



# The Economic Case for the US–Israel Partnership

The US–Israel relationship is often described through the lens of security aid, yet the economic and technology links are one of the clearest reasons the partnership keeps paying [dividends \(https://www.hudson.org/economics/economic-case-us-israel-partnership-zineb-riboua\)](https://www.hudson.org/economics/economic-case-us-israel-partnership-zineb-riboua) for Americans. Israel is tightly connected to US capital markets, US research pipelines, and the product roadmaps of major American companies. After October 7, 2023, many analysts predicted a long war would damage Israel’s economy and weaken these ties. New data points in 2025 and early 2026 show the opposite: core economic indicators held up, investment links stayed active, and joint innovation work continued.

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## Key takeaways

- The US–Israel Free Trade [Agreement \(https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/israel-fta?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com\)](https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/israel-fta?utm_source=chatgpt.com) that took effect in 1985 was the first free trade agreement ever implemented by the United States.

- US goods and services trade with Israel totaled ([https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/europe-middle-east/middle-eastnorth-africa/israel?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/europe-middle-east/middle-eastnorth-africa/israel?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) an estimated \$55.0 billion in 2024, and the relationship rests on long-running trade and investment flows.
- US firms account ([https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-investment-climate-statements/israel?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-investment-climate-statements/israel?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) for nearly two-thirds of the more than 300 multinational R&D centers in Israel, showing how central Israel has become to American innovation work.
- In early 2026, Moody's moved ([https://www.timesofisrael.com/moodys-boosts-israels-credit-outlook-to-stable-as-ceasefires-in-gaza-lebanon-hold/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.timesofisrael.com/moodys-boosts-israels-credit-outlook-to-stable-as-ceasefires-in-gaza-lebanon-hold/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) Israel's outlook to stable from negative, and the Bank of Israel projected 5.2% GDP growth for 2026.
- Israel's foreign exchange reserves stood ([https://www.boi.org.il/en/communication-and-publications/press-releases/foreign-exchange-reserves-at-the-bank-of-israel-january-2026/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.boi.org.il/en/communication-and-publications/press-releases/foreign-exchange-reserves-at-the-bank-of-israel-january-2026/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) at \$233.044 billion at the end of January 2026, a sign of financial strength during a period many expected to produce capital flight.

## Trade and investment ties that keep compounding

In 1985, the United States' first free trade agreement took effect with Israel. That fact matters because it signals how early Washington judged the commercial relationship to be valuable, not symbolic.

Fast forward to today. The Office of the US Trade Representative estimates US goods and services trade with Israel at \$55.0 billion in 2024. These totals capture something bigger than imports and exports. They reflect a two-way flow that includes services, venture capital, and corporate R&D, plus a long list of Israeli firms operating inside the United States.

One practical marker is where Israeli companies go to raise capital. US government reporting has described Israeli firms as the second-largest ([https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-investment-climate-statements/israel?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-investment-climate-statements/israel?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) source of foreign listings on NASDAQ after China. That means American markets are not just trading Israeli shares. They are also financing growth that often turns into US jobs, US tax base, and US intellectual property co-development.

## Innovation work that lands in American products

A major reason the economic relationship matters is that US companies treat Israel as a high-output R&D environment. The US State Department's Investment Climate Statements note that US firms account for nearly two-thirds of the more than 300 multinational R&D centers established in Israel. The US Embassy in Israel has echoed ([https://il.usembassy.gov/fact-sheet-u-s-israel-economic-relationship/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://il.usembassy.gov/fact-sheet-u-s-israel-economic-relationship/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) the same point in public fact sheets.

This is not limited to a small circle of niche startups. [Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/business/palo-alto-plans-dual-listing-tel-aviv-after-closing-25-billion-cyberark-deal-2026-02-12/?utm_source=chatgpt.com) ([https://www.reuters.com/business/palo-alto-plans-dual-listing-tel-aviv-after-closing-25-billion-cyberark-deal-2026-02-12/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.reuters.com/business/palo-alto-plans-dual-listing-tel-aviv-after-closing-25-billion-cyberark-deal-2026-02-12/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) reporting in February 2026 described Palo Alto Networks planning a dual listing in Tel Aviv after its acquisition of Israeli firm CyberArk, while emphasizing that its Israeli R&D operation is its largest outside Silicon Valley. The picture that emerges is steady integration: American firms build teams in Israel, those teams ship code and hardware designs into US supply chains, and US customers rely on the results in cybersecurity and other high-value fields.

A second marker is the track [record](https://www.hudson.org/economics/economic-case-us-israel-partnership-zineb-riboua?utm_source=chatgpt.com) ([https://www.hudson.org/economics/economic-case-us-israel-partnership-zineb-riboua?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.hudson.org/economics/economic-case-us-israel-partnership-zineb-riboua?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) of structured US-Israel R&D funding. The Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation (BIRD) has supported hundreds of joint projects since the late 1970s, with published figures in the hundreds of millions of dollars and billions in associated sales. Whatever one's politics, that is a measurable pipeline turning joint research into commercial outcomes.

## Resilience after October 7 that surprised skeptics

After October 7, many observers expected a prolonged conflict to trigger sustained economic damage in Israel. Early 2026 updates cut against that prediction.

- Moody's upgraded Israel's credit outlook to stable from negative in late January or early February 2026 reporting, tied to reduced geopolitical risk and evidence of resilience.
- The Bank of Israel's January 2026 staff forecast projected GDP growth of 5.2% in 2026.
- The IMF projected 4.8% growth for Israel in 2026 in early February 2026 reporting.
- The Bank of Israel reported foreign exchange reserves at \$233.044 billion at the end of January 2026.
- Reuters [reported](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-economy-grew-31-2025-after-1-growth-2024-2026-02-16/?utm_source=chatgpt.com) ([https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-economy-grew-31-2025-after-1-growth-2024-2026-02-16/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-economy-grew-31-2025-after-1-growth-2024-2026-02-16/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) Israel's economy grew 3.1% in 2025 after 1% growth in 2024, with investment and exports rising.

For American readers, the point is not cheering for a number on a chart. It is what the numbers imply: Israel remained a reliable node for R&D and high-tech production during stress, which is exactly what the United States looks for in trusted economic partners.

## What American communities get back

The benefits show up in local economies, not only in corporate earnings calls. A 2025 New York-Israel economic impact [report](https://www.calcalistech.com/ctechnews/article/hjiwza2rxl?utm_source=chatgpt.com) ([https://www.calcalistech.com/ctechnews/article/hjiwza2rxl?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.calcalistech.com/ctechnews/article/hjiwza2rxl?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) summarized in Israeli business coverage found 648 Israeli-

founded companies in New York State supporting 57,145 jobs and generating \$19.5 billion in gross economic output (using 2024 data). A related summary focused on New York City alone cited 590 Israeli-founded companies and thousands of jobs.

These are the kinds of figures that turn “partnership” into something a mayor and a governor care about. They are also a reminder that calls to weaken US–Israel economic ties do not only affect Israelis. They can hit American payrolls, American suppliers, and American pension funds.

## What Washington can do next

Four actions can protect American economic interests while strengthening a trusted technology partnership:

1. **Update the 1985 trade framework for today’s economy.** The 1985 agreement was built for goods trade. The modern relationship includes services, data, and joint R&D, all areas where clearer rules can reduce friction.
2. **Expand joint R&D programs with clear commercialization goals.** [BIRD \(https://www.birdf.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/BIRDBOGJune2011PREnglish.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com\)](https://www.birdf.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/BIRDBOGJune2011PREnglish.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com) shows a working model of binational R&D support tied to real products and sales.
3. **Protect cross-border R&D from coercive restrictions that harm US firms.** When European measures disrupt dual-use trade or technology transfer, US companies can become collateral damage.
4. **Promote state-level investment ties.** The New York figures show how much value can land in US states when Israeli-founded firms scale inside America.

## Conclusion

The economic case for the US–Israel partnership is visible in trade totals, R&D footprints, and hard performance under stress. The United States’ first free trade agreement taking effect with Israel in 1985 set a long-running pattern: dense commercial ties anchored in US markets and US innovation needs. Early 2026 indicators, including Moody’s stable outlook and the Bank of Israel’s 2026 growth forecast, show that the partnership did not buckle under the pressure many predicted. The next step for Washington is to treat the relationship as a direct contributor to American prosperity and industrial strength, then make policy choices that protect the jobs, research, and capital flows already tied to it.

# Frequently Asked Questions about the US-Israel Economic Partnership

## What are the main benefits of the US-Israel economic partnership?

The **US-Israel economic partnership** is a vital economic collaboration that fosters growth and resilience by leveraging Israel's innovative research capabilities alongside America's expansive markets, manufacturing, and investment potential. This multifaceted partnership is increasingly crucial as it addresses supply chain challenges, infrastructure needs, and security risks that directly impact everyday costs and reliability.

Main benefits typically include:

- **Trade & investment ties:** fostering two-way business, job creation, and access to new customer bases for firms in both countries.
- **Technology sharing:** collaborative research and development (R&D) that facilitates the transition of ideas from labs to pilot programs and commercial products.
- **Energy security initiatives:** partnerships that enhance the protection and reliability of critical energy infrastructure.
- **Workforce development programs:** connections between universities and training institutions that prepare engineers, researchers, and skilled technicians for the future.

Examples of successful collaborations include joint research programs, cross-border venture investments, and partnerships in sectors such as cybersecurity, medical devices, and water technology. This partnership not only mitigates technical risks for firms but also strengthens American economic resilience by promoting co-production and U.S.-based manufacturing. Stakeholders evaluating options can see that these efforts support both national security and economic growth simultaneously.

## How does cooperation in technology and innovation impact both nations?

Cooperation in **technology sharing** enables the United States and Israel to transform research into practical products and services. A common pathway is *R&D* → *pilots* → *commercialization*: teams test innovative ideas in real-world settings before scaling them through US manufacturing, capital markets, and global distribution channels.

This collaboration bolsters **shared prosperity** by nurturing startups, attracting investment, and generating high-skill jobs in both nations. Current trends indicate that cross-border partnerships also diversify supply chains and research networks,

which is essential for critical sectors like healthcare, energy, and cybersecurity. By focusing on practical economic activities, both nations can avoid dependency risks while reinforcing their economic strengths.

