable to comprehend what was happening. People came to rescue us from under the rubble, they tied a rope around my little baby girl to pull her out. They put an oxygen mask on me, I remained in shock until the next day. Thankfully, my entire family was outside the house at the time of the bombing, so it was just me and my baby who were trapped.”*

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Sultan, originally from Gaza city, displaced six times: *“I have been displaced six times. My harrowing journey began on October 19th when I was forced to displace from Al Sabra to the Beach Camp, everyone fled due to heavy bombing and destruction. I witnessed scenes unlike anything I had ever seen before—people lying in the streets, body parts scattered everywhere, and we didn't know what to do. We walked for over an hour until we found a vehicle to transport us, eventually heading to Al-Bureij Camp.”*

DRC, PARC and WAC Data shows that **many people initially sought refuge in the closest locations they considered safe, often extended family homes or public buildings such as schools, universities, and hospitals**, which quickly became shelters for displaced families. Many believed these sites would provide safety, as they were clearly filled with civilians seeking protection from the violence. However, displacements to nearby areas were overwhelmingly short-lived, as escalating bombardments soon made it clear that the entire area was unsafe.

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Tarek, 43, originally from northern Gaza, displaced nine times: The urgency of Tarek’s displacement was compounded by the need to protect his elderly father and entire extended family. After receiving a forced displacement order, they initially sought refuge in nearby Jabalia Camp.

“We thought we’d be safe at the school. But after seven days, a nearby area was bombed, killing my cousin. I had no choice but to displace again. We walked for hours before finally reaching a shelter, but each move felt like a step closer to losing everything.”

”

People in Gaza have been repeatedly forced to flee active warfare as nowhere has been exempt from the Israeli military offensive. When displacement was driven by active warfare, people’s displacement journey has been defined by fear, panic, and profound uncertainty. Without designated safe exit routes or guidance to secure areas, families fled along treacherous paths, often under the looming presence of Israeli tanks and armed soldiers. Many describe these journeys as harrowing, marked by terror and the constant threat of violence. Reports of random shootings and people being killed during their flight epitomise the danger and pervasive environment of intimidation. Some recount stepping over dead bodies, too frightened to raise their heads for fear of being shot, whilst others witnessed such horrors firsthand. At no point did displaced individuals interviewed for this report receive support or protection from the Israeli military, instead, their escape was characterised by intimidation, fear, and a profound sense of abandonment.

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Saria, originally from Gaza city, displaced twelve times: *“As the situation worsened, it was hard to take the decision of evacuating to the south through the Israeli checkpoint, the so-called “safe path” despite the danger, it was our only option. We left one Friday in late November. The journey was terrifying—we walked past Israeli soldiers standing on both sides, showing our IDs and raising our hands. The sight of people being killed in front of me filled me with terror. After long hours of waiting and then walking, eventually, we reached Al-Maghazi.”*

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Tamer, 36, originally from Gaza city, displaced six times: *“As the situation worsened and more people began moving south, I had to displace to Khan Younis. We spent two months in Block 12 there. When the Israeli army invaded Khan Younis, our car was destroyed as we tried to escape, and I was captured. I spent 25 days blindfolded, not knowing where I had been taken. During this time, we were tortured and interrogated continuously. After about a month in captivity, they transferred us in a jeep, and when the blindfolds were finally removed, we found ourselves at Kerem Shalom. We were thrown to the ground like animals, and they ordered us to head toward Rafah.”*

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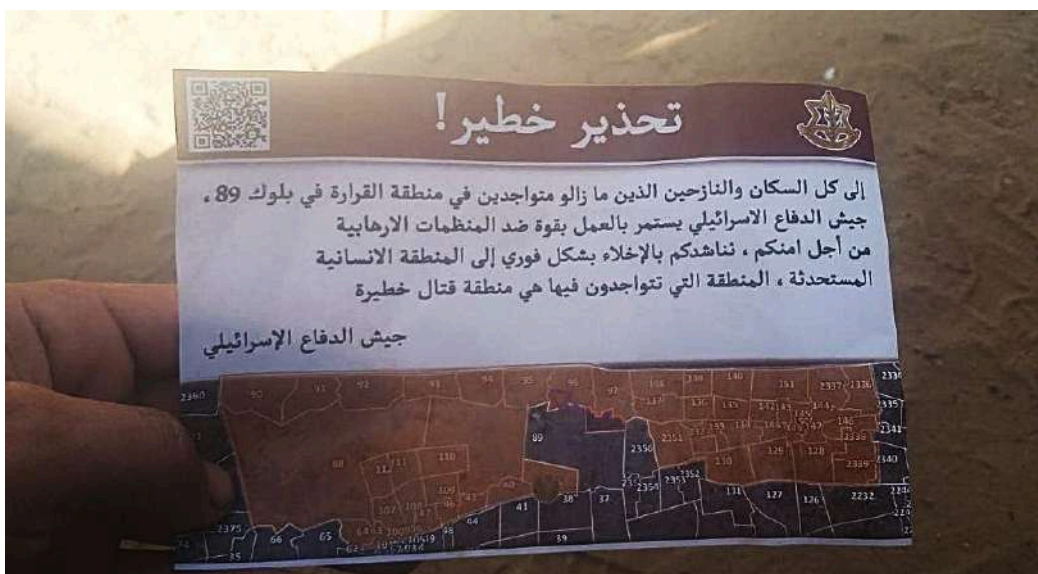
Displacement orders

In addition to fleeing due to bombardments and military operations, **Gaza's population has repeatedly been forced to flee as a result of Israel's policy of issuing forced displacement orders.** These orders have been a primary driver of the unprecedented displacement of 90% of Gaza's population. Currently, 87% of Gaza remains under displacement orders³⁴, with only small portions of Khan Younis, Deir al-Balah, and Rafah excluded from these directives. However, the heavy military presence and ongoing bombardments in areas not under displacement orders highlights that nowhere in Gaza is safe. Vast numbers of civilians, including nearly half a million in northern Gaza and Gaza city governorates, continue to reside in areas under forced displacement orders.

The Government of Israel has referred to these directives as “evacuation orders,” yet as they do not meet the legal criteria for evacuation under international law³⁵, the term is both misleading and dangerous. As both party to the conflict and the occupying power in Gaza, Israel's actions are subject to international humanitarian law (IHL). Under IHL forcible transfer is prohibited and if committed with intent, constitutes a war crime³⁶. The sole exception to this prohibition is when a party to the conflict evacuates people for their safety or due to imperative military necessity. For such displacement to be lawful³⁷, specific conditions must be met, including that people are moved safely without being separated from family members, people should be provided with adequate access to food, water, sanitation and healthcare. In addition, evacuations must always be temporary, with people being able to return home as soon as the security situation allows. As the Government of Israel has not ensured that these evacuations are safe, nor that people received the basic necessities of food, water, sanitation and healthcare, DRC uses the term displacement order, to reflect that these directives do not meet the legal requirements of an evacuation.

This inhumane and harmful policy began on 13 October 2023, less than a week after the latest military campaign began. Each of these orders has affected huge numbers of the population with inadequate timeframes for people to flee. The first displacement order alone ordered over one million people in northern Gaza to displace within 24 hours.

To implement its policy of displacement orders, the Government of Israel has imposed a grid system on Gaza, dividing it into zones identified on maps that accompany these orders. This system, unilaterally defined by Israel, is unfamiliar to the people of Gaza and does not reflect how residents understand or navigate their communities. Consequently, civilians often find it difficult to interpret these maps, leaving them uncertain about which areas they are in, which are they are required to leave and where they are expected to relocate.



These orders are issued via text, social media, or by leaflets dropped by planes, yet many people reported that they only hear about displacement orders via word of mouth. The displacement orders are issued with an inadequate timeframe in which to safely flee areas, further heightening the insecurity and making it nearly impossible for families to organise their belongings, ensure the safety of vulnerable members, or secure transportation. The short timeframe and inadequate dissemination of information place civilians in extreme danger, forcing them to flee under duress without proper preparation or any clear idea of where to flee to. The lack of a systematic and direct communication strategy compounded by a disconnect between Israel's grid system of Gaza and people in Gaza's lived reality of their communities adds another layer of harm to this illegal policy.

“**Farha, 25, originally from Gaza city, displaced seven times:** *“Leaflets were dropped, warning us to displace to the south. Fear overwhelmed me, especially with the burden of protecting my three children. We knew we had to leave, but transportation was hard to find. It took four long, agonising hours to find a car to take us to Khan Younis, where we sought refuge with relatives. Yet, the bombing followed, and we were forced to be displaced once again.”*”

The vast majority of civilians report being forced to flee multiple times over the past year due to Israeli displacement orders. Many accounts describe individuals seeking refuge in areas previously designated as "safe" by the Israeli military, only to face renewed displacement within days as military operations expanded to those same areas. Reports also reveal that subsequent displacement orders are often issued shortly after civilians arrive at the locations that were previously marked as "safe" to go to by Israel. Israel's persistent and arbitrary expansion and alteration of areas subject to these orders have left civilians in a constant state of uncertainty and danger. Areas civilians are told are not under displacement orders are neither formally protected nor spared from bombardment, and their boundaries often change within days, creating chaos and compounding the risk to civilians. In reality, nowhere in Gaza is safe. Issuing repeated orders that force displacement has caused severe harm to civilians in Gaza without attempts to ensure their protection.

“**Luna, 31, originally from Gaza city, displaced eight times:** *“On December 4, 2023, we were forced to displace again for the second time after evacuation leaflets were distributed to the southern residents. We moved to tents at the UNRWA compound in Rafah, but heavy shelling forced us to leave the area after two days.”*”

“**Tuleen, 27, originally from Gaza city, displaced four times:** *“The Israeli army ordered us to flee to Rafah, so we returned to Khan Younis once again. I feel that repeated displacements were aimed at creating a state of panic and instability. Each time we displaced, we lost some of our belongings because we had to leave quickly to reach safer areas. We couldn't take everything we owned because we didn't have the money to secure transportation, which was extremely expensive and hard to find, not to mention the bombardments and active warfare that also prevented us from taking all our essentials.”*”

Resource scarcity, overcrowding and lack of privacy

Resource scarcity, overcrowding, and the resulting lack of privacy have emerged as significant new drivers of displacement, as evidenced in DRC, PARC and WAC data. Tented sites, schools, hospitals, and other public infrastructure are overwhelmed by the sheer number of displaced people. Multiple families often share a single tent, while others live in overcrowded public buildings with a lack of privacy, further eroding their sense of dignity. In the 19 sites that alone shelter 32,000 people which DRC and PARC manage overcrowding was reported in 95% of sites.

