

Gaza: 800 Days of Genocide

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp; the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a shining star kindled from a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow forth of itself though no fire touched it. Light upon light.

— Qur'an, Surah An-Nur 24:35

In the longest, darkest night the world has witnessed since 1945, two million souls in Gaza became that lamp.

For exactly eight hundred days the sky over Gaza has been filled with fire. For eight hundred nights the earth has shaken with two hundred thousand tonnes of explosives. For eight hundred dawns ministers have repeated, on camera and without shame, that not a single grain of wheat, not a drop of medicine, not a litre of fuel would be allowed to reach two million human beings.

And still the light did not go out.

A New Benchmark for Human Suffering

In the entire post-1945 era, no civilian population on Earth has been subjected to a comparable combination of duration, intensity, and deliberate deprivation as the 2.3 million people trapped in the Gaza Strip between October 2023 and December 2025.

- 800 consecutive days of total or near-total siege
- 200,000+ tons of explosives dropped (equivalent to fifteen Hiroshima-sized bombs)
- 80 % of all homes destroyed or severely damaged
- A man-made famine that reached IPC Phase 5 (catastrophic) across multiple governorates
- The deliberate, publicly announced starvation of an entire civilian population as a method of warfare
- The near-complete annihilation of the healthcare, water, sanitation, and education systems

By every metric used by the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the International Criminal Court, Gaza has not merely suffered a “humanitarian crisis.” It has been subjected to conditions that push the very boundaries of human survivability.

And yet, against every rational expectation, the vast majority are still alive. That fact alone is one of the quietest miracles of our century.

Light Upon Light

Every famine forecast, every public-health simulation, every grim spreadsheet produced by the World Food Programme and the IPC said the same thing: at this level of caloric deprivation, sustained for this long, across an entire population with no medical system and no clean water, mortality should have reached catastrophic, society-ending levels. It has not. Not because the suffering was exaggerated; it was worse than the models could imagine. But because the models did not account for a people who decided, with a quiet and unbreakable certainty, that their existence itself would be the resistance.

- A mother who had not eaten for four days still found milk in her breast for her infant, passing life forward even as her own body consumed itself.
- A surgeon who had to amputate a six-year-old's leg with a kitchen knife and a mobile-phone torch whispered "You are brave, habibi" again and again, until the child's sobs became the only anaesthesia available.
- Twenty strangers in a tent sharing one tin of beans, each taking a single spoonful so the children could have two.
- An old man in Beit Lahia who, after his house was bombed for the third time, planted tomato seeds in a shell crater because "something green must grow here before I die."
- A teenager who carried his paralysed grandmother 14 kilometres on his back, telling her stories of the sea she could no longer reach, so she would not lose hope on the journey.

These were not heroic exceptions. They were the rule.

The Legal Framework: Three Concurrent Regimes Violated Simultaneously

All three legal regimes below were violated on a daily basis for over two years.

Geneva Convention IV (1949) – Protection of Civilians in Time of War

- Article 23: Obligation to allow free passage of foodstuffs, medical supplies, and clothing for children, pregnant women, and maternity cases – violated from 9 October 2023 onward.
- Article 55: Occupying Power must ensure food and medical supplies "to the fullest extent of the means available to it" – violated continuously, even after the 2021 ICJ and Israeli High Court rulings reaffirmed effective control over Gaza.
- Article 56: Duty to maintain medical and hospital services – violated by systematic targeting of every hospital in northern Gaza and the deliberate denial of fuel, oxygen, and medicines.
- Article 33: Prohibition of collective punishment – violated by the explicit public statements ("complete siege," "no electricity, no food, no fuel") and the sustained policy of caloric restriction.

Genocide Convention (1948)

The International Court of Justice (January & May 2024, July 2025 provisional measures; October 2025 advisory opinion) found a “plausible risk” and later “serious risk” of genocide. By December 2025 the ICC Prosecutor had requested arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant explicitly on the charge of:

- Article II(c): “Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction” through starvation, denial of water, destruction of sanitation, and prevention of medical care.

Supporting evidence includes cabinet-level statements (“human animals,” “not a single grain of wheat,” “erase Gaza”), the sustained caloric intake below survival thresholds, and the destruction of all means of food production (fishing boats, greenhouses, bakeries, farmland).