- **Cybersecurity:** collaborative tools and training enhance the protection of utilities, hospitals, and financial systems.
- **Health and life sciences:** shared clinical research and digital health pilots improve care delivery and data-driven diagnostics.
- **Energy security:** joint initiatives on grid monitoring and resilience reduce disruption risks.

For organizations aiming to engage in this partnership, the most direct steps involve identifying sector needs, seeking research or industry partners, and planning for pilot testing with clear compliance and procurement requirements.

## What role does defense economics play in the US-Israel partnership?

**Defense economics** examines how security cooperation influences budgets, industry dynamics, innovation capacity, and long-term stability. Within the US-Israel economic partnership, it elucidates the trade-offs between the *cost of preparedness* (including training, equipment, and readiness) and the economic repercussions that can arise when instability disrupts investment, supply chains, and critical infrastructure.

This framework connects policy decisions to tangible economic activities. Recent developments illustrate how procurement choices and joint programs can shape manufacturing locations, expedite system maintenance, and facilitate the transition of technologies from research to commercial application.

Common pathways include:

- **Joint research and development (R&D)** that can extend into civilian applications, such as cybersecurity and communications
- **Co-production and supply chains** that bolster specialized manufacturing and maintenance capabilities
- **Resilience investments** that enhance the protection of critical infrastructure, particularly energy systems



Building prosperity through US and Israel economic partnership.

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## Evidence & Verification

# The Facts on Hamas Using Civilian Infrastructure for Military Purposes

Hamas fights from inside one of the most densely populated urban areas on earth, and it has a long record of placing military assets in and around civilian sites. That pattern matters for two reasons. It increases danger for Gaza’s civilians, and it creates legal and operational dilemmas for any force responding to Hamas attacks. The evidence base is not limited to Israeli claims. It includes U.S. intelligence statements, UN agency admissions from past wars, and reporting from major wire services that documented specific discoveries.

### Key Facts

- The White House said U.S. intelligence indicated ([https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/white-house-says-it-has-evidence-hamas-using-al-shifa-hospital-run-military-2023-11-14/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/white-house-says-it-has-evidence-hamas-using-al-shifa-hospital-run-military-2023-11-14/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) Hamas used Gaza’s Al-Shifa hospital complex for command-and-control, with weapons storage assessed as likely.
- UNRWA publicly reported ([https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-strongly-condemns-placement-rockets-school?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-strongly-condemns-placement-rockets-school?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) rockets found in its Gaza schools during the 2014 war, documenting militant weapon placement

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inside UN premises.

- The IDF has published incident-level claims during the 2023–2026 Gaza war involving military infrastructure near or inside medical clinics, schools, and UN facilities, with dates and locations named in press releases.
- A 2024 AP report (<https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-unwra-gaza-tunnels-31f6ca23365e349bcde1332d5028e431>) documented the IDF showing journalists a tunnel system under UNRWA’s Gaza City headquarters area, with UNRWA calling for an independent investigation and stating it was unaware.
- International humanitarian law prohibits ([https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/external/doc/en/assets/872-bouchie-de-belle.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/external/doc/en/assets/872-bouchie-de-belle.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) the use of civilians to shield military objectives and prohibits attempts to use protected persons or protected sites to gain military advantage.

## What “civilian infrastructure used for military purposes” means

Civilian infrastructure includes hospitals, schools, shelters, mosques, clinics, ambulances, UN facilities, and residential buildings. Under the law of armed conflict, many of these sites receive special protection, especially medical facilities. That protected status can be lost when a site is used for military action. The prohibition on “human shields” focuses on using civilians to shield military objectives or military operations.

**Table 1: Common forms of misuse documented in Gaza conflicts**

Category	What it looks like in practice	Why it matters
Hospitals and medical compounds	Command posts, weapons storage, tunnel access, armed presence near wards	Hospitals have special protection; misuse puts patients and staff at higher risk

UN facilities and schools	Weapons stored in classrooms, tunnels adjacent to compounds, firing from nearby	UN sites are widely used as shelters; misuse endangers displaced civilians
Civilian neighborhoods	Rocket launches from built-up areas, tunnel shafts under homes, fighting positions near apartments	Creates predictable civilian exposure during counterfire
Civilian transport and services	Abuse of ambulances or civilian vehicles for movement of fighters or weapons	Undermines trust in protected transport and increases checkpoint friction

## Hospitals: what credible sources say

The most cited hospital case is Al-Shifa. In November 2023, the White House said it had intelligence that Hamas used Al-Shifa to run military operations and likely to store weapons, calling that conduct a war crime. Reuters reported ([https://www.reuters.com/world/us-will-not-share-intelligence-connecting-hamas-al-shifa-hospital-white-house-2023-11-16/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/us-will-not-share-intelligence-connecting-hamas-al-shifa-hospital-white-house-2023-11-16/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) U.S. officials saying the United States was confident in its intelligence assessment.

An AP report (<https://apnews.com/article/hamas-intelligence-shifa-biden-hostages-israel-d0f782682a7a06ed5a3749ed92c4f821>) later described a declassified U.S. intelligence assessment saying terrorist groups, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, used Al-Shifa for military purposes, including command-and-control, weapons storage, and holding at least a few hostages.

The IDF maintains a public dossier-style page ([https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/hamas-operations-in-hospitals/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/hamas-operations-in-hospitals/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) describing "Hamas operations in hospitals," presenting its view that hospitals serve as recurring nodes for Hamas activity.

## Table 2: Al-Shifa related statements and reporting

Date	Institution	What was stated or reported	Source
Nov 14, 2023	White House (via Reuters)	U.S. intelligence indicated Hamas used Al-Shifa for military operations; weapons storage assessed as likely	
Nov 16, 2023	White House (via Reuters)	U.S. stood by its intelligence assessment, did not release details publicly	

Late 2023 (declassified assessment reported by AP)	U.S. intelligence community	Assessed militant use of Al-Shifa for command-and-control, weapons storage, and holding hostages	
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## UN schools: an unusually direct UN record

During the 2014 Gaza war, UNRWA issued multiple press releases stating that rockets were found hidden in vacant UNRWA schools in Gaza during inspections. UNRWA condemned the placement of rockets in its installations and described withdrawing staff from premises after discoveries.

Those statements are significant. They are not Israeli military claims. They are admissions by the UN agency operating the facilities, written during the conflict itself.

## UN facilities and tunnels during the 2023–2026 Gaza war

In February 2024, AP reported that the IDF revealed a tunnel system under the UNRWA Gaza City headquarters area and brought journalists to see it, alleging Hamas used the site to support tunnel infrastructure. UNRWA's Commissioner-General said UNRWA was unaware and called for an independent investigation.

Separately, the IDF has released dated press statements describing discoveries of militant infrastructure near medical clinics and schools, and describing tunnels near UNRWA schools in areas such as Rafah and Shejaiya.

## Why this evidence matters for “human shields” claims

When militants place military assets in protected or civilian sites, the civilian population bears the first and worst cost. It can trigger fighting near shelters, disrupt aid delivery, and degrade the safety of hospitals and schools. It can create a propaganda advantage for the armed group when civilians die, even when the misuse is the initiating act.

International law still binds Israel's conduct. Distinction, proportionality, and precautions remain required even when an enemy violates the rules. The legal reality is not “anything goes.” The legal reality is that Hamas's misuse can turn civilian sites into military objectives while raising the expected civilian harm.

## Conclusion

The factual record supporting Hamas's use of civilian infrastructure rests on multiple layers: U.S. intelligence statements on hospital misuse, UNRWA's own documented discoveries of rockets in schools, and war-period reporting on tunnels and infrastructure linked to UN sites. Israel's IDF publishes incident-level claims and visual material for many episodes, while major outlets like Reuters and AP have reported on U.S. intelligence positions and site discoveries. Taken together,

these sources support a consistent conclusion: Hamas has repeatedly used civilian environments and protected facilities for military purposes, increasing risk to civilians and complicating lawful military responses.

## FAQ - Addressing Common Questions

### What evidence supports claims about Hamas using civilian infrastructure for military purposes?

Multiple, independently described evidence streams indicate that Hamas embeds military activity in civilian sites. Recent developments include *captured and declassified internal Hamas materials*...operational orders, maps, and administrative records...demonstrating weapons storage and command activities in locations such as hospitals, schools, and UN facilities, as well as directives to remain close to civilians for protection, as summarized in FactSignal's report on declassified Gaza files (<https://factsignal.org/verified-evidence-and-documentation/declassified-documents-and-reports-what-gazas-files-reveal>). This pattern aligns with Hamas's long-standing history of employing terror tactics that endanger civilians while exploiting their presence for military advantage.

There are also firsthand admissions. A seized diary attributed to Hamas commander Khaled Abu Akram details the establishment of an ambush at a school and the appropriation of batteries and solar panels from a UNRWA clinic for military purposes, according to PaxPoint's diary-based documentation (<https://paxpoint.org/hamas-own-words-expose-its-war-crimes-a-diary-of-exploitation-of-schools-un-clinics-and-civilian-infrastructure/>). Such actions underscore the calculated risks Hamas poses to both its adversaries and the civilians it claims to protect.

Finally, a 2021 Hamas document reportedly referred to an Oxfam-funded agricultural project as a "cover," illustrating how aid projects can be repurposed without the knowledge of NGOs, per PaxPoint's aid oversight analysis (<https://paxpoint.org/when-aid-becomes-a-shield-how-some-gaza-ngos-became-unwitting-partners-in-hamas-operations/>). This manipulation of humanitarian efforts complicates the operational landscape for aid organizations.

### How do international laws address the use of civilian areas in armed conflicts?

Under **international humanitarian law (IHL)**, civilian areas are not "free zones" for military operations. The core rules are **distinction** (separating civilians from military targets), **proportionality** (avoiding attacks where expected civilian harm is excessive compared to the concrete military advantage), and **precautions** (taking practical steps to minimize harm).