The strain on basic resources such as food, water, and sanitation, coupled with the absence of privacy, has exacerbated tensions within families, shelters, and communities. Many families struggle to meet even their most basic needs, as meagre resources are stretched across vast numbers of people. These intolerable living conditions have forced many families to leave displacement sites, not necessarily due to immediate threats of violence but in an effort to escape the indignity and hardship. **When people were asked why they had returned to areas that had seen active fighting, the leading response was that it was due to a lack of resources and privacy in displacement sites.** The immense psychological drain which living without a sense of dignity has on people leads them to take life-threatening choices.

“**Dareen, 24, originally from Gaza city, displaced nine times:** Dareen was displaced three times due to overcrowding and resource scarcity. Dareen was pregnant during the start of the Israeli military offensive and after having been displaced three times, finally arrived at her aunt’s house. *“Life at my aunt’s house became increasingly difficult as more families sought refuge there. I was six months pregnant, and with the overcrowding and lack of resources, every day grew harder, so we then moved to Al-Amal neighbourhood in Khan Younis. We arrived completely exhausted, having walked from early morning until sunset, carrying heavy bags despite the intense pain I felt in my back and stomach. We spent 50 days there, in an unfinished building crammed with about 100 other people. Then, as the situation worsened, we were forced to be displaced for the fourth time, to another relative’s house in the Al-Satar Al-Gharbi area of Khan Younis. Even during the seven-days ceasefire, the fear never left us. The area was bombarded heavily, and I constantly worried about what might happen next. By January 22nd, we were forcibly displaced once more, this time to the Mawasi area of Khan Younis. But the conditions there were unbearable, and we couldn’t stay more than two days.”*

“**Mohammad, 53, originally from northern Gaza, displaced nine times:** *“Our third displacement took us from area near the Egyptian Crossing to the centre of Rafah, where we stayed in a UNRWA school. However, services there were insufficient, and we had to stand in long lines just to receive canned food. As the situation deteriorated further, reaching a point we could no longer endure, we decided to displace for the fourth time. We walked through dangerous routes to reach Al Sultan area (his eyes fill with tears as he recalls the events). We stayed there for three months, but eventually, Rafah was completely destroyed leading to our sixth displacement to Al Iqlimi area in Khan Younis.”*

Repeated displacement, fuelled by and intertwined with relentless violence—including deliberate attacks on civilians, violations of international humanitarian law, and the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure—has left thousands struggling to survive in increasingly dire conditions. The deprivation of basic services, often the result of deliberate policies, has compounded the suffering of displaced people, steadily eroding living standards in overcrowded and unsafe displacement sites. Those displaced are not only deprived of safety but forced to endure conditions so harsh that the concept of dignity has become a distant memory.

Gendered impacts of displacement

Displacement drivers in Gaza also reveal a stark gendered impact. Many women reported having little to no agency in decisions about where and when to move. Many reported feeling powerless as male family members decided their fate, with women's husbands often requesting them to reunite in an area of their choosing, or men deciding to move the entire family to unite with extended family. In situations where women's husbands are absent—whether due to death, detention, disappearance, or being trapped in another location in Gaza—women often report that male relatives assume the authority to decide when and where they should move. This dynamic significantly affects female-headed households, as nearby male relatives continue to make decisions on their behalf, as well as women who have relocated to live with male family members. Ultimately, women are often left little choice but to follow their male relatives.

In addition, as displacements became recurrent, many families grew increasingly reluctant to move. Exhaustion, trauma, and the realisation that no place in Gaza offered true safety led to a growing sense of lethargy. For some, the decision to stay in unsafe conditions was driven by the belief that nowhere else would be any better.

“**Lamia, 30, originally from Rafah, displaced three times:** *"I returned against my will because my husband did not want to leave his family, so I went back with him. But afterward, they bombed the refugee camp which was near the UN warehouse in Rafah, so, we had to flee and all of his family fled with us to the Mawasi area."*

“**Wardeh, 52, originally from Khan Younis, displaced four times:** *"I returned to my home after the withdrawal of the Israeli army, yet our area was still dangerous. My husband returned because his family came back, so I felt compelled to return as well. When we got back, Israeli drones dropped leaflets urging us to displace to the humanitarian zone. Suddenly, tanks started entering our area in Khan Younis, and we all began running for our lives. Thank God we survived, and we returned to the Mawasi area. Sadly, our lives have become filled with terror and fear."*

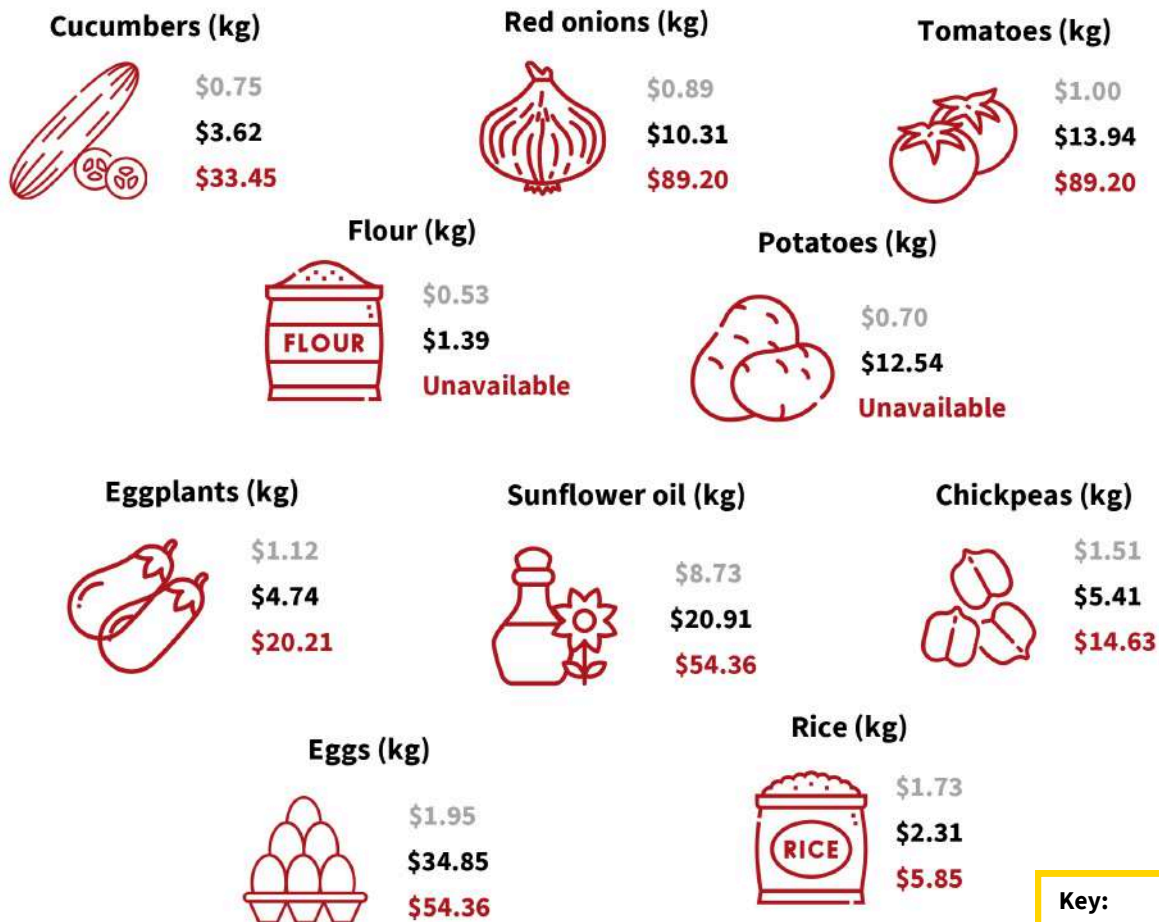
“**Rawan, 35, displaced seven times:** *"I have been displaced seven times. Living near the border means that with every war, we are among the first to be affected. On October 7th, my husband made the quick decision for us to displace without hesitation, and we moved to an unfinished building on Salah al-Din Street, near Al-Maghazi. We initially thought it would only be for a day or two, so we didn't bring many of our belongings. During our stay, we endured extremely harsh conditions, as the building lacked basic necessities like a bathroom."*

The drivers of displacement in Gaza highlight clear violations of International Humanitarian Law. Displacement was overwhelmingly driven by relentless bombardments, shelling, and forced displacement orders that failed to meet IHL's legal requirements, including the provision of safe routes, adequate shelter, and basic necessities such as food, water, and medical care. Many families were further displaced by appalling living conditions in overcrowded shelters, where the lack of resources and privacy eroded their dignity and compelled them to seek alternatives. This highlights the failure to provide essential humanitarian assistance, as required under IHL, and demonstrates how the deprivation of basic necessities inflicted additional harm and drove further cycles of displacement.

Impact on livelihoods

The Israeli military offensive in Gaza has severely disrupted livelihoods, with repeated displacement further hindering people's ability to secure income. The destruction of infrastructure, skyrocketing prices, and systemic barriers leave most families dependent on a fragile patchwork of humanitarian aid, temporary jobs, and unsustainable coping mechanisms. Repeated displacement increasingly erodes livelihoods, forcing families into cycles of deprivation and dependency, where even the most resourceful efforts to generate income are hindered. Before the current Israeli military offensive, Gaza was already facing severe economic challenges, including an unemployment rate of 45 per cent and a staggering youth unemployment rate of nearly 62.6 per cent in 2022³⁸.

Today, there is a near-total collapse of formal markets in Gaza due to extensive destruction of shops, inventory, and critical infrastructure following the Israeli military offensive. Informal markets, such as street vendors and stalls, have partially emerged to fill the gap but face significant challenges, including severe price volatility and limited access to goods. Traders report major difficulties in restocking, driven by movement restrictions, damaged infrastructure, and unreliable supply chains, which has led to significant price increases for essential goods compared to pre-crisis levels. These price surges, which have been even greater in northern Gaza, coupled with unstable supply and demand dynamics, have compounded the hardship faced by households who report resource shortages and high prices as substantial barriers to purchasing basic necessities.



Key:
Whole of Gaza
September 2023
Deir El Balah
October 2024
North Gaza 2024

The above prices are taken from a market monitoring report by the World Food Programme³⁹.

Most employers were simply forced to shut businesses and stop paying salaries when Gaza was engulfed by violence, with many people reporting that the building they worked in was blown up. Even people who had remote work have been unable to continue their employment as internet connections are poor to non-existent and there is no reliable source of electricity to work digitally from. DRC, PARC and WAC data revealed that just 30% of households had any form of income, some of the people reporting an income considered selling aid as their income.

Salaries

Just 11% of people reported that their household receives a salary. Even for households with a salary, the situation remains dire, as rising prices have rendered salaries inadequate to meet basic needs. The income itself often comes from temporary or insecure employment, such as short-term contracts with NGOs. Furthermore, individuals receiving salaries through banks face deductions of 20–30% in withdrawal fees, further diminishing their already insufficient earnings.

