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DATA REPORT AUGUST 6, 2026

What Does the Documentary Record Show About Civilian Harm in Gaza?

Israel's Foreign Ministry states two war objectives and names no third. The rest of the record is counts, nearly all published by a party to the events.

Gaza

War aims

Casualty counts

Party-published data

Population estimates

Humanitarian aid



Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs states **two** war objectives in its position statement of 17 September 2025: the return of the hostages and the dismantling of

Hamas's military capability. It names no third, and it is the only document in the assembled record that states an objective at all.

The rest of the record is a set of counts, and almost every one of them was published by a party to the events it describes. Israel counts the aid it says it moved and the losses it says it took. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics counts the population. A Jerusalem research institute performs arithmetic on inputs it says nobody has independently confirmed. And the mechanism the question presumes, that force applied in a civilian area produces political pressure on an armed group, is not measured by any study in the set.

Key Findings

- **Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs states two war objectives** in its position statement of 17 September 2025, hostage return and dismantling Hamas's military capability, and reports 207 hostages returned or recovered as of 14 September 2025, 148 alive and 59 deceased, with 48 still held. Israel's own count.
- **The Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs (2025) puts a ceiling of at most 41,000 on civilian war-related deaths in Gaza**, derived by subtracting estimated natural deaths and Israel's estimate of 21,000 Hamas fighters killed from a Gaza Ministry of Health total of 67,000. The Center's own page states that neither input has been independently confirmed and that the Hamas claim has been challenged.
- **The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimates Gaza at about 2.13 million at the end of 2025**, against a pre-war baseline of roughly 2.2 million on 6 October 2023, a decline of about 10.6% covering deaths, missing persons and roughly 100,000 people who left the Strip. A population estimate, not a casualty count.
- **COGAT records 1,778,363 metric tons of food entering Gaza between 10 October 2025 and 7 June 2026**, a tonnage resting on self-declaration by humanitarian organizations and private providers rather than weighing at the crossings. COGAT is a unit of Israel's Ministry of Defense and a party to the events it describes.
- **No study in the assembled source set measures whether destruction in civilian areas produces political pressure on an armed group.** The set contains measurements of what

the conflict does to online discourse and to attitudes, which is a different question, and those studies are named below.

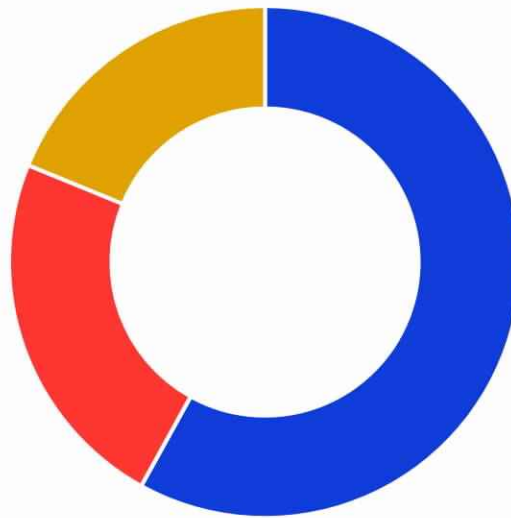
What does Israel state its war aims are?

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs states two war objectives in its position statement last updated 17 September 2025: the return of the hostages and the dismantling of Hamas's military capability.

The same statement puts **207** hostages returned or recovered as of 14 September 2025, 148 of them alive and 59 deceased, with 48 still held 712 days after the abduction. Both are Israel's own count.

Israel's own accounting of the hostages, 14 September 2025

AS STATED BY ISRAEL'S MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS; A PARTY'S OWN COUNT, NOT INDEPENDENTLY VERIFIED



■ Returned or recovered alive ■ Returned or recovered deceased ■ Still held

Source: Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Mission of Israel to the Multilateral Organizations in France, position statement last updated 17 September 2025. Official record published by a party to the conflict.

The same page states humanitarian figures alongside the objectives: more than 106,000 aid trucks carrying over two million tons of food, water, medicine and equipment since the start of the war, and more than 12,000 trucks since May 2025, 80% of them carrying food, all as of 14 September 2025. The Ministry refers readers to COGAT's aid data site for the detail, so these are stated totals rather than an audited tally.

The figures are point-in-time. A hostage count published on 14 September 2025 is a count on that day, and the Ministry offers it as such. Nothing in the statement is presented by the Ministry as verified by a third party, and nothing in the assembled set verifies it.

Does any Israeli document state harm to civilians as an objective?

One Israeli government document in the assembled record states war objectives, and harm to civilians is not among them: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement of **17 September 2025**, which names two. That sentence describes one published document on one date. It is not a measurement of intent, and nothing in the set measures intent.