IHL also restricts how armed forces may operate from populated areas. Parties must, *to the extent feasible*, avoid locating military objectives in or near densely populated areas and must not use civilians as shields for military assets. Using hospitals or schools for military purposes can void their special protection, but it does not eliminate the attacker's obligations under distinction, proportionality, and precautions.

In practice, commanders should:

- verify targets and select less harmful means when available
- provide effective advance warnings when feasible
- facilitate humanitarian relief as required

## What are the implications of using civilian infrastructure on humanitarian aid efforts?

Using **civilian infrastructure** (homes, schools, hospitals, water systems) for military purposes can disrupt humanitarian aid efforts directly. Under **international humanitarian law (IHL)**, civilian objects are protected; however, this protection may be compromised when they support combat operations...raising risks for patients, staff, and displaced families.

In practical terms, recent developments indicate that aid organizations frequently face more challenging decisions regarding access and safety. When a site is suspected of dual-use, it can lead to:

- **Delayed or denied deliveries** due to perceived safety risks for routes and facilities
- **Reduced medical capacity** if hospitals must evacuate or limit services
- **Broken trust** that undermines *humanitarian neutrality* and staff security

The outcome is often fewer operational aid corridors and increased pressure on verification, coordination, and accountability...ensuring assistance reaches civilians without being diverted or placing them at added risk.

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# The Palestinian Area C Land Grab, and Why It Stands Against Chances for Peace

A fight over paperwork is reshaping facts on the ground in Judea and Samaria, otherwise known as the West Bank. Land registration sounds technical, yet it can decide who controls open space, building rights, roads, and future borders. Under the Oslo-era framework, Area C was internationally agreed to remain under Israeli civil administration and security control. When the Palestinian Authority (PA) carries out land registration in Area C outside that framework, it is not ordinary governance; it is a unilateral land grab that violates existing agreements and pressures the international community to accept new "realities" without a deal.

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3. Why the PA's Area C registration is a land grab
4. The Fayyad Plan and why it still matters
5. EU funding and the problem of underwriting unilateral steps
6. Why this matters to Americans who want a negotiated outcome
7. Conclusion

## Key takeaways

- Israel's cabinet said on February 15, that its decision to begin land registration in Area C was a response (<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-886007>) to "illegal land registration processes promoted by the Palestinian Authority."
- The Oslo process created ([https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) the Area A, B, and C structure, with Area C remaining under Israeli responsibility during the interim period until permanent status negotiations.
- The 2009 "Fayyad Plan" set a state-building approach centered on building institutions and facts on the ground first, then seeking political outcomes.
- UN-Habitat publicly describes ([https://unhabitat.org/calls/achieving-planning-and-land-rights-in-area-c-west-bank-palestine?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://unhabitat.org/calls/achieving-planning-and-land-rights-in-area-c-west-bank-palestine?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) an EU-funded project titled "Achieving Planning and Land Rights in Area C" (2019–2023), showing European funding connected to Palestinian land grabs in Area C, against international agreements.

## What the agreements say about Area C

The Oslo framework set up an interim period in which the newly created Palestinian Authority would assume governing responsibilities in parts of the territories, while core permanent-status issues would be negotiated later. In that structure, Area C remains the area where Israel retained civil administration and security responsibilities pending final negotiations.

That division is the baseline for Israel's objection. If a party uses an interim arrangement to take steps that look like permanent claims, it undercuts the point of negotiated outcomes.

# **Why the PA's Area C registration is a land grab**

On February 15, Israel's cabinet approved initiating land registration in the territory and said this was an "appropriate response" to "illegal land registration processes promoted by the Palestinian Authority." The Israeli argument is straightforward: when the PA registers land in Area C under its own mechanisms, it acts outside the agreed jurisdiction and creates documents meant to look like final-status sovereignty.

Land registration can also become a gateway to further moves: planning designations, construction approvals, enforcement actions, and a paper trail that can be taken to foreign governments and donors to demand recognition.

## **The Fayyad Plan and why it still matters**

In 2009, Salam Fayyad's government issued "Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State," a plan centered on building a Palestinian state by creating facts on the ground and an international diplomatic war against Israel.

That logic remains relevant in Area C. If the goal is to win international backing for statehood without a negotiated settlement, then building administrative "facts" in the most disputed territory becomes a powerful tool. Land registration is one of the most effective of these tools because it converts political claims into official-looking property records.

Israel's concern is not about Palestinians registering land inside PA-administered areas. The concern is pushing this model into Area C, the part of Judea and Samaria that was explicitly left for negotiated outcomes.

## **EU funding and the problem of underwriting unilateral steps**

European funding enters the story in a concrete way. UN-Habitat publicly describes an EU-funded project titled "Achieving Planning and Land Rights in Area C, West Bank, Palestine (2019–2023)." Whatever the stated humanitarian intent, the effect of this kind of support is political and highly charged. It can finance mapping, planning, legal support, and public messaging that help the PA pursue Area C claims outside the agreements they signed.

This creates an unfair dynamic: Israel is pressed to honor interim agreements while foreign money helps the PA chip away at them through administrative tactics. When European institutions fund land and planning work tied to Area C, they risk turning "aid" into a tool for rewriting contested jurisdiction without negotiation.

## Why this matters to Americans who want a negotiated outcome

The United States has spent decades supporting diplomacy built around negotiated final-status outcomes. Unilateral land registration in Area C moves in the opposite direction. It seeks to win through paperwork and facts on the ground, on what was supposed to be settled through talks.

This is also a rule-of-law issue. If signed arrangements define who administers which territory, bypassing those rules damages the credibility of the agreements themselves. That damage carries a cost for any future process, since neither side will trust that interim steps stay interim.

## Conclusion

The PA's land grab in Area C fits a long-running state-building tactic associated with the Fayyad Plan: build facts on the ground first, then seek political validation later. Israel's cabinet has said its own Area C land registration move as a response to "illegal" PA registration activity, signaling that Israel views this as an active breach, not a technical dispute. EU-funded programming connected to land and planning in Area C, as described by UN-Habitat, raises the stakes by giving resources and legitimacy to illegal unilateral moves outside the agreement structure.

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# What Historical Decisions Shaped the Current Israel-Palestinian Conflict?

The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians did not emerge overnight. It developed through a series of political decisions, wars, diplomatic efforts, and missed opportunities spanning more than a century. Responsibility for today's reality is shared across multiple actors, but mostly Arab governments, Palestinian leadership, and international institutions. Understanding how these decisions accumulated over time provides the necessary context for evaluating the situation today. This history shows moments when compromise was possible and moments when rejection, violence, or regional power politics hardened positions.



## Key Takeaways:

- The 1947 United Nations partition proposal (<https://israeled.org/arab-committee-rejects-u-n-partition-plan/>) created the foundation for two states, but Arab rejection and subsequent war shaped the initial conflict.
- Repeated Arab military efforts to eliminate (<https://www.gov.il/en/pages/the-arab-israeli-wars>) Israel between 1948 and 1973 entrenched security concerns within Israeli policy.
- Palestinian leadership decisions, including support for armed struggle and rejection (<https://besacenter.org/palestinian-rejectionism/>) of statehood offers in 2000 and 2008, significantly influenced the trajectory of negotiations.
- Regional actors such as Egypt, Jordan, Iran, and Gulf states influenced the conflict's direction through war, peace treaties, and proxy support.
- The rise of Hamas in Gaza and the October 7, 2023 massacre marked a major escalation that reshaped the security environment through 2026.

## The 1947 Partition Plan and the 1948 War

In 1947, the United Nations proposed partitioning (<https://jewishvirtuallibrary.org/map-of-the-u-n-partition-plan>) British Mandatory Palestine into Jewish and Arab states under Resolution 181. Jewish leaders, led by David Ben-Gurion, accepted the plan despite territorial compromises. Arab leaders rejected it. When Israel declared independence in May 1948, five Arab armies invaded.

The 1948 war resulted in Israel securing more territory than allocated under the UN plan. Approximately 700,000 Palestinians fled or were displaced during the war, an event Palestinians call the Nakba. At the same time, roughly 850,000 Jews were forced out of Arab countries in the following years, most resettling in Israel. The initial Arab rejection of partition and the decision to pursue war establish

a pattern in which diplomacy was repeatedly replaced by armed confrontation.

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(<https://paxpoint.org>).

## The 1967 War and Territorial Control

In June 1967, Israel fought Egypt, Jordan, and Syria in the Six Day War (<https://jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-six-day-war>). Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan, Gaza and Sinai from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Israel's control over the West Bank and Gaza fundamentally reshaped the conflict.

UN Security Council Resolution 242 ([https://israeled.org/un-security-council-resolution/?gad\\_source=1&gad\\_campaignid=22588673882&gbraid=0AAAAAqRH3egBRDM4yNGHRzoAwBf\\_2xNur&gclid=CjwKCAiAwNDMBhBfEiwAd7tiXfspu18Y-iOKJv9uYey8qlrbGETvi7Qqtc3H1TQyua6IKKwh6hoC1Z8QAvD\\_BwE](https://israeled.org/un-security-council-resolution/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=22588673882&gbraid=0AAAAAqRH3egBRDM4yNGHRzoAwBf_2xNur&gclid=CjwKCAiAwNDMBhBfEiwAd7tiXfspu18Y-iOKJv9uYey8qlrbGETvi7Qqtc3H1TQyua6IKKwh6hoC1Z8QAvD_BwE)) called for Israeli withdrawal from territories in

exchange for secure and recognized boundaries. Arab states responded with the Khartoum Resolution of 1967, declaring "no peace, no recognition, no negotiations" with Israel. This hardened positions.

## Palestinian National Movement and Armed Struggle

The Palestine Liberation Organization, led by Yasser Arafat, pursued armed struggle aimed at replacing Israel, as evidenced by their first charter ([http://mideastweb.org/palestinian\\_charter.htm](http://mideastweb.org/palestinian_charter.htm)), written in 1964. During the 1970s and 1980s, hijackings and attacks targeted Israeli civilians. These actions shaped Israeli public opinion and security doctrine.

The First Intifada, beginning in 1987, marked a shift toward mass violent uprising. In 1988, the PLO formally recognized Israel's right to exist. This opened the door to negotiations, culminating in the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO, which created the Palestinian Authority.