Sameer, a government employee, receives 800 shekels (222 USD) every 40 days which is severely inadequate to meet the needs of his family. Families reliant on salaries are still reliant on aid and reported selling aid or personal possessions to meet their needs. These challenges highlight how salaried income, far from providing stability, has become another source of stress for families.



Small businesses

Many people report having tried to set up small businesses over the past year of the Israeli military offensive. In Gaza, women are increasingly taking the lead in starting small businesses, often driven by necessity and perhaps gendered expectations that align with activities such as cooking, washing clothes, and childcare services. Women also reported that the increase in women-led initiatives was partly driven by male family members becoming disengaged, reportedly due to trauma and the harsh conditions of displacement.

Notably, many male children are assisting their mothers with income earning initiatives while fathers remain unemployed. This is also compounded by the complete absence of formal education and a lack of informal education. Worryingly, this highlights a potential rise in child labour as desperate families struggle to make ends meet whilst coping with trauma. Men also reported having set up small businesses, such as making falafels, or setting up stalls to sell canned goods received from aid.

Overwhelming, **DRC, PARC and WAC data revealed that women, in particular, are leading at small business ventures.** Although 66% of respondents to this data were women, just one man reported starting a small business compared to ten women.

However, the entrepreneurial efforts of both men and women are severely undermined by the repeated displacement that disrupts livelihoods and prevents stability. The high cost and scarcity of raw materials for businesses, including food, wood and fabric are substantial barriers to entrepreneurial efforts. High prices have limited how much people can afford to buy and the cost at which they must sell, leaving their income both precarious and inadequate.

“**Muna, 52, originally from Khan Younis, displaced five times:** *“At the beginning of the war, I was making cleaning products such as liquid shampoo, dish soap, and air fresheners. Initially, things were going well, but when the Karm Abu Salem crossing closed, supplies ceased to arrive, and prices skyrocketed. I could no longer afford the materials needed to continue my cleaning products business, forcing me to halt operations. Moreover, the constant displacement and instability have compounded our frustrations. Each time we relocate, we must adapt to a new area, meet new people, and cope with fluctuating prices. All of this significantly impacts our situation. I am still waiting for the raw materials to arrive so that I can resume producing cleaning products.”*”

Each time families are forced to flee their businesses collapse as they lose their customer base and struggle to re-establish themselves in unfamiliar areas. Despite their resourcefulness and determination, people striving to start businesses in Gaza face immense obstacles. This ongoing disruption not only stifles economic self-sufficiency but also leads to increased dependency on humanitarian aid. With few opportunities to generate income, families are often left reliant on external support to meet their basic needs, perpetuating a cycle of vulnerability.

“**Mira, originally from Gaza city, displaced seven times:** *“I make pastries and sell them at my husband’s stall to help our family financially. However, I can’t work all the time—only twice a week—because firewood is very expensive, and I can’t afford to buy large quantities. We manage to live on the money I make from the stall, and I also depend on the humanitarian aid we receive. The war has taught me to preserve everything and save money as much as possible.”*”

“**Bana, 35, originally from Rafah, displaced five times:** *“I considered making and selling pastries and even started doing so, but sales have been unpredictable. The aid we receive mainly consists of canned goods, which I sometimes sell to cover our basic needs. The constant displacement has deeply affected me. Every time I establish my pastry business and build a customer base, we are forced to flee again, ending up in new locations where no one knows about my small venture. This instability has negatively impacted my business. I often find myself in unfamiliar areas where other vendors have already established their customer bases. While I believe that everyone has their own luck, these disruptions inevitably take a toll on my efforts. As the sole provider for my family, with my husband trapped in Egypt, I feel the weight of both parental roles, bearing the full burden of our responsibilities.”*”

“**Suhaila, 35, originally from Gaza city, displaced 10 times:** *“At the start of the war, I was knitting and selling wool sweaters, but when the raw materials ran out, my husband opened a small street stall to cover our basic needs. However, this income is far from sufficient.”*”

Selling aid

Due to a lack of income and the inability of humanitarian aid to meet all needs, **DRC, PARC and WAC data found that many families in Gaza have resorted to selling aid.** The sale of aid highlights the failure to meet essential needs, as families trade items of humanitarian assistance to purchase vegetables, medicine, transport, and other daily necessities. Humanitarian and commercial goods entering Gaza remain profoundly insufficient to address the population's extreme needs.

For example, while dry goods like rice may arrive, the scarcity of fuel and firewood means many families cannot cook them. The inability to provide fresh produce, due to lengthy approval processes whereby fresh produce has been reported to rot before entering, further compounds nutritional deficiencies, pushing families to sell aid to access it. This dire situation forces people to make impossible trade-offs, prioritising immediate needs over others. The deliberate Israeli policies to restrict and often deny access to humanitarian aid and commercial imports, combined with the devastation of Gaza's social and economic infrastructure caused by military operations, have left the population in a state of prolonged vulnerability. The thriving market for humanitarian aid in Gaza underscores the severity of unmet needs: if aid were sufficient, families would not be forced to sell the little they receive, nor would others be desperate enough to pay high prices for it.

“**Layla, 36, originally from Rafah, displaced five time:** *“My husband used to work for the Palestinian National Authority, but with the current situation and the rising cost of living, his income is no longer sufficient to provide us with a decent life. Every day, we have to spend at least 200 shekels (55.60 USD) just on food and clean water. The price of vegetables has skyrocketed. I remember times when we couldn't even afford to buy food.*”

To make ends meet, we started selling the flour and canned goods we receive from the UN just to cover our household expenses. I've even had to sell the clothes we received as humanitarian aid to support my family financially. I recall receiving a personal kit that contained everything we might need, and I really wanted to keep it, but sadly, I had to sell it for 500 shekels. I used that money to buy our daily necessities. I don't want to beg for anyone's help, but our low income just isn't enough to cover our expenses, especially during these harsh times.””

Money from abroad

For some families in Gaza, monetary support from relatives abroad provides a crucial lifeline. However, withdrawing cash has become increasingly challenging due to the destruction of banks and ATMs during the ongoing conflict. Most traditional banking infrastructure, including branches of the Bank of Palestine and ATM networks, has been rendered inoperable. To access cash, many people rely on informal and alternative mechanisms. Currency exchange offices and international money transfer services like Western Union and MoneyGram remain operational in limited capacities but struggle to meet overwhelming demand. Informal networks and intermediaries are often used to facilitate transactions, although these can be unreliable and expensive.

Families who rely on money from abroad are therefore impacted by the high transfer fees and unreliable channels, which significantly diminish their impact, leaving many families unable to meet even their basic needs. Delays in receiving money from relatives further exacerbates the situation, often leaving families without funds for extended periods and unable to plan for essential expenses such as food, rent, or medical care. While monetary support from abroad offers temporary relief for some, it is unsustainable for many families especially given the continued rising cost of living in Gaza and the prolonged military offensive.

Israel's prolonged military offensive and systematic decimation of Gaza's infrastructure have devastated livelihoods, stripping people of their ability to earn an income while simultaneously denying entry to essential aid and supplies. This deliberate blockade and Israeli-declared siege, coupled with the destruction of markets, businesses, and critical infrastructure, has driven resource scarcity and inflated prices for basic necessities such as food and fuel. Families already grappling with displacement face further harm as they are forced to sell aid or possessions to afford essential goods, highlighting the failure to meet their most basic needs as required under IHL.

These sustained deprivations of basic necessities, combined with the destruction of livelihoods and ongoing displacement, may amount to acts within Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention, which prohibits the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to destroy a group "in whole or in part." By depriving civilians of essential resources and creating conditions of extreme hardship, these actions exacerbate the humanitarian crisis and risk violating fundamental tenets of international law.



Documentation

The ongoing cycle of displacement in Gaza has led to the widespread loss of critical identification, housing, land, property, and educational documents for numerous individuals. This loss severely impedes peoples' ability to secure employment, register for humanitarian aid, and access essential services required for daily life. Many people have reported losing their identification papers during forced displacements or active bombardments. The chaotic and urgent nature of these displacements often leaves little opportunity to safeguard personal documents.

Repeated escalations of violence and displacement in Gaza prior to 2023 meant that many people had already endured multiple instances of displacement. These previous experiences exposed them to significant challenges in accessing basic services while displaced, particularly in the absence of vital identity documentation. Consequently, since 2023, many people have reported prioritising their identification documents when forced to flee. The repeated exposure to sudden and intense violence, along with the resulting displacement, has heightened awareness of the difficulties in accessing services without essential identity documentation, prompting many to prioritise identity documents when fleeing. However, not everyone in Gaza has been able to retain their identity documents. **For people who do not have essential documents, the most immediate and severe consequence has been their inability to receive humanitarian aid.** Without proper identification, accessing aid programmes becomes extraordinarily difficult, or impossible.

“**Zaid, 35, originally from Gaza city, displaced seven times:** *"I hold a master's degree in psychology and was working with NGOs before the war. However, after my release from an Israeli prison, I was unable to find a job because I lost all my certificates and documents during the conflict. I considered starting a stall, but it was unsuccessful due to the ongoing displacements and the high prices of goods."*

“**Layla, 36, originally from Rafah, displaced five times:** *"The lack of my identification papers made me feel insecure and prevented me from registering for humanitarian aid."*

“**Muna, 52, originally from Khan Younis, displaced five times:** *"Due to the constant displacement, we no longer have any papers. We have nothing left to identify us. I feel unsafe without them."*

“**Ola, originally from Gaza city, displaced 15 times:** *"From the 2014 aggression in Gaza, I learned to prepare a bag with all my important documents and keep it on a shelf in my room. When crisis strikes, it's the first thing I take with me."*

At present, **the loss of educational certificates was reported as the most pressing documentation issue.** Without these records, individuals cannot apply for jobs, perpetuating a cycle of unemployment and economic instability. The loss of housing, land, and property documentation poses long-term threats to people's rights and stability with many people already fearing that they will be unable to prove their ownership upon their return home.

“**Tuleen, 27, originally from Gaza city, displaced four times:** *"Not having my identification documents affected me when trying to apply for a job. The loss of my certificates impacted my ability to apply because everyone was asking for documentation. This prevented me from submitting applications for any job."*

Diala, 53, originally from Khan Younis displaced four times: *“Honestly, I didn’t feel much of an impact because I took pictures of all my certificates on my phone as a backup. Over the years, I learned that having a backup of all important documents is crucial during these aggressive times.”*

Maha, originally from Gaza city, displaced 11 times: *“I forgot all our documents in the bag; I had dedicated a bag for everything, but I forgot all when we displaced under heavy bombardment. Everything was burned in the house. I’m afraid I’ll struggle, and I’m worried about how to prove ownership of my house.”*

In addition, a lack of identity documents, which were often left behind when families fled active warfare, or lost during repeated displacement, was reported as a barrier to registering for aid.