What the IDF briefing of 29 February 2024, delivered on the 146th day of the war, does state is a count. The IDF said it had eliminated **over 13,000** people it describes as terrorists in Gaza since the beginning of the war, and that IDF forces together with the Israel Security Agency had apprehended about 3,400 people it describes as terrorists in Judea and Samaria, 1,500 of them described as Hamas terrorists. The classification of those counted is the IDF's own characterisation, and combatant and civilian counts in this conflict are contested.

Israel's other published material in the set describes activity rather than objectives. The IDF's humanitarian mini-site, date-stamped 19 August 2025, states aid tonnages it says it delivered or coordinated. COGAT's July 2026 report measures its own recorded food entry against a World Food Programme monthly requirement benchmark. Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs page of 16 December 2023 states over 70,000 tons of aid entered and about 9,500 foreign nationals and dual citizens were evacuated with Israeli assistance.

No internal Israeli order, no court judgment, no treaty instrument and no government-commissioned review bearing on this question appears in the assembled record. Where a tier

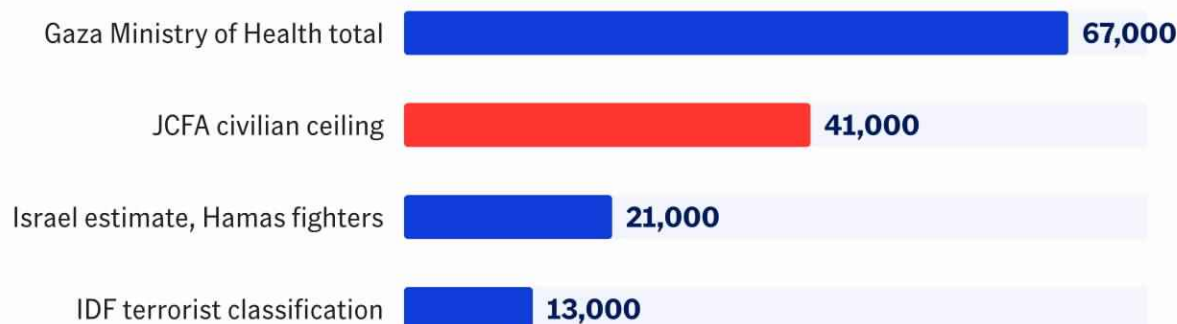
of evidence is absent, the absence is what there is to report.

Who counts the dead in Gaza, and what does each count?

Four figures circulate, produced by four different bodies, on four different dates, counting four different things. The Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs, in a 2025 essay by Dr. Eugene Korn, derives a ceiling of **at most 41,000** civilians in Gaza who have died of war-related causes, and states on the same page that neither the Hamas claim of 67,000 total deaths nor the Israel estimate of 21,000 Hamas fighters killed has been independently confirmed.

Four published figures for deaths in Gaza, and what each one counts

FOUR BODIES, FOUR DATES, FOUR DEFINITIONS. NOT A PARTITION, NOT ADDITIVE.



Source: Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs, 2025 (research institute; the 41,000 is the Center's own arithmetic on inputs supplied by parties to the conflict). Israel Defense Forces, press briefing of 29 February 2024 (party's own count, stated as a floor).

The 41,000 is arithmetic, not enumeration. The Center reached it by subtracting estimated natural deaths and Israel's fighter estimate from the Ministry of Health total, and it presents the result as a ceiling rather than a count. Its two inputs are figures published by the two parties to the conflict, and the Center states of both that they are unconfirmed.

The IDF's 13,000 is written on its own page as "over 13,000", a floor rather than a total, and it stops on 29 February 2024. It counts people the IDF classifies as terrorists, on the IDF's own classification, and covers Gaza only.

The assembled record contains no independent enumeration of deaths in Gaza and no court judgment establishing any of these figures. Every number above is a party's count or a research institute's derivation from parties' counts, and each is labelled that way here because that is what each one is.

What happened to Gaza's population between 2023 and 2025?

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimates Gaza's population at about 2.13 million at the end of 2025, against a pre-war baseline of roughly 2.2 million on 6 October 2023, a net decline of about **10.6%** relative to pre-aggression estimates.

The Bureau attributes the change to war-related deaths, missing persons and forced out-migration, with roughly 100,000 people having left the Strip.

Gaza's estimated population, before the war and at the end of 2025

ESTIMATES BY THE PALESTINIAN CENTRAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS, NOT ENUMERATION



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "A Brief on the Status of the Palestinian People at the End of 2025." Official record, national statistical office; a demographic estimate covering deaths, missing persons and out-migration.

This is a demographic net decline, and it is not a casualty count. It folds together three distinct movements, only one of which is death, and the Bureau states that plainly. The brief's own absolute-change figure does not reconcile with its own endpoints, so the percentage and the two endpoints are the citable quantities.