Oslo envisioned gradual progress toward a final settlement. Israel transferred civil control of major Palestinian population centers. Palestinian leaders committed to ending violence. Yet Palestinian suicide bombings in the mid 1990s and disputes over implementation eroded trust.

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## Failed Peace Efforts and Diverging Narratives

In 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered (<https://honestreporting.com/camp-david-ii-summit/>) a proposal at Camp David that included a Palestinian state in most of the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as a capital. Arafat declined the proposal without a counteroffer. The Second Intifada erupted shortly afterward, resulting in over 1,000 Israeli deaths and several thousand Palestinian deaths.

In 2008, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert proposed (<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-843721>) a plan offering 100 percent of the West Bank with land swaps. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas refused to sign the agreement. These missed opportunities reinforced Israeli skepticism about Palestinian leadership intentions.

## Gaza, Hamas, and Regional Influence

In 2005, Israel unilaterally withdrew (<https://www.gov.il/en/pages/israel-s-disengagement-from-gaza-and-north-samaria>) from Gaza, dismantling all settlements there. In 2007, following Palestinian internal conflict, Hamas violently seized control of Gaza from the Palestinian Authority (<https://naxpoint.org>). Hamas openly calls for Israel's destruction and has launched thousands of rockets at Israeli cities.

The October 7, 2023 massacre by Hamas killed approximately 1,200 people in Israel and led to over 200 hostages being taken into Gaza. Israel launched a major military campaign in response. The conflict drew in regional actors, including Iran, which provides support to Hamas and Hezbollah.

Peace treaties with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994 demonstrated that negotiated peace with Israel is possible. The Abraham Accords, brokered by the United States in 2020, normalized relations between Israel and several Arab states, signaling a regional shift even as the Palestinian issue remains unresolved.

## Timeline of Major Decisions

Year	Event	Impact
1947	UN Partition Plan	Jewish acceptance, Arab rejection
1948	Arab invasion of Israel	War shapes borders
1967	Six Day War	Israel wins after war with multiple Arab states, gains control of Judea and Samaria and Gaza
1993	Oslo Accords	Mutual recognition and Palestinian Authority created
2000	Camp David Summit	Arafat refused Barak offer, Second Intifada
2005	Israeli withdrawal from Gaza	End of Israeli settlements in Gaza
2007	Hamas takeover of Gaza	Islamist leadership in Gaza whose goal is to destroy Israel
2020	Abraham Accords	Regional normalization with Israel
2023	Hamas October 7 massacre	Major regional escalation

## Conclusion

The current conflict reflects decades of decisions and non-decisions. Arab rejection of early partition, repeated wars against Israel, and sustained support for armed struggle played a central role in shaping Israeli security policy. Palestinian leadership's refusal to accept Israel or any agreement offered was and remains the obstacle to peace.

As of today, the path forward requires accountable Palestinian leadership, recognition of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, and serious negotiations grounded in security and mutual recognition. Past experience shows that peace agreements are possible when leaders accept compromise. Future stability depends on whether that lesson is finally applied.

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# When “Human Rights” Becomes a Cover for Anti-Israel Hostility

Many Americans assume big-name humanitarian NGOs speak with moral clarity and stick to careful standards. Recent claims from inside one of the world’s most recognizable charities point to a darker reality: ideological fixation on Israel, loose use of the most inflammatory labels, and a workplace climate that can turn toxic for Jews and for anyone who refuses to follow an anti-Israel script. When an NGO treats words like “genocide” and “apartheid” as political slogans instead of precise legal terms, it stops informing the public and starts feeding suspicion, anger, and conspiracy thinking. That pattern does not stay “over there” in foreign policy [debates](https://cognitura.org/blog/category/policy-analysis). It can spill into antisemitism, including in the way colleagues talk about Jewish identity and Jewish national self-determination.

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  - 7.2. How does radicalization exploit narratives around human rights?
  - 7.3. What strategies can counteract anti-Israel sentiments rooted in misinformation?

## Key takeaways

- Former Oxfam Great Britain CEO Halima Begum has accused (<https://www.jns.org/former-oxfam-ceo-accuses-group-of-toxic-antisemitic-culture/>) the charity of a “toxic antisemitic culture” and said staff pushed to use the term “genocide” before the organization had evidence and legal advice.
- Begum’s remarks highlight a common NGO failure: treating charged allegations against Israel as a default posture, not a conclusion reached through careful standards.
- The IHRA working definition (<https://www.state.gov/defining-antisemitism/>), used by many governments, describes ways anti-Jewish hate can appear in modern political language, including when Israel is treated as uniquely illegitimate.
- The result of hateful rhetoric is predictable: public trust drops, Jewish staff can feel targeted, and genuine humanitarian work gets pulled into political campaigns.

## An insider allegation that pulled the curtain back at Oxfam

On February 17, it was reported ([https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/former-oxfam-accuses-charity-of-racism-sexism-and-toxic-antisemitic-culture-in-legal-action/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/former-oxfam-accuses-charity-of-racism-sexism-and-toxic-antisemitic-culture-in-legal-action/)) that Halima Begum, the former CEO of Oxfam Great Britain, accused the charity of a “toxic antisemitic culture” in connection with an employment tribunal claim. She said Oxfam placed a disproportionate focus on Gaza inside the organization and warned against rushing to call Israel’s actions “genocide” without “consultation and evidence and good legal advice.”

Other outlets reported (<https://www.devex.com/news/ousted-oxfam-ceo-lambastes-charity-for-brutal-dismissal-111893>) that Begum is taking legal action and that she described internal pressure connected to how the Gaza war was discussed and labeled. This matters for a simple reason: this is not an outside critic calling a group biased. It is a former top executive describing what she says she saw from the inside.

## How “genocide” and “apartheid” can function as political weapons

Words like “genocide” and “apartheid” carry unique moral force. They also have specific legal meanings and high evidentiary thresholds. When NGOs use them as activism-first labels, they create a public impression that the case is closed and anyone who disagrees must be defending evil. That framing can turn Jews into targets in daily life, since many people collapse “Israel” into “Jews” in practice, even when they claim not to.

Begum's warning about using "genocide" before the organization had evidence and legal advice points directly at this dynamic. It describes a workplace where the pressure is not "get it right," it is "say the strongest thing now." Once that norm sets in, staff who ask for standards can be treated as disloyal, and Jewish staff can be treated as suspect simply for not joining the pile-on.

Oxfam's own advocacy record shows how easily the language can escalate. For example, Oxfam has used "apartheid" framing in public materials connected to Israel and the territories, including in policy letters and statements. You can support Palestinian rights and still recognize that turning one side into a permanent moral criminal, by default, is not neutral humanitarian work.

## When anti-Israel obsession crosses into antisemitism

No one should label all criticism of Israel as antisemitism. At the same time, modern antisemitism often shows up through political language about Israel, not through old slurs. That is one reason governments and institutions have leaned on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism, which describes how anti-Jewish hate can appear in contemporary settings. The United Kingdom formally adopted the IHRA definition in 2016.

The practical point for Americans is straightforward: if an NGO's internal culture treats Israel as uniquely evil, pushes maximal accusations as a group identity marker, and punishes dissent, it creates fertile ground for antisemitic outcomes even when participants insist they only oppose a government. Begum's description of a "toxic antisemitic culture" is a warning sign that this is not a theoretical concern.

## What accountability should look like

If NGOs want public trust, they need standards that match their moral claims.

1. **Use legal terms with discipline.** If an NGO uses "genocide," it should show the legal reasoning and evidence trail, not just outrage.
2. **Protect viewpoint diversity inside the organization.** A healthy workplace allows staff to question language and framing without being smeared.
3. **Adopt clear antisemitism safeguards.** Many democracies treat IHRA as a useful guide for spotting when Israel-related rhetoric slides into anti-Jewish hostility.
4. **Treat Israel like other democracies in conflict.** Scrutiny is fair. Fixation, double standards, and moral demonization corrode credibility.

# Conclusion

The Begum allegations about Oxfam put a spotlight on a pattern many people have sensed but struggled to document: parts of the NGO world can drift from humanitarian principles into political activism focused on delegitimizing Israel, with language like “genocide” and “apartheid” used as identity badges rather than careful conclusions. When NGOs reward the most extreme claims and punish internal dissent, antisemitism can ride in the slipstream. If you want to act on this, start with a basic test: demand sourcing, demand consistent standards across conflicts, and support [watchdog scrutiny](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-886736) (<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-886736>) of major NGOs that shape media narratives and policy debates.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Human Rights and Anti-Israel Sentiments

### What are the psychological mechanisms behind anti-Israel propaganda?

The misuse of **human rights** language in anti-Israel propaganda exploits **cognitive biases**...mental shortcuts that unfairly influence judgment, particularly in emotionally charged contexts. This manipulation employs **confirmation bias** (favoring information that supports existing beliefs), **availability bias** (where dramatic images or stories are deemed more trustworthy than detailed evidence), and **in-group/out-group thinking** (which portrays one group as completely human while depicting another as threatening). Extremist groups exploit these psychological patterns by leveraging fear and selective information to shape perceptions and control narratives.

Moreover, it leverages repetition and emotional appeals. Short slogans, selective media clips, and emotive language create *moral certainty* detached from factual context, while **scapegoating** reduces intricate political realities to simplified narratives. Recent events illustrate how swiftly social media can disseminate these claims before they are substantiated. To critically evaluate these processes, look for:

- **One-sided evidence** or missing timelines;
- **Dehumanizing language** and broad generalizations;
- **Immediate pressure to take sides.**

Engage in **critical thinking** by verifying original sources, differentiating between civilian and governmental roles, and considering what evidence could challenge the claim.

## How does radicalization exploit narratives around human rights?

Radicalization often co-opts **human rights framing**, using terms like fairness, dignity, and freedom to create narratives that position “our group” as the victim while designating “their group” as the oppressor. While this strategy may evoke a sense of moral urgency...especially when addressing legitimate grievances...it frequently constrains empathy and encourages acceptance of extreme “solutions.” Understanding the psychological underpinnings of these manipulations is crucial, as it reveals how narratives can distort perceptions of justice.