Lina, 49, originally from Gaza city, displaced four times: *“The absence of my ID had a significant negative impact on my husband, causing him a great deal of anxiety. This situation led to difficulties in registering for aid and proving my identity. I was unable to verify myself to receive assistance or register with humanitarian organisations.”*

Samia, 53, originally from Khan Younis, displaced three times: *“My husband and children often went out to find where we could register for aid with UNRWA. It was exhausting, and it took us a full week to figure out the registration process.”*

Faten, originally from Gaza city, displaced seven times: *“When we were displaced to a shelter center, honestly, I stood in line for the Takiyeh and was hurt by others. My shoulder hurt from all the pushing and shoving. I also had a hard time finding epilepsy medication for my son. When I finally found it, it was out of stock. UNRWA provided only one kind of my son’s medication but couldn’t provide the other one. My son suffers from frequent seizures. What can I do? Every place has its own sad story of pain, grief, and frustration from searching for everything, all of which were far from us.”*

Lara, 30, originally from Gaza city, displaced eight times: *“I struggle to access aid due to problems with my husband. I had to move in with my family, and I can’t receive any aid since everything is registered under my husband’s name, placing a great deal of pressure on me.”*

People in Gaza are more aware of the importance of safeguarding vital documentation due to a history of active warfare and repeated displacement. However, the ongoing loss of critical identification, housing, land, property (HLP), and educational documents is already having severe consequences, limiting access to aid, services, and livelihoods. Loss of vital documentation raises serious concerns over the ability of displaced individuals to assert their HLP rights once they return home. Comprehensive HLP programming will be essential in reconstruction and recovery efforts, ensuring that displaced families can reclaim their rights, rebuild their lives, and establish the foundation for a stable and dignified future.



Access to services

Access to information on services

Repeated displacement in Gaza has severely undermined people's ability to access critical information on how and where they can access essential services. Each displacement disrupts local networks and severs connections to reliable sources of information, leaving individuals increasingly isolated and uninformed about how to meet their basic needs. **DRC, PARC and WAC research found that when people are initially displaced the majority go without basic necessities such as food and water for prolonged periods, some for days at a time.** Without clear information channels and coordination within displacement sites, people only relink to services after physically walking around, until they find them. This involves walking for hours or days at a time in dangerous conditions, relying on rumours or fragmented guidance from others, only to too often discover that services are unavailable or that aid has already run out.

Despite Gaza's small geographical area, people are being displaced to places they have never been before. Additionally, active warfare has profoundly reshaped communities, and the destruction of essential service infrastructure has led to services being delivered through temporary or makeshift facilities. Compounding this, the severe lack of aid means many communities do not receive assistance on a consistent basis. This irregular distribution of aid further hinders people's ability to access essential services and highlights the urgent need for clear and reliable information about aid availability and distribution.

“
Rania, originally from Gaza city, displaced six times: *"Lack of information affects us when searching for services. During my second displacement, we struggled a lot to find everything—food, water and humanitarian aid."*”

“
Farah, 34, originally from Gaza city, displaced ten times: *"With the repeated displacement, things have gotten worse. We move from area to area, and we don't know who is distributing aid or what services are available in the new location. Sometimes we hear from neighbors or people around us, but often by the time we arrive, the aid has run out. Even getting electricity or internet access is a struggle, making it difficult to get the right information."*”

“
Luna, 31, originally from Gaza city, displaced eight times: *"Every time we move from place to place, we lose the information we had. There's no fixed way or organisation we can regularly contact. Most of the time, we hear from people on the streets or those around us, and the information isn't always accurate. Sometimes we walk long distances to reach aid distribution sites, only to find they're closed or the aid has run out."*”

— “
Samia, 53, originally from Khan Younis, displaced three times: *"Due to the constant displacement, I struggled to find a place to charge our phones. We had to walk and search for clean drinking water, wondering where we could find a soup kitchen or market. When we were displaced to Rafah, we spent an entire day without drinking a single drop of clean water. My husband and children often went out to find where we could register for aid with UNRWA. It was exhausting, and it took us a full week to figure out the registration process. The situation was incredibly stressful, affecting my mental health and causing irritability among all of us. It also impacted our physical health; there were days when we could barely manage to eat one meal."* — ”

— “
Screen, 47, originally from Gaza city, displaced six times: *"Evacuating from one place to another has significantly affected me, especially during the first three days. I would sleep in darkness while my husband went out searching for water or a bakery. We faced immense difficulty accessing services, and the stress of the situation made me feel as if my nerves were about to collapse."* — ”

— “
Layla, 36, originally from Rafah, displaced five times: *"Displacement itself is the hardest challenge we face. Each time we move to a new place, we need to figure out how to access essential services. I've been displaced four times, and each experience has impacted our relationships with others. I remember during the third displacement when we spent an entire day without food or water because we didn't know where to obtain it. Eventually, we found the UNRWA office, where we received aid and canned food. My husband searched for clean drinking water, but we had to resort to drinking regular water meant for cleaning and washing. We stood in a long line—my husband, my children, and I—just to secure water. For us, water is a vital necessity."* — ”

Access to services and aid

The repeated displacement of people in Gaza has made the struggle to meet basic needs a relentless and exhausting challenge, consuming vast amounts of time and energy. For many, daily life is now defined by walking and queuing as essentials like water, food, sanitation, and electricity remain persistently inadequate to completely unavailable. The scarcity of resources has forced communities to rely on shared facilities, which further exacerbates the burden as individuals must physically queue to access these limited communal resources. Data from **DRC, PARC, and WAC paints a grim picture of daily survival, where accessing even the most fundamental services demands immense physical effort, emotional resilience, and an unyielding endurance for a life reduced to an endless cycle of queuing.** Families have divided tasks between themselves to ensure they can meet all basic needs, with children often being required to walk and queue for at least one basic necessity whilst adults secure the rest.

— “
Kholoud, originally from northern Gaza, displaced eight times: *"My family and I divide our responsibilities—some look for water, while others search for aid and register with local representatives. This consumes so much time, and we often wait in long lines just to secure basic needs."* — ”

— “
Lina, 49, originally from Gaza city, displaced four times: *"My husband used to go out to secure what we needed, often spending two to three hours just to obtain clean drinking water. I was constantly worried that something might happen to him, so we divided the tasks between us—I would wait in line at the bakery while he went to the market. We struggled with every single task, no matter how simple. Even when it came to receiving medical treatment, I had to leave early in the morning to secure a spot in line. Accessing services was extremely difficult."* — ”

“**Kawkab, originally from Khan Younis, displaced six times:** *“During displacement, we’re forced to take whatever aid we can with us, and we often run out of clean drinking water. Sometimes, we’ve gone three or four days without any, relying on salty municipal water. The food situation is also dire, and we live off canned food. It’s hard to find any information about available aid because everything changes so quickly. The search for electricity to charge phones and batteries has become a daily chore, requiring hours of walking and waiting in line. For many, access to electricity is critical for staying connected with aid networks and family members.”*”

The search for electricity to charge phones and batteries has become a daily chore, requiring hours of walking and waiting in line. For many, access to electricity is critical for staying connected with aid networks and family members.

Formal education has ceased for children in Gaza for more than a year. Some people reported informal schools operating in displacement sites. Parents report their children falling behind, forgetting how to read and write, or missing critical years of schooling entirely.

Accessing humanitarian aid is an ongoing challenge for displaced families facing repeated displacement in Gaza, marked by confusion, delays, and systemic barriers. The lack of clear information on aid distribution points often forces families to wander for hours, with no guarantee of finding support. Even when aid is available, the supply is often insufficient to meet the overwhelming demand. Women separated from their husbands face additional barriers, as aid registration is frequently tied to male family members. The systemic barriers to accessing aid reflect a broader neglect of displaced families' rights and dignity. Without a coordinated and transparent distribution system, families are left to navigate an inequitable and fragmented system.



Food

Repeated displacement severely undermines people's access to food. Each time families are forced to flee, they are often unable to carry food supplies, leaving behind what little they have managed to gather. As displacement becomes more frequent, people are pushed into increasingly overcrowded areas where limited food must be shared among growing numbers, intensifying scarcity. The disruption of access to markets, aid distributions, or informal food-sharing networks forces people to repeatedly search for new food sources in unfamiliar and often unsafe environments. This cycle leaves families facing worsening hunger and malnutrition.

Food insecurity in Gaza has reached unprecedented levels, exacerbated by severe restrictions on the flow of essential goods and the impact of the ongoing violence. The consequences of this collapse in supply are reflected in the alarming findings of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)⁴⁰. According to its latest projection, 91% of Gaza's population, approximately 1.95 million people, are currently experiencing acute levels of food insecurity classified as Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse. Within this already dire figure, nearly 876,000 people, or 41%, are classified under Emergency conditions (IPC Phase 4), and about 345,000 individuals, or 16%, are believed to be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), the most severe form of food insecurity. In an urgent alert issued on 8 November, the IPC warned that there is a strong likelihood that famine may already be occurring in Northern Gaza.

DRC, PARC and WAC data revealed the primary source of food in Gaza now comes from *Takiyehs*, which are functioning as community kitchens providing one hot meal per day. However, many reports indicate that *Takiyehs* struggle to provide enough food for everyone, with some families unable to secure sufficient portions. The lack of available food and high costs are substantial barriers for all aid efforts in Gaza trying to provide food, including *Takiyehs*. Across the 19 sites managed by DRC and PARC, 61% of people reported inadequate food, including humanitarian assistance.



Wardeh, 52, originally from Khan Younis, displaced four times: *"Life is so harsh, but adaptation is what keeps us going. I always remind myself to put the children first, even if it means sacrificing my own needs. I remember days when we only managed to secure food for the kids from the Takiyeh, and I'd go there myself to bring them food. I would deprive myself and eat very little just to let my kids have enough food."*

Lamees, originally from northern Gaza, displaced eight times: *"During the first days of displacement, we were starving. My youngest son, who is four, would cry for bread, and I didn't know how to get any. I lost a lot of weight, and my health deteriorated because I gave my food to my children. During the first months of displacement, we didn't receive any humanitarian aid, and I didn't even know where to register to get some. My son suffered from malnutrition, and we didn't receive anything for him."*

The high cost and scarcity of fuel, including wood, has made cooking nearly impossible for many households. As a result, dry food distributions which contain staples such as rice, are less practical, since families often lack the means to prepare them. Many families report cooking less to conserve fuel. People report relying on bakeries for bread and supplementing it with canned goods, if available, to cover an additional one or two daily meals. Gas, when available, is reserved for quick tasks like making tea, while most households have turned to open flames fuelled by coal, plastic, or nylon. Many have constructed makeshift stoves or mud ovens to prepare basic meals. In Gaza city, where essential supplies are even more scarce, many families report relying on plastic for cooking, a hazardous practice born of sheer desperation.