None of it rests on a head count. The last full Palestinian census was the 2017 round, which enumerated 4,780,978 residents of the West Bank and Gaza on 1 December 2017, and every later total in the Palestinian, UN and World Bank series is a projection off that base. The World Bank's World Development Indicators put West Bank and Gaza at about 5.29 million

for 2024, and neither the World Bank nor the UN Population Division publishes Gaza as a separate area, so no Gaza-specific figure exists in either international series.

What has Israel published about aid entering Gaza?

COGAT, the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, records **1,778,363** metric tons of food entering Gaza between 10 October 2025 and 7 June 2026, which it presents as nearly threefold the World Food Programme's monthly food requirement benchmark. COGAT is a unit of Israel's Ministry of Defense and a party to the events it describes, and its tonnages rest on self-declaration by humanitarian organizations and private sector providers rather than weighing at the crossings.

The same July 2026 COGAT report states more than 70,000 cubic meters of water per day facilitated through external water lines and desalination, excluding local wells, and 18,000 tons of medical supplies and medicines since the ceasefire began on 10 October 2025. It also reports approximately a 72% decline in the Gaza food consumer price index between September 2025 and May 2026, without identifying the source of the price data. In the threefold ratio, only the numerator is COGAT's; the denominator is the World Food Programme's benchmark.

Earlier Israeli figures come from different bodies on different dates and cover different periods. The IDF's humanitarian page, date-stamped 19 August 2025, states over 1.9 million tons of aid delivered since the start of the war, 23,000 tons overseen in the week ending 19 August 2025, and 7,800 tons cumulatively via the aerial route. Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated over 70,000 tons of aid and over 6,500 tons of medical supplies as of 16 December 2023, alongside over 750 patients who exited Gaza for care overseas.

Several of these are written as floors, "over 1.9 million tons", "more than 106,000", and they cannot be restated as exact totals. They are also not a single series: the war-long IDF total to August 2025, the post-ceasefire COGAT food total to June 2026 and the December 2023 Ministry total measure different things across different windows. Every one of them is Israel's own reported count, and no source in the assembled set independently verifies any of them.

What are Israel's own counted losses?

The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, a research institute, carries a cumulative total of **1,664** Israelis confirmed killed in the war as of 5 September 2024, alongside 17,809 wounded, in a situation report whose own window covers 1 August to 5 September 2024.

The same report puts 1,184 Israelis confirmed killed on the single day of 7 October 2023.

The report credits no official body for the killed and wounded figures. They are running war totals current to 5 September 2024, not counts for the report's own period, and they are the figures of a research institute rather than an Israeli government statistical release.

Set against the hostage accounting, the picture Israel and Israeli institutions publish about their own losses is a small number of dated, cumulative, self-reported totals. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs figures of 14 September 2025 add 207 hostages returned or recovered and 48 still held. The IDF's own operational tallies in the set, such as its live update of 13 March 2026 reporting more than 4,700 air sorties and approximately 7,600 strikes across Iran during Operation Roaring Lion, are counts of Israeli activity rather than Israeli losses.

There is no third-party audit of any of these numbers in the assembled record, and none of the bodies publishing them claims one.

Has the pressure-a-population mechanism ever been measured?

It is often said that force applied in a civilian area is intended to generate popular pressure on an armed group, and that the gain sought is deterrence, coercion or the fracturing of a group's social base. The assembled source set contains no study measuring whether destruction in civilian areas produces political pressure on an armed group, in this conflict or any other. That absence is the finding here, and it is recorded rather than filled.

What the set does measure is adjacent and different, and each study says what it measured. Becker, Ascone and Troschke (2022, peer-reviewed) coded 4,500 Facebook comments on leading UK, French and German media pages reacting to the May 2021 escalation and found **26.9%** of 1,504 UK comments antisemitic against an IHRA-based scheme, with 12.6% of

French and 13.6% of German comments. That measures comment content, not the behaviour of any armed group.

Rosenbaum (2025, peer-reviewed) analysed 3,255 hate crimes in New York City administrative records for 2019 to 2024 and found monthly anti-Jewish hate crimes about twice as common during the first year of the Israel-Hamas war as in the previous five years, adjusting for borough Jewish population (prevalence ratio 1.97, 95% confidence interval 1.64 to 2.35). Sear and Johnson (2023, preprint) report that antisemitic hate rose almost instantaneously across a 26-platform hate-community map in the minutes following the attack of 7 October 2023, before Israel had responded. Guerra, Lepre and Karakuş (2024, preprint) scored over 450,000 Reddit posts and comments from 7 October 2023 to 3 January 2024 and found extremism-score peaks coinciding with offline conflict events.