Common manipulative approaches include:

- **Selective evidence:** highlighting abuses that bolster the narrative while omitting broader context or contradictory accounts;
- **Moral inversion:** portraying discrimination or violence as *self-defense* or “justice;”
- **Redefining rights:** framing loyalty to the cause as a “right,” while denying rights to marginalized out-groups.

A practical response is to apply **critical thinking**: verify sources, actively seek missing perspectives, and evaluate if suggested actions uphold *human dignity* for everyone. When human rights discourse becomes a vehicle for recruitment, it often signifies a **recruitment pipeline** rather than genuine advocacy.

## What strategies can counteract anti-Israel sentiments rooted in misinformation?

Countering anti-Israel sentiment driven by misinformation begins with enhancing **media literacy** and employing **truth verification**: take the time to distinguish between facts and opinions, validating claims with multiple credible sources. Be aware of common manipulation techniques...such as **cognitive biases** (which can distort perception) and **propaganda** (messaging designed to manipulate beliefs through selective or emotional framing)...to identify them actively. For deeper insights into how cognitive biases contribute to radicalization, refer to our exploration of the psychology behind these phenomena.

Effective strategies for educational institutions, workplaces, and community organizations include:

- Ask “*What is the original source?*” before sharing screenshots, clips, or slogans;
- Utilize lateral reading: open new tabs to confirm context, dates, and potential editing;
- Compare headlines with complete statements and primary sources;
- Model respectful correction: prioritize evidence over shaming.

Ultimately, foster a robust **narrative defense** by disseminating verified accounts that prioritize **human dignity** for all civilians and encourage **critical thinking**, including accepting uncertainty as facts continue to evolve.

(<https://cognitura.org>)

Research and education platform exploring radicalization prevention through truth and moral resilience.

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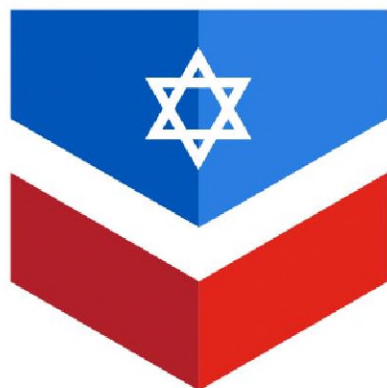
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# ALLYVIA

Policy and Updates on the US and Israel Alliance

## Antisemitism in the United States Is Rising: Data Shows Jews Are Targeted at Rates Far Beyond Their Share of the Population

February 19, 2026 • Allyvia

American Jews make up a small share of the country, yet anti-Jewish hate shows up again and again in crime data, incident tracking, and national surveys. The growth is visible in two places that measure different things: law enforcement hate crime statistics (criminal offenses reported by police) and community monitoring (harassment, vandalism, assault, threats, campus incidents, rally chants, online abuse). Put together, the evidence shows a pattern that hits Jews in everyday life, in public spaces, online, and at schools, and it comes from a mix of extremist currents rather than one single source.

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## Key takeaways

- The FBI's 2024 hate crime data shows **1,938 single-bias anti-Jewish hate crime incidents**, a **5.8%** rise from 2023 and the highest number recorded since the FBI began collecting this data in 1991.
- Jews were the target of **nearly 70% of religion-based hate crimes** in the [FBI's 2024](#) data, despite being about **2% of the U.S. population**.
- ADL recorded **9,354 antisemitic incidents in 2024**, the highest in its tracking history, with a **344%** increase over five years and an **893%** increase over ten years.
- ADL recorded **196 antisemitic physical assaults in 2024**, a **21%** increase from 2023.
- AJC's February 2026 [report](#) found **31%** of American Jews say they were personally targeted by antisemitism in the last year (in person or online), and **55%** changed behavior out of fear.

## The clearest benchmark: FBI hate crime statistics show Jews are the top-targeted religious group

The Department of Justice's hate crime [statistics](#) page summarizing the FBI's 2024 release reports **11,679 hate crime incidents** nationwide in 2024. It notes that **23.5%** of single-bias hate crime victims were targeted for religion.

Within that religion category, the FBI data cited by ADL shows:

- **1,938** single-bias anti-Jewish hate crime incidents in 2024
- **178** anti-Jewish assaults (up from 174 in 2023)

- Anti-Jewish hate crimes made up **nearly 70%** of religion-based hate crimes in 2024
- Anti-Jewish hate crimes were **16% of all reported hate crimes** in 2024

That last point matters for basic context. A group that is about 2% of the population accounting for 16% of reported hate crimes is a signal of concentrated targeting.

## Table: What the two main U.S. measurement systems show (latest available through February 2026)

Measure	Source	Latest year covered	What it counts	Key finding
Criminal hate crimes reported by police	FBI UCR via DOJ summary	2024	Criminal hate crime incidents reported by participating agencies	<b>11,679</b> total hate crime incidents; religion was <b>23.5%</b> of single-bias victim motivations
Anti-Jewish hate crimes	FBI data cited by ADL from FBI reporting	2024	Single-bias anti-Jewish hate crime incidents	<b>1,938</b> incidents; <b>nearly 70%</b> of religion-based hate crimes; <b>16%</b> of all hate crimes
Antisemitic incidents tracked by a community monitor	ADL Audit	2024	Harassment, vandalism, assault, threats, campus incidents, rally activity	<b>9,354 incidents</b> ; <b>344%</b> increase over five years; <b>893%</b> increase over ten years
Physical assaults (subset of ADL Audit)	ADL Audit reporting	2024	Antisemitic physical assaults	<b>196</b> assaults; <b>21%</b> increase from 2023

Lived experience and behavior change	AJC national survey report	2025 survey year, published Feb 2026	Perceptions, targeting, behavior changes	31% personally targeted; 55% changed behavior out of fear
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## Antisemitism is rising in incident data, and it shows up in daily life

ADL's 2024 Audit recorded **9,354** antisemitic incidents nationwide, a fourth consecutive record year. ADL reports that total reflects a **344%** rise over five years and an **893%** rise over ten years.

ADL's assault numbers help anchor the story in physical risk, not just speech. ADL reports **196** antisemitic assaults in 2024, up **21%** from 2023, targeting at least 250 victims.

Campus life became a major pressure point. ADL reports **1,694** antisemitic incidents on college campuses in 2024, an **84%** increase from 2023, and campus incidents were **18%** of all incidents, the largest proportion ADL has recorded for campuses.

## "All directions" is not a slogan. The data points to multiple, distinct sources of hate

No single ideology owns antisemitism. U.S. data through February 2026 shows antisemitism surfacing in at least three large streams that look different on the ground.

### 1) White supremacist movements and conspiracy propaganda

ADL's Center on Extremism reports that in 2024 it documented white supremacist propaganda distributions in almost every state, and its 2024 assessment found that most propaganda included antisemitic or anti-immigrant language.

### 2) Anti-Israel mobilization that crosses into antisemitic targeting

ADL's 2024 Audit found that a majority of incidents had elements related to Israel or Zionism, including antisemitic rhetoric in rally settings. AP's [coverage](#) of the ADL report notes ADL's distinction that policy criticism is not automatically antisemitic, yet rallies that shift into tropes, Holocaust comparisons, or celebration of violence move into antisemitism.

### 3) Online harassment that reaches mainstream audiences

AJC's February 2026 report found nearly three in four American Jews (73%) experienced antisemitism online in the past year (seen, heard, or personally targeted), and among those, 21% said the antisemitism they encountered online made them feel physically threatened.

These streams interact. Conspiracy content circulates online, shows up on posters and stickers, then turns into intimidation in public settings. Protest environments can bring together people with very different politics who share one target.

## What American Jews report living with right now

AJC's "State of Antisemitism in America 2025" report, released in February 2026, connects the trend lines to lived experience:

- **86%** of American Jews say antisemitism has increased in the U.S. since the October 7, 2023 Hamas terrorist attacks
- **31%** say they were personally targeted by antisemitism at least once in the last year (in person or online)
- **55%** say they changed behavior in the past year out of fear of antisemitism

The same report shows a gap in what the broader public sees. **45%** of U.S. adults reported personally seeing or hearing antisemitic incidents in the last 12 months, and among those who saw or heard incidents, **74%** encountered them online or on social media.

## Conclusion

U.S. data from the FBI, ADL, and AJC points in the same direction: antisemitism is rising, it is showing up across settings, and Jews remain the most targeted religious group in U.S. hate crime reporting. The FBI's 2024 data shows **1,938** anti-Jewish hate crime incidents and nearly **70%** of religion-based hate crimes aimed at Jews. ADL's 2024 Audit reports **9,354** incidents, with record growth over five and ten years, plus a rise in assaults and a sharp jump on college campuses. AJC's February 2026 report shows a community adjusting behavior and reporting direct targeting at scale.

Next steps for readers in the middle of the American mainstream are straightforward: treat anti-Jewish hate as a national civic problem, not a niche issue; reject conspiracy claims and "collective blame" language in political debate; support accurate hate crime reporting and enforcement; stand with Jewish neighbors when intimidation shows up in schools, workplaces, or public spaces.

## Frequently Asked Questions About Antisemitism

## What recent data highlights the increase in antisemitism in the U.S.?

Recent reporting indicates a troubling trend: following the October 7, 2023 **Hamas massacre**, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) documented a **notable increase** in U.S.-based circulation of propaganda from designated terrorist organizations, including Hamas. The ADL warns that ongoing exposure to this content can *normalize violence* and elevate risks of radicalization. This concern is amplified as Hamas leaders appear to believe that the next generation of Americans endorses their cause, thereby justifying their continued violence and refusal to disarm.

The ADL's findings underscore how these narratives are shifting from fringe platforms into mainstream environments, including social media and campus activism. One cited example is the **Resistance News Network** Telegram channel, boasting around **150,000 subscribers**, which translates Hamas material into English, facilitating its dissemination in U.S. activist circles. This emphasizes the necessity for clear communication to counteract the narratives that radical groups like Hamas aim to shape for their own ends.