Suroor, originally from Gaza city, displaced 11 times: *"We tried to create alternatives. When there was no gas, we initially used coal. Then we started gathering firewood from the streets and areas affected by shelling. I felt embarrassed picking up scraps from the ground. The situation has humiliated us and forced us to gather plastic to save money since we can't afford to buy wood."*

Dalal, originally from Gaza city, displaced eight times: *"Instead of gas, we use fire, and when firewood is scarce, we use plastic. When plastic runs out, we use nylon and paper. This is our life."*





The prolonged crisis has forced people to fundamentally change their eating habits, adapt their cooking methods, reduce meal portions, and rely on community support to survive. **DRC, PARC and WAC data found the majority of people reported cutting down on the number of daily meals or the size of meals**, often consuming just one to two meals per day to stretch their limited supplies. Women, in particular, note eating less to ensure their children have enough food. A recurring issue across testimonies is the prioritisation of children's food intake above all else. Parents often sacrifice their own portions or skip meals entirely to ensure their children have enough to eat. This has led to increased hunger among adults, weight loss, and deteriorating health, as indicated by individuals who spoke of reduced body weight and the emotional toll of food insecurity.

Samia, 53, originally from Khan Younis, displaced three

times: *"I've learned how to adapt to harsh circumstances: now we cook over open flames. Finding gas has become nearly impossible, so I use firewood for cooking. Sometimes, I have to reduce the number of meals to save food for the children. During times of war, I often rely on very simple meals, as I'm forced to adapt in order to survive. We usually go to community kitchens for food. When gas is available, I use it sparingly. We usually have sandwiches for breakfast and dinner, and we rely on the community kitchens for lunch."*

Khawla, originally from Gaza city, displaced six times:

"We've started reducing the number of meals; we suffice with a biscuit and tea in the morning and rely on the charity for lunch."

Muna, 52, originally from Khan Younis, displaced five times:

"Fasting has become a way of coping to ensure my children have enough to eat."

Ghadeer, originally from northern Gaza, displaced seven times:

"We now fast until 11:30 am waiting for the meals from the charity kitchen, and whatever is left over we have for dinner to save money, as there are no ways to buy food."

Khalid, 50, originally from Gaza city, displaced

10 times: *"We reduced lunch portions, and breakfast became sandwiches to save on gas."*

Testimonies from displaced individuals highlight a near-total breakdown in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure following repeated displacements. Families describe intense struggles to secure clean drinking water, the absence of safe and private sanitation facilities, open sewage, and severe constraints on personal hygiene practices. Access to running water or functional toilets in displacement settings is often non-existent, leaving people to resort to extreme coping mechanisms that amount to a public health concern and strip people of their dignity.

Clean drinking water remains one of the scarcest and most urgently needed resources for displaced families. Many spend entire days without a single drop of safe water, unaware of where distribution points are located and forced to relearn each new environment's resources after every displacement. In some instances, children and the elderly are sent to walk long distances, often during harsh climate events such as under intense heat or bitterly cold weather carrying jerrycans to fill from distant or makeshift sources. Even then, the water obtained may be salty, intended only for cleaning, not drinking. Constant displacement means that people must repeatedly relearn where to access water. Long queues, wasted hours, and limited access push families to ration their scarce water supply, preserving it solely for drinking and occasional cooking, with no allowance for regular bathing or laundry. This persistent scarcity intensifies health risks, including urinary tract infections, dehydration, and other waterborne illnesses.

“**Tarek, 43, originally from northern Gaza, displaced nine times:** *“Every time I am displaced, I encounter significant challenges in locating sources of clean drinking water. Each displacement often requires me to spend two full days just figuring out where I can access water and where Takiyeh is located.”*”

“**Saleem, 53, originally from northern Gaza, displaced nine times:** *“I cry every day for my daughters. My daughters have needs just like any other girls, and it breaks my heart that I can't provide for them. When I go to fetch water, they come with me because I have a herniated disc. It saddens me deeply to see them carrying water over long distances, waiting in line for hours. I think about them day and night. Even when they need to use the bathroom, there's no privacy for them. It keeps me constantly worried.”*”

“**Muna, 52, originally from Khan Younis, displaced five times:** *“During my first displacement, we faced significant challenges in finding a source of clean drinking water. My children had to walk long distances under the scorching sun to carry water, and I would accompany them to help.”*”

“**Kawkab, originally from Khan Younis, displaced six times:** *“During displacement, we're forced to take whatever aid we can with us, and we often run out of clean drinking water. Sometimes, we've gone three or four days without any, relying on salty municipal water.”*”

Overcrowded displacement sites and makeshift shelters often have inadequate access to latrines. Since these limited facilities must serve thousands of people, they quickly overflow and fail to maintain safe conditions. As a result, most individuals resort to digging shallow pits in or near their shelters, placing them at risk of direct contact with human waste.

“**Lara, 30, from Gaza city, displaced eight times:** *“The restroom in the tent is just a hole in the ground, worsening the already tragic conditions. The high cost and unavailability of cleaning supplies led to the spread of diseases among my children, such as intestinal infections, skin rashes, and allergies, in addition to the proliferation of insects and rodents.”*”

Data from DRC, PARC, and WAC indicate that even in sites with latrines, long waiting times severely limit their usability. Many people, especially women who fear using poorly lit latrines at night due to safety concerns, reduce their fluid intake. This practice leads to a rise in urinary tract infections and other related health complications.

Lina, 49, originally from Gaza city, displaced four times: *"The most challenging aspect for me is accessing toilets. I often find myself waiting in line for a long time just to use the bathroom. As a result of holding in my urine, I have developed infections, and the lack of privacy has exacerbated the situation. We share a bathroom with up to 30 people, which has negatively affected my health."*

The struggle to obtain water due to repeated displaced has resulted in a lack of ability to meet personal hygiene. Once-daily baths have been reduced to weekly or even less frequent intervals. Without stable access to water, hygiene products, or private bathing spaces, skin infections, rashes, lice infestations, and other preventable illnesses were reported. Families employ various strategies to cope with a near-complete absence of adequate WASH services. Some people reported resorting to bathing in the sea or digging makeshift pits to retain water. Others ration soap or craft improvised hygiene products or reuse dirty water for multiple purposes. A lack of soap and other basic hygiene products was constantly reported as a need.

The lack of privacy and the inability to maintain personal hygiene erode personal dignity, while the constant fear of running out of water, contamination, or illness exacerbates anxiety. For families with additional needs, such as those caring sick or wounded family members, the challenge of securing clean water and proper sanitation is even more overwhelming, leading to rapid deterioration in health conditions.





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Suroor, originally from Gaza city, displaced 11 times: *"When we were displaced to the Al-Sina'a area, everything changed, including the way we received aid. We didn't know where to go to get it. There were no transportation options, and the places were far away from us. We also had no clean drinking water and had to buy salty water for four shekels per container. We cooked, bathed, and washed dishes with it. The kids would sometimes go weeks without bathing because the water we had left was reserved for cooking and cleaning. When we managed to get water, I would bathe my husband. His wounds smelled of rotten blood, and every time someone visited us, they would leave because of the bad odour. The doctors were shocked by the condition of his wound. His condition worsened while he was waiting for surgery. When they finally operated, it took eight hours to remove shrapnel from his head. He stayed in intensive care, and I was relieved when we were transferred to Halou International Hospital, where there was hot water and proper sanitation. My son would sleep by his side and help bathe him, and my husband was so happy to be clean."*”

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Sereen, 47, originally from Gaza city, displaced six times: *"Since being displaced from Gaza to Khan Younis, I have felt that privacy has completely vanished. As a woman, the lack of personal hygiene supplies has made life even more challenging. With each displacement, I am unable to bring my personal belongings. When my menstrual cycle started, I didn't know how to clean myself or shower, and I spent two days in that condition. Why isn't there any water for us to wash? We used to have it, but the bathroom is overcrowded. I remember wishing for death in those moments, overwhelmed by a deep sense of depression. We all sleep in the same room, which heightens the feeling of suffocation and loss of privacy. Daily life here is filled with challenges, from the absence of basic necessities to a lack of security. Every day feels like a battle to preserve our dignity and privacy under these harsh conditions."*”

These conditions not only jeopardise physical health but also strip families of dignity and exacerbate the psychological toll of displacement.

In addition, women have expressed specific anxiety about their inability to maintain hygiene during menstruation due to a lack of water, a concern further exacerbated by the severe lack of privacy. Women describe the embarrassment and indignity they feel when unable to clean themselves privately, with some resorting to using babies' nappies in place of sanitary towels to manage menstruation in contexts where frequent access to latrines is impossible.

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Maha, originally from Gaza city, displaced 11 times: *"It really affected our privacy. As I said before, accessing the bathroom was a big challenge. Everyone in the school knows when I'm going to use the toilet because I have to take a bottle of water with me to clean myself. This situation causes me so much embarrassment, especially when men are sitting near the bathroom. When I get my period, I have to use diapers instead of pads so I don't need to go many times to the toilet and wait in long lines. Bathing after my period ends is another suffering. Bathing is available only once a week. It is going from bad to worse regarding privacy."*

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Miral, 30, originally from northern Gaza, displaced ten times: *"The overcrowding makes it incredibly hard to sleep. I once experienced a very embarrassing moment when I was in the makeshift bathroom inside the tent, and the plastic sheet blew off due to the wind, which added to my discomfort. There's also no privacy during personal matters like my menstrual cycle—when I don't get up to pray, everyone knows I'm on my period. The bathroom is shared between men and women, which worsens the situation."*

Access to services has been critically impacted by repeated displacement, driven by Israel's military offensive and the inhumane conditions purposefully created. Families have been forced into overcrowded displacement sites where the basic necessities required under IHL have not been provided, facilitated, and, in many cases, actively obstructed. Essential provisions such as food, water, sanitation, and medical care are frequently unavailable due to access constraints, leaving displaced individuals to endure prolonged periods without services that meet their basic needs. Each wave of displacement disrupts access to already scarce resources, forcing families into cycles of deprivation and exposing them to unsafe, undignified and inhumane living conditions.

This repeated and systemic denial of essential services, combined with the overcrowding and precarious conditions in displacement sites, highlights serious violations of IHL. By failing to provide the minimum standards required for the survival and dignity of displaced populations, Israel's actions risk causing severe and sustained harm to civilians. Such conditions may also amount to violations of Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention, as the deliberate deprivation of necessities leaves families in prolonged states of vulnerability and suffering.

Living conditions

Inadequate shelters and overcrowding

DRC, PARC and WAC data reveals a critical deterioration in the standards of shelter, access to privacy, and overall living conditions within displacement sites. Nearly all respondents describe an environment severely lacking in basic infrastructure, consistently marked by unsafe, makeshift, and overcrowded accommodations.