Two experimental papers measure attitudes rather than outcomes. Ozer, Obaidi and Bergh (2025, peer-reviewed) primed British samples of 354 and 490 with war-in-Gaza material and found two separate pathways to anti-Jewish hostility, one running through social dominance orientation and one through out-group identity fusion with the Palestinian people. Huesmann and colleagues (2012, peer-reviewed) surveyed 89 Jewish American and 180 Arab American adolescents and found that total media exposure to the conflict did not directly predict ethnic stereotypes; the association ran through identification with the groups as portrayed.

Every one of those measures discourse or attitudes in third countries. None of them measures the mechanism the question presumes.

Methodology and limitations

The evidence assembled for this question is drawn in the Institute's usual priority order: primary and official records first, then peer-reviewed research, then established monitoring and research organizations, each labelled by type in the prose and in the source list.

The official-record tier here is unusual in one respect. The Israeli government documents cited, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs statements of 16 December 2023 and 17 September 2025, the IDF Spokesperson's briefing of 29 February 2024, the IDF humanitarian page of 19

August 2025 and the COGAT report of July 2026, are official records published by a party to the events they describe. They are admissible and they are cited, and every figure taken from them is attributed as that party's own count. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics figures carry the same treatment: an official national statistical office, reporting on its own population, during a war.

Where a figure is derived rather than counted, that is stated. The 41,000 ceiling is the Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs' own arithmetic on two inputs it describes as unconfirmed, and it is a stated ceiling rather than a measurement. Where a figure is written as a floor, "over 13,000", "over 1.9 million tons", "more than 106,000", it is carried as a floor and not restated as an exact total. Where a source's own numbers do not reconcile, as with the PCBS brief's absolute change figure, only the reconcilable quantities are cited.

Three tiers of evidence a question of this kind would normally draw on are absent from the set. It contains no treaty instrument, no court judgment and no government-commissioned review bearing on the question, and it contains no independent enumeration of deaths in Gaza. It also contains no study measuring whether force in civilian areas changes an armed group's political behaviour, which is recorded above as a finding rather than covered by a substitute source.

Every figure in the assembled set is a published count, a demographic estimate or a stated objective. The set contains no source measuring intent, and no figure here is offered as evidence of one.

Conclusion

So what is in the record? One document stating objectives, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement of 17 September 2025, naming hostage return and the dismantling of Hamas's military capability and no third. A hostage accounting of 207 returned or recovered and 48 held, Israel's own count as of 14 September 2025.

Then the counts, and they do not resolve into one number. Four death figures from four bodies counting four different things, the largest of them relayed by a research institute that says on the same page that it is unconfirmed. A population estimate showing Gaza about

10.6% below its pre-war baseline at the end of 2025, covering deaths, missing persons and roughly 100,000 departures together, expressly not a casualty count. Aid tonnages in the millions, recorded by an Israeli Ministry of Defense unit on the strength of shippers' own declarations. And 1,664 Israelis counted killed to 5 September 2024 by a research institute crediting no official body. Almost every quantity there was produced by a participant in the events it describes, and each one says so.

What the record does not contain is a measurement of the mechanism. No study in the set tests whether destruction in a civilian area produces political pressure on an armed group, in this conflict or any other. So a documentary record made almost entirely of participants' own counts, with the one contested quantity resting on inputs its own publisher calls unconfirmed, is asked to settle a question about purpose. How much can a record like that settle, and what moves in to fill the rest?

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do international statistics report Gaza together with the West Bank?

Neither the UN Population Division's World Population Prospects 2024 nor the World Bank's World Development Indicators publishes Gaza as a separate area; both report West Bank and Gaza as one economy or territory, which the World Bank puts at about 5.29 million for 2024. UNFPA's dashboard reports State of Palestine at about 5.6 million including East Jerusalem, sourced to the 2024 UN revision. That figure is a model projection, not a measured count.

When was the last full Palestinian census?

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics has conducted three censuses, in 1997, 2007 and 2017. The 2017 round enumerated 4,780,978 residents of the West Bank and Gaza on 1 December 2017, and East Jerusalem could not be directly enumerated, so administrative estimates were used there. Every Palestinian, UN and World Bank total after 2017 is a projection off that base.

How is aid tonnage into Gaza actually recorded?

COGAT's July 2026 report states that its tonnages rest on self-declaration by humanitarian organizations and private sector providers rather than weighing at the crossings. That applies to the 1,778,363 metric tons of food it records for 10 October 2025 to 7 June 2026 and to the 18,000 tons of medical supplies since the ceasefire. The report also does not identify the source of the food price data behind its 72% CPI decline figure.

Which figures in this record are independently verified?

None of the party-published counts are. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IDF and COGAT figures are self-reported by a party to the conflict; the PCBS population figures are that authority's own estimates; and the Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs states on its own page that neither the 67,000 total nor the 21,000 fighter estimate has been independently confirmed. The Begin-Sadat Center's casualty totals credit no official body.

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