Specific instances within the ADL analysis include campus posts by chapters associated with **Students for Justice in Palestine**, notably a University of Illinois post sharing a video of a Hamas terrorist during the massacre and a UC Davis post amplifying a quote that praised the attack.

## How does rising antisemitism impact the U.S.–Israel alliance?

Rising antisemitism can weaken the U.S.–Israel alliance by distorting public debate and pressuring leaders to treat this long-standing security partnership as a partisan issue rather than a shared national interest. Recent trends indicate that antisemitism can also fuel isolationist arguments, portraying U.S. support for Israel as a burden rather than a pragmatic investment in American security and prosperity.

This trend strains the “living bridge” between the two nations: the [Jewish-American community](#) has been integral to U.S.–Israel relations since 1948, supporting education, humanitarian initiatives, and fact-based advocacy. An increase in antisemitism can deter participation and propagate misinformation, especially in public forums like campuses.

- **Security impact:** diminishes opportunities for continuous cooperation on intelligence and defense.
- **Civic impact:** undermines *shared Western values* such as equal rights and the rule of law.
- **Practical response:** advocate for local reporting, support campus educational groups, and promote civil dialogue that emphasizes U.S. interests within the alliance.

# What are some common misconceptions about antisemitism today?

A prevalent misconception is that antisemitism is only valid when it manifests as explicit or violent. In reality, it frequently appears as **double standards**, **conspiracy claims** regarding Jewish influence, or language that presents Jews as a collective threat. Recent developments illustrate how rhetoric can cross a line...for instance, criticism following a UN Special Rapporteur's characterization of Israel as a "common enemy," a framing that critics claim echoes historical patterns that have endangered Jews.

Another misconception is that antisemitism is distinct from discussions surrounding Israel. While individuals can disagree on policy without being antisemitic, issues arise when speech *denies Jewish peoplehood*, targets Jews generally for the actions of the Israeli government, or employs demonizing tropes.

- "It's not antisemitism if it's political" (context and tropes are crucial).
- "Only extremists do it" (antisemitism can manifest in mainstream environments as well).
- "Talking won't help" (some researchers suggest dialogue can alleviate polarization).

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# How Often Israel Policy Criticism Uses Antisemitic Tropes: What The Data Shows

## How Often Israel Policy Criticism Uses Antisemitic Tropes: What The Data Shows

Arguments about Israeli government policy can be sharp, and that is normal in democratic debate. A different pattern shows up when the language shifts from policy and leaders to claims about Jews or “Zionists” controlling governments, media, money, or public life. Those claims recycle long-running antisemitic ideas, even when they appear inside Israel-related activism. The most reliable way to measure frequency is to combine incident tracking with survey data, then look at how often Israel-related material includes conspiracy claims, “dual loyalty,” Holocaust inversion, or coded substitutes for “Jews.”

## Key Takeaways

- 1 In the UK, CST (<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/c/4/CST%20Incidents%20Report%202025.pdf>) recorded **3,700 antisemitic incidents in 2025**, and **1,977 (53%)** referenced Israel/Palestine, the Hamas terror attack, or the war, **together with anti-Jewish language or targeting**.
- 2 In those UK Israel-related incidents, CST counted **444 cases** where Israel-related discourse appeared with **antisemitic conspiracy tropes** about Jewish power or control.
- 3 CST counted **387 incidents** in 2025 comparing Israel, Israelis, or Jewish people to **Nazis**, a common form of Holocaust inversion.
- 4 In the US, ADL (<https://www.adl.org/resources/report/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2024>) recorded **9,354 antisemitic incidents in 2024**, and **58%** contained elements related to **Israel or Zionism**.
- 5 ADL reported that, out of **over 5,000 anti-Israel rallies tracked in 2024**, **2,596** included **antisemitic messaging** in signs, chants, or speeches.
- 6 In a national US survey fielded in January 2024, **30.4%** agreed that “supporters of Israel control the media,” and **33%** agreed that Israeli operatives secretly manipulate US policy (<https://cognitura.org/blog/category/policy-analysis>) through AIPAC or similar means.

## What antisemitic tropes look like in Israel-related criticism

A trope is not a policy argument. A trope is a stereotype or conspiracy claim aimed at Jews as a group, sometimes voiced through labels like “Zionists” or “Israel lobby.” Common examples include:

- **Global control:** claims that Jews or “Zionists” run the media, banks, or governments.
- **Dual loyalty:** claims that Jews cannot be loyal citizens and serve a foreign interest.
- **Holocaust inversion:** Nazi comparisons that weaponize Jewish trauma, or slogans that turn Jews into “Nazis.”

CST describes how “Zionist” and “Zionism” can be used as normal political terms, then used as euphemisms for “Jews” and “Jewishness,” or paired with classic anti-Jewish stereotypes and conspiracies.

## UK case study: how often Israel-related discourse includes tropes

CST’s 2025 annual report gives a clear count of Israel-linked antisemitism that includes anti-Jewish targeting or language. CST recorded **3,700** antisemitic incidents in 2025. CST then identified **1,977** incidents that referred to Israel/Palestine, the Hamas terror attack, or the war, **together with anti-Jewish language or targeting**, which equals **53%** of the year’s total.

Inside that Israel-related slice, CST counted specific trope patterns:

- **Conspiracy tropes tied to Israel talk:** CST reports **444 incidents** where Israel-related discourse appeared together with antisemitic conspiracy themes, including claims of disproportionate Jewish control through Israel’s power over global politics, or manipulation of politicians through money.

- **Nazi comparisons:** CST reports **387 incidents** with a direct comparison between Israel, Israelis, or Jewish people and Nazi Germany or the Nazis.
- **“Zionist” used as a euphemism or paired with antisemitism:** CST reports **462 incidents** using “Zionism” or “Zionist” in ways that functioned as a substitute for “Jew/Jewish,” or appeared next to antisemitic language or imagery.

These are direct frequency counts, not impressions.

## US incident data: Israel and Zionism inside recorded antisemitism

ADL’s Audit of Antisemitic Incidents is the largest consistent US incident series. ADL reported **9,354 antisemitic incidents in 2024**. For the first time in ADL’s audit history, a majority of incidents, **58% (5,452 incidents)**, contained elements related to **Israel or Zionism**.

ADL adds a second metric that gets close to the user’s question about “policy criticism” spaces: protests. ADL states that out of **over 5,000 anti-Israel rallies tracked in 2024**, **2,596** involved antisemitic messaging through signs, chants, or speeches.

That finding does not mean most rally participants engaged in antisemitism. It does show that antisemitic tropes show up at scale in environments framed as Israel policy activism.

## Survey data: how common trope beliefs are in the general public

Incidents measure acts that get reported. Surveys measure beliefs and receptivity.

ADL’s Antisemitic Attitudes in America 2024 survey (fielded January 5 to January 18, 2024; **4,143** respondents) reports the share of Americans endorsing Israel-linked conspiracy claims:

- **30.4%** agreed that “supporters of Israel control the media.”
- **33%** agreed that Israeli operatives secretly manipulate US national policy through AIPAC or similar tools.

Those statements match the “global control” family of tropes, expressed through Israel-related framing.

## Table: “How often” by measurement type (latest available through February 2026)

What is being measured	Geography	Time window	What “Israel-related” means in the dataset	Frequency of Israel-related antisemitism	Tropes counted inside Israel-related material

Incident reports	UK (CST)	2025	Incidents referencing Israel/Palestine, Hamas attack, or war <b>with anti-Jewish language or targeting</b>	<b>1,977 of 3,700 (53%)</b>	Conspiracy tropes <b>444</b> ; Nazi comparisons <b>387</b> ; “Zionist/Zionism” as euphemism or paired with antisemitism <b>462</b>
Incident reports	US (ADL Audit)	2024	Incidents with elements related to Israel or Zionism, excluding general Israel criticism that lacks antisemitic content	<b>58% of 9,354 incidents</b>	ADL notes many Israel-related incidents occurred at or near anti-Israel protests
Protest monitoring	US (ADL)	2024	Anti-Israel rallies with antisemitic messaging in signs, chants, or speeches	<b>2,596 of 5,000+ rallies tracked</b>	“Antisemitic messaging” at rallies (signs, chants, speeches)
Public opinion survey	US (ADL)	Jan 2024	Agreement with Israel-linked conspiracy statements	<b>30.4%</b> media control; <b>33%</b> secret manipulation via AIPAC	Global-control style conspiracies framed through Israel politics

## A quick reader test: policy critique vs. trope

- Names and decisions:** “This minister’s policy,” “this military decision,” “this law,” “this budget.” That is politics. “The Jews,” “Zionists,” “Israel lobby controls everything.” That is a trope.
- Conspiracy language:** claims of secret control, bought politicians, media ownership as a plot, hidden hands. CST’s 2025 counts show conspiracy themes showing up hundreds of times inside Israel-related antisemitic incidents.
- Nazi comparisons:** CST treats Israel-to-Nazism comparisons as a marker that the line has been crossed into antisemitic abuse, and it counted 387 such incidents in 2025.

## Conclusion

Through February 2026, the best public data from major monitors shows Israel policy spaces are a frequent setting for antisemitic tropes. In the UK, over half of recorded antisemitic incidents in 2025 referenced Israel or the Palestinians, Hamas’s attack, or the war together with anti-Jewish targeting, and CST counted hundreds of conspiracy and Nazi-comparison cases inside that set. In the US, ADL’s 2024 audit found a majority of incidents included Israel or Zionism elements, and ADL documented thousands of anti-Israel rallies with antisemitic messaging.

Next steps for readers: insist on specific, verifiable claims about policies and decision-makers, reject conspiracy framing about Jewish control or loyalty, and call out Nazi comparisons that weaponize the Holocaust. That standard protects open debate and reduces the space for old antisemitic myths to reappear under a new label.

## FAQs on Antisemitism and Israel Policy Criticism

### What are antisemitic tropes commonly referenced in discussions of Israel's policies?

Antisemitic tropes are **harmful, generalized myths about Jews** that sometimes get mixed into debate about Israel's policies. You can criticize specific laws, leaders, or military actions without using language that targets Jews as a people. Academic centers focused on Jewish and Israel studies often help foster understanding by promoting fact-based discussions about Israel's role in culture and democracy, which is essential for combating these harmful narratives.