Shelters, whether they are tents, vacant classrooms, unfinished buildings, or the rooftops of partially damaged structures, are neither designed nor adapted to provide safe and dignified living conditions. Families that are repeatedly displaced are forced to continually seek shelter in evermore overcrowded displacement sites or establish makeshift shelters from unsuitable materials. of rudimentary stoves and ovens from available scrap materials is common, as supplies of gas and electricity are severely limited. Without ventilation or proper insulation, the shelters offer scant protection from the elements, and the risk of fires started from ad-hoc cooking methods poses a serious hazard. Conditions are particularly dire for pregnant women, the elderly, and individuals with chronic health conditions.

The lack of adequate shelter standards, coupled with non-existent privacy and extreme overcrowding, has significant implications for physical and mental health. Families report being forced into cramped rooms or makeshift displacement sites assembled hurriedly on streets, vacant land, and beaches. In many cases, multiple families, totalling dozens of individuals share a single room or tent.

The lack of space has eroded personal dignity, affected the ability to maintain family cohesion, and heightened tensions between households. The sheer density of people in small, enclosed areas triggers frequent disputes, as well as heightened stress and anxiety. Moreover, this extreme overcrowding makes it nearly impossible to provide separate living spaces for men, women, and children, intensifying social and family conflicts.

Lack of privacy

DRC, PARC, and WAC data found the most pressing concern resulting from repeated displacement in Gaza is the severe lack of privacy. With extended families often forced to share small, confined spaces due to displacement and the destruction of homes, privacy has become an unattainable luxury for most. Shared living arrangements with extended families, acquaintances, or strangers, often separated only by thin curtains make privacy a distant memory.

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Mira, displaced seven times: *"Each time we are displaced, our situation worsens as the number of displaced individuals continues to rise. The lack of privacy is overwhelming. I struggle to have a conversation with my husband because a thin curtain separates us from my father-in-law's area of the tent. Even breastfeeding my baby feels exposed and uncomfortable."* ————— ” —

For women, the lack of privacy comes with both physical and emotional burdens. Women report feeling stripped of their dignity as they are forced to navigate these crowded spaces under the gaze of male relatives. The need to remain covered, wearing headscarves and prayer robes, even within their own shelters is an exhausting daily reality. This constant vigilance, driven by cultural expectations and the presence of men, denies women the ability to relax or care for themselves in private. Tasks like managing menstruation, breastfeeding, or even a moment of solitude become nearly impossible. Family dynamics also suffer with domestic conflicts reportedly intensifying. Women reported that their husbands have become more abusive, both verbally and physically. In addition, women report feeling they can no longer control their children's behaviour, with some women reporting that they are less patient with their children and in some cases verbally and physically lashing out at them.

For men, the constant proximity to family members, including in-laws, creates a deep sense of frustration and loss of autonomy. Traditional expectations of masculinity, which emphasise the role of protector and provider, are increasingly difficult to fulfil in Gaza where there is a complete lack of safety. The inability to secure space for themselves or their families contributes to feelings of inadequacy and disengagement. During interviews it was reported that many men have withdrawn emotionally, as the trauma of war and their perceived failure to shield their families from its effects weigh heavily on their mental health.

The gendered impacts are stark. While men grapple with feelings of emasculation and retreat into isolation, women face a relentless erosion of their personal space and dignity. The strain is further compounded for women who live with their husband's family, where tensions with in-laws often run high. These dynamics place disproportionate stress on women, who are already managing the physical and emotional toll of caregiving, resource scarcity, and survival.

For both men and women, the absence of privacy exacerbates the mental health crisis already brewing in Gaza's fragile environment. It creates an unyielding sense of powerlessness and frustration, stripping individuals of their ability to maintain even the smallest semblance of dignity.

The inadequate shelters and extreme overcrowding in Gaza's displacement sites reflect clear violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Under Article 55 and Article 56 of the Geneva Convention IV, occupying powers are obligated to ensure the provision of adequate shelter, sanitation, and living conditions to displaced populations. However, DRC, PARC, and WAC data reveal that families are being forced into makeshift, overcrowded accommodations, lacking even the most basic standards of safety, privacy, and dignity. The absence of adequate shelter, compounded by limited access to basic necessities like electricity, water, and sanitation, directly contravenes IHL requirements to safeguard the welfare and dignity of displaced persons.

The lack of privacy and the overcrowded conditions disproportionately affect women, who face physical and emotional burdens, including the inability to care for themselves or their children in private. Men, too, experience severe psychological impacts, exacerbated by the loss of autonomy and the inability to fulfil traditional roles as protectors.

This systemic failure to provide dignified living conditions may further constitute violations of Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention, which prohibits the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to destroy a group "in whole or in part."



Family and community dynamics

Prior to this escalation of violence, community and family support was generally strong in Gaza where kinship extended beyond nuclear families to include a large number of relatives, often living in the same compound and supporting each other financially and emotionally. Life under blockade had strengthened these networks, providing social support to those affected by the conflict⁴¹. Displacement has disrupted community and family networks as people have been separated from extended family, leaving individuals more isolated. In addition, the repetitive nature of displacement means that people are frequently moving to new sites and new communities, prohibiting many people from forming new community support systems.

The relentless struggle for survival has drained families' energy, forcing many to focus solely on meeting their basic needs. The trauma of the Israeli military offensive and repeated displacement has severely undermined people's capacity to cope, straining family and community relationships. Overcrowding and a lack of resources in displacement sites further exacerbates tensions, compounding the challenges at a time when resilience is already critically depleted. People report frequent disagreements with neighbours and family over trivial matters, such as accessing latrines. Many simple disagreements are escalating due to the severe strain on people's mental health.

In the 19 sites sheltering 32,000 people DRC and PARC manage, 58% reported verbal altercations and 53% reported physical fights. Additionally, domestic violence was reported in 47% of sites, underscoring the vulnerability of families in these settings.

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Dalia, displaced eight times: *"Social relationships have deteriorated. My relationships are ruined with everyone. There are so many problems with everyone, even with the neighbours. We had a lot of arguments over the bathroom and water. Honestly, I've lost trust in everyone. Those who loved me stopped loving me. Today, everything has changed; even my siblings aren't willing to help me. The war revealed hatred that was hidden in people's hearts. Relationships have shifted dramatically. People no longer love each other. At my family's house, I feel like a stranger. My children are always getting yelled at; my mother has become very irritable, yelling at them all day long, for every little thing. I wait every moment for the war to end so I don't have to enter my family's house again, given all the humiliation and taunting I've experienced."*

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Abdul Qaider, 53, displaced nine times: *"My relationships are strained, both with my family and neighbors in the camp. Unfortunately, there are many problems arising, even over trivial matters."*

Prolonged exposure to violence and deeply traumatising events can lead to enduring and long-lasting mental health consequences. These effects may become disabling, impacting a person's relationships, ability to work, and overall functioning in society. Respondents interviewed have already reported noticeable changes in their behaviour and significant struggles in interpersonal relationships. Many women reported struggling with increased irritability, nervousness and anger since they were displaced. This in turn, is closely associated with an intensification of conflict and tension within the family. This includes disputes with relatives they are forced to share a living space with, lack of capacity to manage children's behaviour, conflicts with spouses. In addition, many respondents shared that their relationships with neighbours and surrounding community have severely deteriorated or become non-existent.



50%

Women reported strained relationships with neighbours



52%

Women reported tension within the family

“**Seham, displaced eleven times:** *“Social relationships are not like they used to be; they’ve deteriorated significantly. No one can bear anyone anymore; irritability has increased, and marital problems have escalated more than before. I haven’t spoken to my husband in a week. There are daily conflicts; he doesn’t help with anything. He only brings the negativity and complaining, which is all he’s good at. It’s very frustrating. He creates problems out of nowhere. My relationship with my children has increased my irritability. There are daily conflicts between them due to the overcrowding.”*”

“**Noor, 56, originally from Khan Younis, displaced five times:** *“Social relationships have become increasingly complex after our displacement. We struggle to value those around us; feelings of loneliness and isolation are pervasive. Living among strangers—people we would never have chosen to be with—adds to our distress, leading to frequent family conflicts.”*”

“**Sara, displaced six times:** *“Repeated displacement has made me an introverted and depressed person; I no longer wish to communicate with anyone. I have lost contact with many of my friends, and my husband’s emotional distance during the toughest times of my life has negatively impacted our relationship. Everyone now only cares about themselves, and no one helps each other anymore. My relationship with my husband’s siblings deteriorated because they refused to support me when I asked for help multiple times.”*”

Over time, this is eroding people's resilience, gradually diminishing their ability to cope with new challenges. Several women described feeling as though they had 'taken on more than they can handle'. This is particularly true for women who bear the full burden of domestic responsibilities, especially when men refuse to support them.

Changes in women's roles

DRC, PARC and WAC data reveals how women's roles in Gaza have been profoundly impacted by the ongoing violence and repeated displacement. Women are making significant sacrifices to ensure the survival of their families, such as eating less so their children have enough food, showering less frequently due to water shortages, and managing the physical and emotional challenges of menstruation, childbirth, and childcare under extreme conditions. Women also report caring for family members who are ill or coping with life-altering injuries, all on top of their usual caregiving duties.

As men increasingly withdraw due to the trauma of war and feelings of helplessness rooted in traditional gender roles, women are stepping up as primary income earners, as outlined previously. In addition, women describe taking on more responsibilities such as ensuring food and water for their family daily, as well as that their other tasks such as cooking and cleaning consume much more time and energy. Yet, despite their growing responsibilities, women often have little control over key decisions in their lives. Husbands, and in their absence, male family members, frequently dictate where women and their families live or displace to, leaving women without agency in critical matters affecting their safety and wellbeing.

In extended family living arrangements, it is predominantly women who bear the burden of adjusting to life with their husband's relatives. This dynamic adds further strain to their mental health, exacerbating feelings of stress, vulnerability, and isolation. The lack of privacy in these crowded homes forces women to remain covered at all times, wearing headscarves and prayer robes, which they describe as a constant indignity. Gender-based violence (GBV) is also a significant concern, particularly in these overcrowded and tense living environments. Women's physical and emotional safety is further undermined, leaving them with little recourse or support.

Hala, displaced six times: *"Being close to relatives during repeated displacements has led to many conflicts between us, even to the point of severing ties with many of our acquaintances. The burdens have also caused my husband to abandon me."*



In the absence of familial or community-level support systems, this heavy burden has taken a profound psychological toll. Women frequently expressed feelings of isolation and loneliness, underscoring the emotional strain of managing these overwhelming challenges alone.