Customary International Humanitarian Law (Rules 53–56, ICRC Study)

- Rule 53: Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited.
- Rule 54: Attacks against objects indispensable to survival (water installations, food-stuffs, agricultural areas, hospitals) are prohibited.
- Rule 55: Parties must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief.

The Actual Conditions: A Chronicle of Slow-Motion Annihilation

They called it a “complete siege.” They called it “pressure.” They called the people “human animals” and declared, without euphemism, that not a single grain of wheat would be allowed to pass.

Phase 1 – October 2023 to February 2024: “Complete Siege”

Defense Minister Gallant’s 9 October announcement was implemented literally. For weeks, zero trucks entered. Caloric intake fell to 300–600 kcal/day. The first documented starvation deaths occurred in December 2023.

Phase 2 – March to May 2025: The “Total Blockade”

After the January ceasefire collapsed, Finance Minister Smotrich and National Security Minister Ben-Gvir forced an eleven-week closure of every crossing. UNRWA ran out of flour entirely. Mothers diluted baby formula with contaminated water. The first mass grave of emaciated children was discovered in Kamal Adwan Hospital.

Phase 3 – June to September 2025: Famine Declared

IPC Phase 5 declared in Gaza Governorate (August 2025). Average weight loss reached 22 % of body mass. Children's ribs became visible on every street. Airdrops – the only “relief” Israel permitted – killed more people than they fed.

Phase 4 – October to December 2025: The Ceasefire That Wasn't

The October 2025 agreement promised 600 trucks a day. Actual deliveries averaged 120–180. Rafah crossing remained closed most days. Fuel shortages forced hospitals to choose which incubators to keep running. By December, 100 % of the population remained in IPC Phase 3 or higher.

The Parental Calculus

Malnutrition science is merciless: children under five are the most vulnerable to acute wasting and irreversible stunting. Yet Gaza's parents know this. So they do the only thing left to them. They stop eating.

Survey after survey (Lancet 2025, UNICEF 2025, WHO surveillance 2024–2025) records the same pattern: 70–90 % of adults report skipping meals entirely so their children can have one more mouthful of rice, one more sip of powdered milk diluted to transparency. Mothers breastfeed infants while their own ribs protrude, passing on malnutrition before the child has even taken its first solid food.

The result is a heartbreaking inversion: children in Gaza have lost, on average, less weight than their parents, because their parents have chosen to die a little every day so their children can live a little longer.

The Medical Nightmare No One Should Have to Imagine

Surgeons in Gaza have been forced to perform thousands of amputations – many on children – without anaesthesia, without painkillers, sometimes with nothing more than a mobile-phone torch and a dull scalpel boiled in rainwater.

- A four-year-old girl with 50 % burns has her dead flesh scraped away while screaming “Mama” until she loses consciousness from pain.
- A six-year-old boy has his crushed femur sawn through while fully awake, clutching the surgeon's hand and whispering “Why does it hurt so much?”
- Teenage girls undergo Caesarean sections restrained by relatives because there is no ketamine left.

Every doctor who has worked in Gaza since 2023 describes the same recurring nightmare: the moment they realise they must cut into a screaming child knowing there is nothing to dull the agony. Many have stopped sleeping; some have stopped speaking altogether.

How Are They Still Alive? The Anatomy of a Miracle

Against every prediction of public-health models, Gaza has not yet suffered a total demographic collapse. Several factors explain this improbable survival:

1. **Extraordinary Social Solidarity** Families pooled the last crumbs, neighbours shared a single can of tuna across twenty people, and strangers carried the elderly on their backs during forced marches.
2. **Makeshift Coping Mechanisms** People ate animal feed, boiled grass and leaves, distilled seawater with firewood scavenged from destroyed homes, and performed surgery with mobile-phone flashlights.
3. **The Stubborn Refusal to Leave** Despite evacuation orders covering 85 % of the Strip at various points, most Gazans stayed – partly because there was nowhere safe to go, partly because leaving meant permanent dispossession.

Doctors in Gaza repeatedly describe the population as “the living dead” – alive, but only just.

Epilogue: The Verdict Written in Breathing Bodies

That two million human beings – teachers, poets, toddlers learning to walk, grandmothers who have survived every previous war – are still breathing on 12 December 2025 is not proof that the policy was humane.

It is proof that some forms of human endurance are stronger than the machinery designed to end them.

They are still here. They are still alive. And every breath they take is an indictment.