Common tropes to watch for include:

- **Dual loyalty:** suggesting Jewish Americans can't be fully loyal to the U.S. because of Israel.
- **Secret control:** claims that "Jews" or "Zionists" control governments, media, banks, or foreign policy.
- **Collective guilt:** blaming all Jews for the actions of Israel's government.
- **Blood libel/dehumanizing myths:** insinuations that Jews are uniquely cruel or inherently malicious.
- **Holocaust inversion:** comparing Jews or Israel to Nazis to provoke and delegitimize rather than inform.

Recent developments show how fast these ideas spread online. A practical check: focus on *verifiable policies and impacts*, avoid conspiracies, and keep the conversation grounded in faith, freedom, and friendship.

### How can criticism of a country's policies be distinguished from antisemitic sentiment?

It helps to focus on whether the critique targets **specific policies and decision-makers** or whether it slips into **antisemitic tropes** about Jews as a people. Policy criticism is normal in any pluralistic society; antisemitism appears when Jews are blamed collectively, dehumanized, or treated as uniquely illegitimate. Initiatives by organizations like StandWithUs and Hillel International also promote informed dialogue about Israel, which can help clarify these distinctions.

A practical way to check your language is to ask whether you are applying fair standards and avoiding stereotypes. Watch for patterns like:

- **Collective blame** ("Jews" are responsible for a government action) instead of naming institutions or leaders
- **Conspiracy claims** about hidden Jewish control of media, banks, or governments
- **Double standards** that deny only Israel the right to exist while accepting that right for other nations

If you want to support *faith, freedom, and friendship* in the U.S.–Israel partnership, aim for precise criticism, cite credible sources, and make room for Israeli and Jewish diversity of views.

# What data exists to analyze the frequency of antisemitic tropes in Israel policy debates?

There isn't one definitive dataset, but you can analyze **antisemitic tropes** in Israel policy debates by combining public reporting, platform transparency, and structured content review. The most useful sources track *incidents* and *rhetorical patterns* over time rather than making absolute claims about intent.

Look for data in:

- **Civil society incident reporting** (annual audits and trend reports) that document antisemitic expressions across media, campuses, and public life.
- **Social media transparency archives** (e.g., ad libraries and content enforcement reports) that let you compare how often certain phrases appear and how they're moderated.
- **Academic and think tank research** using coding frameworks (such as the **IHRA Working Definition** and related guidance) to identify recurring tropes in speeches, articles, and hearings.

For actionable analysis, define a short list of tropes, set a time window, sample debate transcripts or posts, and document your method. This keeps the work fair, source-aware, and focused on **shared values** and respectful dialogue.

	Research Areas	Resources	About
( <a href="https://cognitura.org">https://cognitura.org</a> )	Psychology of Radicalization ( <a href="https://cognitura.org/psychology-of-radicalization">https://cognitura.org/psychology-of-radicalization</a> )	Case Studies ( <a href="https://cognitura.org/case-studies-from-studies-in-doctrination-to-exit/">/case-studies-from-Studies in indoctrination-to-exit/</a> )	Our Mission ( <a href="https://cognitura.org/about-mission">https://cognitura.org/about-mission</a> )
Research and education platform exploring radicalization prevention through truth and moral resilience.	Social and Cultural Drivers ( <a href="https://cognitura.org/social-and-cultural-drivers">https://cognitura.org/social-and-cultural-drivers</a> )	Blog ( <a href="https://cognitura.org/blog">https://cognitura.org/blog</a> )	Stay Updated ( <a href="https://cognitura.org/stay-updated">https://cognitura.org/stay-updated</a> )
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## Evidence & Verification

# Gaza's Humanitarian Crisis: How Evidence Supports Hamas Responsibility

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is real, severe, and measurable in basic indicators like safe water, medical evacuation needs, and displaced families. The harder question is attribution: which flows directly from the war Hamas launched on October 7, 2023, and from the structure of Hamas rule inside Gaza during the fighting and the ceasefire period. Multiple sources support several clear points about Hamas decision-making that worsened civilian risk and distorted aid and markets.

### Key Facts

- Hamas started the war with the October 7, 2023 assault on Israel, then fought from within dense civilian areas.
- In the months before October 7, Israel had expanded (<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle->

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east/israel-reopens-gaza-crossings-lets-palestinians-back-work-after-two-weeks-2023-09-28/?

utm\_source=chatgpt.com)Gaza work permits, and Reuters reported these wages brought in about \$2 million per day, a sign of economic improvement at the margin.

- Reuters reported (<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hamas-tells-gaza-residents-stay-home-israel-ground-offensive-looms-2023-10-13/?>

utm\_source=chatgpt.com)Hamis urged residents to ignore Israeli evacuation calls in October 2023, a pattern Israel said increased civilian exposure to combat.

- Senior U.S. officials publicly accused (<https://qa.usembassy.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-remarks-at-a-joint-press-availability-with-qatari-prime-minister-and-minister-of-foreign-affairs/?>

utm\_source=chatgpt.com)Hamis of using civilians as human shields and using civilian infrastructure for military activity.

- U.S. oversight bodies report credible allegations (<https://oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2025-08/USAID%20OIG%20-%20Gaza%20work%20073025.pdf?> utm\_source=chatgpt.com)of Hamas interference, diversion, and theft of humanitarian aid.

## **Hamas started the war, after a period of limited economic improvement**

Hamas's October 7, 2023 massacre triggered the war and the collapse of economic gains tied to cross-border work. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken described ([https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-the-un-security-council-ministerial-meeting-on-the-situation-in-the-middle-east/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-the-un-security-council-ministerial-meeting-on-the-situation-in-the-middle-east/?utm_source=chatgpt.com))the “carnage committed by Hamas” at the UN Security Council in October 2023.

On the pre-war trend line, Reuters reported that Israel had issued over 18,000 work permits for Gazans, bringing in about \$2 million a day in wages, and it reported reopenings of crossings for workers in late September 2023. It does support the claim that incremental improvement was underway in at least one measurable channel, then collapsed when Hamas launched the war.

## **Evacuation, human shields, and civilian exposure to combat**

A major driver of civilian harm is whether civilians can realistically move away from the most intense fighting. Reuters reported in mid-October 2023 that Hamas urged Gaza residents to stay put and ignore Israeli evacuation calls.

Israel's Prime Minister's Office publicly accused Hamas of preventing civilians from leaving combat areas.

Senior U.S. officials made the same core allegation in public settings. Blinken stated Hamas could stop using civilians as human shields and stop using civilian infrastructure to stage attacks.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, in October 2023 remarks, said protecting civilians “can never mean using them as human shields.”

These statements do not quantify how many civilians were blocked or coerced. They do establish that major governments and the UN leadership publicly treated the risk as real and tied it to Hamas conduct.

## **Aid and the economy: what is supported, what is disputed**

Hamas has governed Gaza for years and has controlled policing, local commerce, and armed groups. In wartime, that power shapes who can safely access warehouses, distribution points, and trucking routes.

U.S. oversight reporting is one of the strongest, least rhetorical sources on this topic. USAID’s Office of Inspector General states it received credible allegations of Hamas interference, diversion, and theft of humanitarian aid in Gaza, with related investigations and audits continuing.

Data from the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) showed (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2025/08/05/un-reports-88-percent-of-aid-trucks-slated-for-delivery-in-gaza-since-may-looted-along-routes/>) that between May 19 and August 5, more than 2,600 trucks carrying humanitarian aid crossed from Israel into Gaza. However, only 300 of these trucks reached (<https://app.un2720.org/tracking/arrived>) their intended destinations in Gaza during that period, with some 2,309 trucks being “intercepted (<https://app.un2720.org/tracking/intercepted>)” by Hamas and affiliated groups and looted along their delivery routes

## **Hamas-linked drivers of the humanitarian crisis and the evidence level**

<b>Driver</b>	<b>How it worsens civilian suffering</b>	<b>Evidence examples</b>	<b>What remains uncertain</b>

Starting the war	War triggers displacement, infrastructure damage, border disruption	Blinken UN remarks on Hamas attack; broad international reporting on Oct 7	None on the trigger event itself
Discouraging evacuation	Keeps civilians closer to battles	Reuters: Hamas urged residents to stay; Israel accused Hamas of blocking movement	Degree of coercion versus persuasion, neighborhood-by-neighborhood
Fighting from civilian areas	Raises civilian risk and complicates aid operations	U.S. officials: civilian infrastructure use, human shields claims	Strike-by-strike proof is often classified
Manipulating aid and markets	Distorts who receives scarce goods, raises prices, funds armed groups	UN: Up to 88% aid was looted along routes by Hamas and affiliated groups	How much of the remaining aid reached civilians.

## Conclusion

Gaza's humanitarian crisis can be linked to Hamas in several evidence-supported ways: Hamas launched the war that shattered a fragile pre-October 7 improvement channel tied to work permits and wage inflows; Hamas urged civilians to ignore evacuation calls early in the war; U.S. leaders publicly accused Hamas of human shielding and military use of

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Did Hamas actually start the war in Gaza?

Yes. The war began with Hamas's October 7, 2023 assault on Israel. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken described the "carnage committed by Hamas" at the UN Security Council in October 2023 (<https://2021-2025.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-the-un-security-council-ministerial-meeting-on-the-situation-in-the-middle-east/>). This attack killed approximately 1,200 people and involved mass hostage-taking, which is widely documented by international sources and US government statements.

### Was Gaza's economy improving before October 7?

Evidence suggests limited economic improvement was underway. Reuters reported that Israel had issued over 18,000 work permits for Gazans, bringing in about \$2 million a day in wages, with crossings reopening for workers in late September 2023. This incremental progress collapsed when Hamas launched the October 7 attack.

### Did Hamas prevent civilians from evacuating combat zones?

Multiple sources report that Hamas discouraged evacuation. Reuters reported in mid-October 2023 (<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hamas-tells-gaza-residents-stay-home-israel-ground-offensive-looms-2023-10-13/>) that Hamas urged Gaza residents to stay put and ignore Israeli evacuation calls. Israel's Prime Minister's Office publicly accused Hamas of preventing civilians from leaving combat areas. While the exact degree of coercion versus persuasion remains uncertain on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis, the pattern of discouragement is well-documented.