“**Mira, originally from Gaza city, displaced seven times:** *“All my relationships have become tense. There’s been a lot of fighting. My relationship with my family is strained. My husband isn’t with me, so everyone tries to control me and my decisions. They also try to control my son, and I get angry. I can’t handle it because my son is sick, and I worry about him a lot. This has caused many conflicts.”*

“**Lamees, originally from northern Gaza, displaced eight times:** *“Everything has changed; the burden has become much heavier on me. Before the war, my husband helped me, but now I’m alone with everything. I have to be both the father and the mother, the caregiver, and do everything.”*

“**Sana, displaced four times:** *“Due to my repeated displacement as a mother of two children without their father, I’ve become both mother and father at the same time. The burdens on me have increased significantly; I carry water from far distances, go to the market, and carry supplies during our displacements. I have to wait for long hours in line at the bank to withdraw money, and I have faced harassment while receiving aid. I am constantly fearful for my daughter and shoulder all the responsibilities alone, feeling deprived of the right to complain.”*

Despite the significant tensions and familial strain caused by repeated displacement, moments of resilience and solidarity have emerged within affected communities. Some individuals report finding unexpected support systems among new neighbours, fostering bonds that help navigate shared hardships. Families continue to share the limited resources available, demonstrating mutual care even in overcrowded and resource-scarce settings. Women, in particular, have found ways to ensure their collective safety and dignity, such as organising to stand guard outside bathrooms to provide privacy and protection. These acts of cooperation highlight the enduring strength of community ties, even as relationships are tested by immense psychological pressure and daily challenges.

Repeated displacement in Gaza has devastated community and family dynamics, dismantling once-strong community networks and leaving people isolated and struggling to cope. Women have taken on overwhelming caregiving and domestic responsibilities, often with little or no support from their spouses, while men increasingly withdraw due to frustration and a sense of helplessness. Overcrowded and makeshift shelters have heightened tensions, fuelling family conflicts, straining relationships, and eroding resilience. The lack of privacy and constant stress has deepened feelings of loneliness and isolation, leaving many families fractured and emotionally drained as they endure the relentless hardships of displacement.

Mental health impact

Over a year of extreme violence has intensified a mental health crisis without precedent in Gaza. Constant bombardment, unending cycles of repeated displacement and loss of family members are not only aggravating pre-existing mental health conditions among people in Gaza but predisposing previously healthy children and adults to anxiety, depression and traumatic stress as well as having detrimental effects on people's physical health.

Prior to the Israeli military offensive in October 2023, mental health needs were already high among people in Gaza, driven by decades of occupation, repeated conflict and violence and severe economic deprivation. While it is difficult to determine the prevalence of specific mental health disorders prior to the latest Israeli military offensive, a 2022 study, relying on self-reporting found that 70% of Gazan respondents screened positive for depression and 7% fulfilled the diagnostic criteria for PTSD⁴². It is likely that drivers and associated mental health and psychosocial support needs have intensified dramatically since this most recent military offensive.



DRC, PARC and WAC data found the most common self-reported mental health symptoms were **depression** (including **suicidal ideation** and feelings of **hopelessness**) and **severe anxiety** (including feelings of intense panic). Other commonly reported symptoms included extreme and constant fear, irritability and nervousness. Mental symptoms are often accompanied by psychosomatic conditions. Many people also reported loss of appetite, disturbed sleep including sleeplessness and nightmares, whilst less frequently reported physical symptoms included bedwetting and constant headaches and migraines.

“**Faizan, 49, originally from Gaza city, displaced nine times:** “Each move brought immense pain and suffering, especially with both of us being seriously ill and without access to medication. Each relocation was fraught with the struggle to secure money for transportation, making our situation nearly unbearable. There were moments when I wished for death, as the pain and hardship felt overwhelming. With every forced displacement, we lost a part of our souls, our hope, and our belongings.”

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Hasan, 49, originally from Khan Younis, displaced ten times: *"I'm severely depressed; I feel like I'm drowning in a black hole and have no appetite for food."*

Miral, 30, originally from northern Gaza, displaced ten times: *"I've become a person who doesn't resemble my former self—nervous and reckless. I've suffered from bedwetting and depression. My reactions have deteriorated; there's no comfortable place to rest, no income, and my children's pleas and cries for their father, who is in the West Bank, have added to my responsibilities, leaving me feeling completely shattered."*

Several people also mentioned shaking or trembling of their hands or other body parts, commonly associated with severe anxiety conditions.

Farha, originally from northern Gaza, 25, displaced seven times: *"I feel fear, distraction, and anxiety on a daily basis. Sometimes, I find my whole body trembling for several minutes, and I can't pinpoint why this is happening to me."*

Each displacement journey represents a deeply traumatic and terrifying experience in itself. People have recounted witnessing the death of neighbours or loved ones as they were forced to flee under intense bombardments and shelling.

Laya, originally from Gaza city, displaced seven times: *"The biggest impact the war had on me was the scenes my children witnessed—the bombing and the fear. We were in a school that was bombed four times, and our tent was severely damaged. We saw dead bodies and body parts, and we were picking up shrapnel. To this day, we still find shrapnel in our clothes. My son can't go to the bathroom alone at night because of the fear. I'm the only comfort they have, and I try to suppress my anger so I can keep going with them. They, too, were deeply affected by what they saw."*

Some respondents also described the terror of being separated from the rest of their family during evacuations and the fear of not knowing whether they had made it out alive or not.

“**Suroor, originally from Gaza city, displaced 11 times:** “Eventually, we decided to return to our home, marking our fifth displacement. As the situation deteriorated and bombing escalated across Gaza, we displaced to Al-Sinaa area, our sixth displacement. While there, we learned that our house had burned down; everything was destroyed, leaving us with no choice but to stay in Al-Sinaa. Later, we were displaced for the seventh time, moving to my brother’s house in Al-Tuffah, where we stayed for a while. Suddenly, bombs began falling around us, and panic set in. I lost track of my husband and son, leaving me with my daughter-in-law and daughter. We cried helplessly, unsure of where to go or what to do. The scene was horrific—injured people and shattered bodies littered the streets. My heart aches every time I recall that moment.”

These experiences are profoundly distressing in themselves, and many respondents describe lingering dread and fear that persist long after they have arrived in another destination. One woman recounted the harrowing experience of losing her children when fleeing.

“**Ola, originally from Gaza city, displaced 15 times:** “In May a horrific massacre took place in the warehouse area. The shock was immense, and the mass displacement that followed was desperate, as people fled the destruction and death that surrounded us. We displaced to Khan Younis, but even there, we were bombed. I spent half the day searching for my children among the rubble and in hospitals. When I finally found them at Nasser hospital, alive with only a few injuries, I couldn’t believe my eyes. It was a miracle they had survived. That day left a deep wound in my soul. The terror of almost losing my children brought on severe psychological distress. I became paralysed by fear, afraid to leave the house after witnessing my neighbours being martyred right before my eyes. It was the first time I had seen such heartbreaking scenes. Now, every time I look up at the sky, I am terrified that shelling could happen at any moment.”

Several respondents also described experiencing “shock” as a physical reaction to traumatic events, a manifestation of the body’s fight, flight, or freeze response.

“**Zaid, 35, originally from northern Gaza, displaced seven times:** Zaid was working in Israel and arrested there after the military offensive began.

“I was trying to leave Nazareth for Ramallah, but the army arrested me along with a group of Gazan workers. We were captured and blindfolded for 10 days without knowing our location. Israeli soldiers poured cold water on us and interrogated us harshly. Due to the prolonged blindfolding, I temporarily lost my vision. Throughout that time, I was unable to contact my wife or family. After three months of captivity, we were thrown near Kerem Shalom crossing, stripped of our clothes. We walked for miles until the Red Cross found us. Without a phone or money, I borrowed a phone to call my wife, only to learn that they had reached Khirbat Al-Adas in Rafah. I joined them, and we stayed there for a month, enduring extremely difficult times. I was in shock from everything that had happened. Despite being a psychologist, I couldn’t comprehend or process what I had experienced.”

Compounding the constant fear for personal safety repeated displacement orders, and the uncertainty of not knowing when the next one will be announced, there is the struggle for survival that accompanies each displacement experience. This leaves no time for recovery or respite, as individuals are constantly engaged in exhausting and time-consuming efforts to meet basic needs. With every displacement, families lose crucial connections that once provided vital information and support for managing daily life.

“**Lamees, originally from northern Gaza, displaced eight times:** *“Displacement was extremely difficult, especially because of the water shortages. We had to buy both salty and clean drinking water, and my children would carry heavy containers up to the third floor, completely exhausted. Heating water over firewood to bathe them took an entire day. We stayed with people for four days without changing our clothes or washing them because there was no water. During the first days of displacement, we were starving.”*”

“**Rula, displaced 16 times:** *“My painful journey of displacement began in October, when we were forced to leave our home and seek refuge at my brother's house. Leaving behind everything we owned, we stayed there for five days. However, the relentless shelling soon drove us to move again, this time to Al-Jala'a neighbourhood, where our relatives lived. We stayed for only three days before evacuation orders forced us to leave Al-Jala'a as well.*”

Seeking safety, we displaced to Al-Zahra City and settled in a tower. But soon after, we learned that the tower was under threat of being bombed, forcing us to return to Al-Jala'a once more. The situation only worsened from there. During these harrowing times, I lost my beloved sister. We then returned to Sheikh Radwan for a short period, before moving to the Beach Camp.

When we returned to Beit Lahiya, tragedy struck again. My sister's son was killed right in front of our home. Desperate to find safety, we moved to Al-Bureij, where my family was staying, but the situation there was no better. Seeking refuge at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, we were dealt yet another devastating blow, my brother was killed during this turbulent period.

As the violence escalated, we were displaced again, this time to Rafah, to Kharbat Al-Adas area, and then to the Hashashin neighbourhood. However, numerous challenges forced us to seek shelter at the Al-Awda Camp. Yet again, we found ourselves returning to Kharbat Al-Adas, where we managed to stay for a while, but the escalating violence drove us back to Khan Younis, to Al-Nus Street.

Conditions continued to deteriorate, and the relentless shelling inflicted more heartbreak. I lost my son, while my husband and my sister-in-law's daughter were injured. In light of these dire circumstances, we attempted to move to Al-Qarara, but the dangers there compelled us to return to Khan Younis, back to Al-Nas Street. Throughout this agonising period, I was displaced at least 16 times. Each displacement was steeped in fear and uncertainty, with no place offering true safety. Every move we made was driven by the desperate hope to survive.””

It is important to note that the experience of war and displacement differs significantly between men and women who are subjected to different cultural and societal pressures. This in turn may impact their mental health and psychosocial needs differently. Men and women in Gaza are exposed to different risks, with men being more likely to experience arrest, detention and torture during displacement.