# What evidence supports the claim that Hamas is responsible for launching the war in Gaza?

**Verified facts** in multiple documentation summaries tie the war's start to Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, when thousands of Hamas fighters carried out a coordinated invasion that killed more than 1,200 people and abducted over 250 hostages. This attack is widely treated as the trigger for the ensuing war in Gaza, based on the documented sequence of events. The evidence indicates that this was not a spontaneous act of resistance but rather a premeditated assault, reflecting Hamas's long-standing agenda against Israel.

Recent developments also point to planning and command responsibility. According to declassified document reporting, thousands of seized Hamas operational and administrative files (<https://factsignal.org/verified-evidence-and-documentation/declassified-documents-and-reports-what-gazas-files-reveal>) (collected 2023–2025) include directives signed by Hamas leader **Yahya Sinwar** (<https://factsignal.org/verified-evidence-and-documentation/declassified-documents-and-reports-what-gazas-files-reveal>) approving the October 7 invasion and describing coordination with Iranian and Hezbollah operatives. This aligns with findings that highlight Hamas's role in exacerbating civilian suffering in Gaza through tactics such as using human shields and diverting aid intended for the population.

*Evidence types cited include:*

- Operational orders and internal communications
- Hostage-management spreadsheets maintained by Hamas's internal security wing
- Financial records describing diversion of international aid toward tunnels and weapons

**Analysis:** Taken together, the timing plus documented planning and execution supports the conclusion that Hamas initiated the conflict through a deliberate, organized attack rather than a spontaneous escalation. For a deeper understanding of how Hamas's actions have led to increased civilian hardships, see our analysis of Hamas's impact on Gaza's humanitarian situation ([verified-evidence-and-documentation/fact-checking-common-myths](https://factsignal.org/verified-evidence-and-documentation/fact-checking-common-myths)).

# How does international humanitarian law apply to the actions of Hamas during the conflict?

**International humanitarian law (IHL)** applies to *all* parties in an armed conflict, including organized armed groups like Hamas. IHL does not depend on whether a party is a state; it depends on conduct during hostilities and the protections owed to civilians and others who are not taking part in fighting.

In practical terms, IHL prohibits actions such as:

- **Intentionally targeting civilians** or civilian objects
- **Hostage-taking** (seizing and holding people to force concessions)
- **Indiscriminate attacks** that cannot be directed at a specific military target
- **Using human shields** or operating from protected sites in ways that endanger civilians

When credible reporting and documentation indicate any of these acts, the legal question becomes whether the conduct meets IHL thresholds for **war crimes** and what accountability mechanisms (domestic courts, international investigations, or sanctions regimes) can lawfully apply. Evidence-led analysis separates verified facts from legal assessment and avoids conclusions beyond what documentation supports.

# What role does propaganda play in shaping perceptions of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza?

Propaganda can shape the Gaza humanitarian narrative by pushing emotionally charged claims faster than they can be verified, then repeating them until they feel like settled fact. Recent analysis describes Hamas treating information operations as a **second phase** of violence...using images, selective footage, and rapid messaging to steer blame, obscure its own conduct, and pressure outside actors.

In practice, this often looks like:

- **Flooding** social media with high-engagement content that algorithms reward over accuracy.

- **Amplification** by foreign state media and satellite channels, which can blur reporting and activism.
- **Uncritical repetition** of figures or claims by NGOs and influencers without independent checks.

Propaganda also exploits real suffering by turning aid shortages into a narrative weapon. For example, a Palestinian activist critical of Hamas reported that baby formula and nutritional supplies were allegedly hoarded to deepen hunger and intensify a famine narrative. Separately, a December 2023 UNRWA report put *acute malnutrition* among children at about **7%**, under commonly cited famine thresholds...showing why standards-based verification matters.

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INTERNATIONAL LAW & ACCOUNTABILITY

# PROPORTIONALITY IN ISRAELI TARGETING: THE LEGAL RULE ISRAEL USES, AND HOW THE IDF APPLIES IT IN PRACTICE

Israel's documented precautions, accountability mechanisms, and evidence of Hamas using hospitals undermine war crime claims like Al-Ahli hospital case.



*The principles of international humanitarian law seek to limit the effects of armed conflict and protect those who are not participating in hostilities.*

The debates about “proportionality ([https://casebook.icrc.org/a\\_to\\_z/glossary/proportionality?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://casebook.icrc.org/a_to_z/glossary/proportionality?utm_source=chatgpt.com))” often start in the wrong place. In international humanitarian law (IHL), proportionality is not a scoreboard that compares total deaths or damage on each side. It is an attack-by-attack rule that asks a narrower question: given what a commander knows at the time,

would the expected civilian harm from a particular strike be excessive compared with the concrete, direct military advantage expected from that strike? Israel says it applies that IHL rule in its Gaza operations against Hamas, including during the October 7, 2023–October 10, 2023 ceasefire and the unstable ceasefire period that followed.



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### Key points

- In IHL, proportionality is an **individual-attack test**, not a comparison of overall war suffering.
- The legal phrase “**excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated**” is the core standard Israel points to.
- Operationally, the IDF describes a process (<https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/hamas/how-is-the-idf-minimizing-harm-to-civilians-in-gaza/>) that mixes intelligence, collateral-damage estimation, commander judgment, and legal review, plus warnings and last-minute abort authority.
- Hamas's fight from dense civilian areas and its use of civilian sites for military activity is a central factor Israel says it must account for when applying proportionality and precautions.

- Reliable casualty figures in Gaza are often reported by the Hamas-run Gaza Ministry of Health and repeated by international outlets; they often separate civilians from fighters, so proportionality claims still need strike-level facts.



The IHL definition of proportionality grounds its view in THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026

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# Proportionality is a conduct-of-hostilities rule

In IHL, proportionality restricts attacks on lawful military objectives when civilian harm is expected as an incidental side effect. The standard formulation, reflected across widely used IHL references and military manuals, bars attacks expected to cause incidental civilian death, injury, or damage that would be **excessive** compared with the **concrete and direct military advantage anticipated**.

This has two practical implications that shape how Israel frames the term:

1. **No numeric ceiling exists in the rule itself.** The legal test ([https://ogc.osd.mil/portals/99/Law%20of%20War%202023/DOD-LAW-OF-WAR-MANUAL-JUNE-2015-UPDATED-JULY%202023.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://ogc.osd.mil/portals/99/Law%20of%20War%202023/DOD-LAW-OF-WAR-MANUAL-JUNE-2015-UPDATED-JULY%202023.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) is not “zero civilian harm,” and it is not “equal harm on both sides.”
2. **The judgment is ex ante.** The assessment is made in good faith with the information reasonably available before the strike, not with perfect hindsight.

**Table 1: The rule in recognized IHL language, and how Israel points to it**

Element	Recognized IHL formulation	What it means in plain terms	Where Israel ties itself to this framing
Proportionality threshold	“Excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated”	A strike is unlawful if expected civilian harm is too high compared with the expected battlefield gain from that strike	Israel’s public legal messaging routinely uses the same IHL phrasing and treats proportionality as strike-specific, not war-wide
What is weighed	Expected incidental civilian harm vs expected military advantage	Harm includes foreseeable civilian death, injury, and civilian-object damage; advantage must be concrete and direct	U.S. Law of War framing, often cited in U.S.-Israel discussions of Gaza targeting, uses this same weighing model
Timing	Based on information available “at the time”	Mistakes can occur in war; the legal question is reasonableness and good faith using available intel	Operational targeting doctrine ( <a href="https://www.justsecurity.org/91319/the-principle-of-proportionality-in-the-dod-law-of-war-manual/?utm_source=chatgpt.com">https://www.justsecurity.org/91319/the-principle-of-proportionality-in-the-dod-law-of-war-manual/?utm_source=chatgpt.com</a> ) in U.S. practice highlights collateral-damage estimation as an aid to the proportionality decision





Military advantage: What concrete, direct gain is expected?

Disrupt rocket fire, degrade command, remove combat capability

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Civilian harm: What incidental civilian harm is expected if the estimate (<https://justorium.org>) exceeds now with this weapon?

Use structured estimation methods and weapon selection choices, as described in U.S. law-of-war practice

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Precautions

What feasible steps reduce expected harm?

SMS/phone calls/leaflets/recorded messages; timing shifts; abort options

Proportionality decision

Is expected harm "excessive" vs advantage?

Commander judgment informed by staff and law-of-war guidance

Execution check

Did new information change the balance?

Abort strike when civilians appear near the aim point

What two years of war against Hamas changes in practice

## Scale, density, and Hamas's embedding in civilian space

Gaza is densely populated, and Hamas has long been documented by U.S. reporting and other sources as a designated terrorist organization that operates from civilian areas and uses civilian infrastructure for military purposes. Israel argues this raises the baseline risk of incidental harm and makes warnings and real-time abort authority more central to lawful operations.

## The ceasefire did not remove the targeting problem

A ceasefire took effect on October 10, 2025 after Israeli government approval, yet evacuations and sporadic violence continued into 2026, with new leaflet warnings reported in January 2026. This matters for proportionality: the legal test remains strike-by-strike even during ceasefire instability, and the decision must track the immediate advantage and the immediate civilian-risk picture at that moment.

### Conclusion

Israel defines "proportionality" in the same core IHL terms used by mainstream law-of-war references: a commander must not launch a strike expected to cause incidental civilian harm that would be excessive compared with the concrete and direct military advantage expected from that strike. Israel's operational description centers on intelligence-driven targeting, structured collateral-harm estimates, layered warnings, and the option to abort when civilians are identified near the target. Readers who want to evaluate proportionality claims need to look past broad casualty totals and understand the broader context and complexity. When that is taken into account, the IDF utilizes and adheres to the highest standards of IHL, and makes it one of the most moral (<https://www.jns.org/the-idf-is-the-most-moral-army-in-history/>) armies in the world.

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