Arshad, 35, displaced six times: *“When the Israeli army invaded Khan Younis, our car was destroyed as we tried to escape, and I was captured. I spent 25 days blindfolded, not knowing where I had been taken. During this time, we were tortured and interrogated continuously. After about a month in captivity, they transferred us in a jeep, and when the blindfolds were finally removed, we found ourselves at Kerem Shalom. We were thrown to the ground like animals, and they ordered us to head toward Rafah. The Red Cross eventually found us, and I was taken to hospital because of the severe torture I had endured, especially to my back and feet.”*

Arrest, detention and torture can lead to severe and long-term mental health issues that require clinical care. However, as the conflict persists and specialised services remain scarce or inaccessible, individuals with serious psychological conditions are highly likely to go untreated. The lack of access to MHPSS services not only causes significant suffering for the individuals themselves but also places additional burdens on family members, who must take on caregiving responsibilities.

Ashan, 35, originally from northern Gaza, displaced seven times: *“Since I was a prisoner and continue to suffer from psychological issues that have affected both me and our relationship.”*

In contrast, women are more likely to report different forms of violence, particularly domestic and gender-based violence (GBV). Protection monitoring data and reports from GBV organisations consistently show a significant increase in GBV within displacement sites. Prolonged exposure to violence, combined with the frustration and anger stemming from harsh, overcrowded living conditions, often manifests as violence globally, putting women and girls at greater risk. Several personal accounts evidence incidents of violence within their homes.

Rania, originally from Gaza city, displaced six times: *“My husband started getting angry with my daughter over small mistakes. He beats her a lot and gets angry without reason. I feel sad about how I treat my daughter too because the pressure on me is overwhelming. With the fear we live in, I’ve developed nervousness, my hands tremble, and I suffer from sleep disturbance.”*

Social and cultural norms often position men as the heads of the family, entrusting them with the responsibility of decision-making and ensuring the safety and protection of their loved ones. This role can place immense psychological pressure on men. DRC, PARC and WAC data revealed that men typically make all critical decisions regarding their family's security. For instance, it is the men who determine when to displace an area or when to return to areas previously affected by conflict. These decisions are made with the primary goal of safeguarding the privacy and well-being of their families yet fail to take afford women the agency they deserve.

However, when men are unable to fulfil their role as family protectors, it leads to significant emotional and psychological distress. Several men shared their deep anguish over being unable to provide a secure and stable environment for their families.

Naeem, displaced seven times: *“Repeated displacements were harsh, and the relentless bombing pushed me to return to a place where I felt relatively safe after the army left. I needed somewhere to protect my family's privacy and shield us from the dangers of ongoing shelling.”*

Subjective differences in the experience of displacement and the military offensive may result in very different mental health states and emotional reactions between men and women. Although the self-reporting of symptoms will not provide an accurate understanding of the range and prevalence of mental health symptoms experienced by research participants, it is interesting to note that men were more likely to cite experiencing depression compared to women (57% of men compared to 46% of women). Men interviewed used powerful imagery to their condition.

“**Asim, 41 displaced ten times:** *"I'm severely depressed; I feel like I'm drowning in a black hole and have no appetite for food."*”

“**Zaid, 35, originally from Gaza city, displaced seven times:** *"The torture I experienced while captive by the Israeli occupation forces has slightly affected my vision. I feel like I'm living in an endless nightmare, unable to concentrate and feeling completely lost."*”

Women on the other hand were more likely to report fear (40% of women interviewed compared to 29% of men). Women were also the only ones who acknowledged feeling ‘angry’ or feeling ‘overwhelmed’ or ‘unable to cope’.

“**Lina, originally from Gaza city, displaced 14 times:** *"I want to vent my frustration with anyone, and I raise my voice without realising how loud it is. I don't care; I snap and get angry. I have no appetite; I don't want to talk to anyone. Sometimes I want to eat excessively, other times I have no appetite at all."*”

Given the limited sample size, further research is needed to gain a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the mental health needs of men in Gaza. However, the findings from this study highlight the importance of designing and scale up tailored mental health interventions that address the distinct needs and challenges faced by men and women.

The mental health crisis in Gaza, fuelled by constant bombardment, repeated displacement, and the collapse of community networks, has left civilians struggling with severe anxiety, depression, and trauma. Prolonged violence, fear, and the daily fight for survival have strained families, increased domestic tensions, and eroded resilience. These impacts are avoidable; if civilians were adequately protected from warfare, and afforded basic dignity including adequate shelter, essential services, and safety, as outlined in IHL, many of these conditions could have been prevented or mitigated, sparing families the devastating psychological toll of repeated displacement.

Conclusion

The findings presented in this report underscores the inhumane and abhorrent conditions in Gaza, where people are simultaneously trapped and abandoned. The population faces profound and systematic harm due to repeated displacement, compounded by policies and practices that flagrantly violate international law. Repeated displacement orders, coupled with relentless bombardments, have created cycles of upheaval, forcing families to flee under traumatic and life-threatening conditions in search of safety that simply does not exist in Gaza. These displacements, often arbitrary and inadequately communicated, fail to meet the fundamental protections required under International Humanitarian Law, including the provision of safe routes, access to essential services, and adequate shelter. The indignity of living without adequate resources in overcrowded displacement sites is driving families to endure further displacement, often to areas of even greater danger. In the absence of any semblance of safety, many are returning to hazardous locations in a desperate attempt to restore a sense of dignity.

The cumulative impact of this crisis has made the delivery of meaningful humanitarian assistance impossible, devastated livelihoods, fractured community and family dynamics, and eroded resilience. Families endure overcrowded and unsafe shelters with no privacy, while the destruction of infrastructure and the systematic denial of aid have plunged the population into unprecedented levels of deprivation. The loss of documentation compounds this crisis, leaving many unable to access aid or assert housing, land, and property rights, which will be critical for reconstruction and recovery. Mental health outcomes have been catastrophic, with civilians reporting severe anxiety, depression, and trauma as a result of prolonged exposure to violence, insecurity, and profound loss. There is an urgent need to improve conditions in displacement sites, which entails the immediate access of aid in and across Gaza, at scale, as well as urgent improvements in WASH and shelter.

Whilst this report does not look into the intent behind Israel's policies and therefore does not seek to ascertain whether genocide is being committed in Gaza, the systematic deprivation of basic necessities, the stripping of dignity, and the forced displacement of civilians have left families in a persistent state of vulnerability, isolation, and suffering. This not only represents breaches of IHL but also actions that could be considered to deliberately inflict conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction, in part or in whole, which would amount to acts under Article II of the Genocide Convention.

All states have an obligation to uphold International Humanitarian Law. Failure to do so not only inflicts irreparable harm upon civilians in Gaza but also undermines the foundational principles of IHL, jeopardising its role as a safeguard for civilians globally. States that are parties to the Genocide Convention are specifically committed to preventing the crime of genocide, as well as punishing it. This commitment entails proactive measures to prevent such acts, as well as the enactment of relevant legislation to punish perpetrators. Civilians in Gaza are entitled to the fundamental protections afforded by human rights law and IHL. States that fail to act against these violations risk not only enabling impunity but also becoming complicit in these actions.

Recommendations

The Danish Refugee Council and the Women's Affairs centre call on:

The Government of Israel and Palestinian armed groups to:

- Achieve an immediate and lasting ceasefire as the only way to ensure the protection of civilian lives in Gaza.
- Adhere to IHL by immediately halting all attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, ensuring full compliance with all applicable international laws, including the Geneva conventions.
- Immediately stop the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.
- Facilitate independent international investigation mechanisms on reported violations of IHL.

The Government of Israel, as the Occupying Power of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem:

- Immediately cease and actively prevent any acts which may violate Article II of the Genocide Convention.
- Halt all forced displacement orders and where the evacuation of civilians is necessary for their safety, ensure that such evacuations meet the requirements outlined in IHL.
- Ensure the rapid and unimpeded entry of humanitarian assistance for all people in need in Gaza, including ending the siege of Gaza and areas within Gaza, opening of all crossings, and allowing humanitarian actors to deliver aid safely and efficiently guided solely by need.
- Immediately end the siege on Gaza and lift restrictions on the free movement of people. The blockade imposes arbitrary limits on travel for essential purposes, including seeking safety abroad, accessing medical care, education, and work, whilst ensuring to guarantee the voluntary right of return for Palestinian refugees and displaced persons in line with international law.
- Take immediate steps to comply with the recent United Nations General Assembly resolution that calls for an end to its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This includes withdrawing its military forces, halting settlement expansion, dismantling sections of the separation wall, and facilitating the safe return of displaced Palestinians, in line with international law.

Third states:

- Take every possible measure to 'prevent the crime of genocide', as per obligations under the Genocide Convention.
- Immediately halt the transfer of weapons, parts, and ammunition to Israel and Palestinian armed groups while there is risk they are used to commit acts within the genocide convention.
- Take active measures to ensure Israel's adherence to the recent United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for an immediate end to its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This includes pressing Israel to comply with international law by withdrawing its military forces, halting settlement expansion, dismantling sections of the separation wall, and facilitating the safe return of displaced Palestinians.

- Ensure that no party to the conflict can act with impunity and prevent global double standards on adherence to international law that weaken the very foundations of IHL worldwide.
- Where Palestinians have been able to flee the military offensive in Gaza, guarantee that Palestinians seeking international protection can access fair and non-discriminatory asylum systems. States must ensure compliance with their obligations under international law, recognising Palestinians' right to seek asylum without facing exclusion, denial, or discriminatory treatment.

Donors and Aid actors:

- Ensure the continued presence and response capacity of UNRWA in light of their mandate, reach and vitality for the aid effort in Gaza.
- Support the documentation of crimes against civilians in Gaza, with a focus on gendered impacts, to ensure accountability for violence against women and girls under International Law, alongside all other violations of human rights in Gaza.
- Ensure humanitarian funding prioritises equitable and meaningful access to services, with a focus on safeguarding women, girls, and other vulnerable populations.
- Ensure humanitarian programming strengthens communication with communities on aid distributions, service points, and available assistance by utilising and enhancing the communication channels accessible to them.
- Ensure a consistent and large-scale supply of essential items into Gaza, saturating the market to stabilise prices, devalue goods, and reduce incentives for looting.
- Prioritise site management in Gaza to ensure effective delivery of essential services, improve coordination of relief efforts, and promote meaningful community participation that upholds dignity.
- Design and implement tailored protection services in displacement sites, including mental health and psychosocial support, gender-based violence and child protection programmes in Gaza that address the specific needs of both women and girls and men and boys, ensuring culturally sensitive and gender-responsive approaches.
- Recognising the complex and evolving social dynamics, adopt a conflict sensitive approach throughout the entire humanitarian response cycle to do no harm and maximise positive impacts stemming from the humanitarian response.
- Support the restoration of trust and social cohesion among individuals, families and communities through dedicated bottom-up, inclusive activities such as dialogue facilitation, humanitarian mediation and capacity enhancement on conflict management.

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