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How Much Room Is There for Two Populations Between the River and the Sea? Reading Both Statistical Registers, the Refugee Counts and the Fertility Series

The Palestinian bureau recorded 5,853 people per square kilometre in Gaza. What both statistical registers count, and where they disagree.

Population Density

Palestinian Demography

Israeli Demography

Refugee Registration

Fertility Rates



The territory reads small on a map, and it is: the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics recorded **5,853 persons per square kilometre** in the Gaza Strip in 2021, against 878 across the State of Palestine and 557 in the West Bank, with the Gaza district alone at 9,683. Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counted about 10.244 million residents on 22 April 2026, on preliminary estimates based on the 2022 census. So the question of whether ground this size can hold what two populations ask of it has a measured answer on one side of the ledger and a definitional dispute on the other: the two statistical registers do not share a denominator, a refugee definition, or an agreement on who is counted where.

Key Findings

- The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the Palestinian Authority's own statistical office, reported density of 878 persons per square kilometre for the State of Palestine in 2021, 557 in the West Bank and 5,853 in the Gaza Strip, with the Gaza district at 9,683 and North Gaza at 6,958.

- Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counted 10.244 million residents on 22 April 2026, comprising 7.790 million Jews and others (76%), 2.157 million Arabs (21.1%) and 296,000 foreigners (2.9%), the last relating to the end of 2025.
- The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine's Technical Committee estimated approximately 711,000 refugees from Israel-controlled territory in its report of 7 September 1949, an estimate its own authors described as only "as accurate as circumstances permit" after deciding a census was not advisable.
- Israel's total fertility rate was 2.89 children per woman in 2022 on the Central Bureau of Statistics' own figures, and the Bureau's series by population group shows the Jewish and Muslim rates converged to within about a tenth of a child.
- The last full Palestinian enumeration, the 2017 census, counted 4,780,978 residents of the West Bank and Gaza; every later total in the Palestinian and World Bank series is a projection off that base rather than a count.

How densely do Palestinians live in the West Bank and Gaza?

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the Palestinian Authority's own statistical office, reported density of **5,853 persons per square kilometre** in the Gaza Strip for 2021, against 557 in the West Bank and 878 across the State of Palestine.

Within Gaza the figure rises further by district: 9,683 in the Gaza district and 6,958 in North Gaza, on the same table.

These are the party's own compiled counts, not independently verified, and they carry the Bureau's own scope. The denominator is the West Bank and Gaza only; the numerator, for every year after 1 December 2017, is a projection off the 2017 census rather than an enumeration. That census counted 4,780,978 residents, 2,881,687 in the West Bank and 1,899,291 in Gaza, and the Bureau states that East Jerusalem could not be directly enumerated, so administrative estimates were used there.

UN-Habitat reported an average of 735 persons per square kilometre for Palestine in 2019 and described Gaza's density as exceeding 4,500 per square kilometre. The two readings are

two years and two methods apart, and neither supersedes the other; cited together they bracket the same finding rather than contradicting it.

The Bureau's own later accounting revises the Gaza numerator sharply downward. Its brief on the status of the Palestinian people at the end of 2025 puts Gaza at about 2.13 million, a decline of approximately 254,000 people, which the brief states is a decrease of 10.6% against pre-aggression population estimates. Those two figures reconcile on their own base: 2.13 million plus 254,000 is 2.384 million, and 254,000 of that is 10.6%. The Bureau separately reports that roughly 2.2 million people were living in Gaza on the eve of the war, that nearly two million of them were displaced, and that roughly 100,000 have left the Strip. It attributes the change to war-related deaths, missing persons, reduced births and forced out-migration, and it is a demographic net decline rather than a casualty count.

So the density question as posed has a measured answer on the Palestinian side of the ledger: the densest districts in the Palestinian statistical record sit above 9,000 persons per square kilometre, on the Bureau's own 2021 figures, before the population movements of 2023 onward.

Is the land actually as small as it sounds?

Yes. The territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean runs to roughly 27,000 square kilometres, and it holds two populations of broadly comparable size: Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counted **10.244 million residents** on 22 April 2026, and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics counted 4,780,978 residents of the West Bank and Gaza at the 2017 census, its last enumeration.

The premise in the question is therefore conceded rather than disputed. What the figures reframe is whose constraint it is. The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs estimated 7.1 million Palestinians inside historic Palestine by mid-2022, or 49.9% of the population there, a figure that organisation compiled itself and which is not an official statistic of either statistical office. On the other side of the same line, the demographer Sergio DellaPergola estimated the world's core Jewish population at 15,736,800 on 1 January 2024, of whom 7,153,000 lived in Israel, in his chapter for the American Jewish

Year Book 2024. That is the author's own estimate, hosted online by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, which did not produce it.

Three registers, three scopes, and they do not stack. Israel's Bureau counts East Jerusalem residents and West Bank settlers inside Israel's total, a scope choice distinct from the international convention, which the settlement monitor B'Tselem follows in publishing its West Bank and East Jerusalem series separately. The Palestinian Bureau's territory is the West Bank and Gaza. PASSIA's 7.1 million counts Palestinians across historic Palestine including Israel's Arab citizens. So a single denominator covering all of the land between the river and the sea is not published by any of the three bodies, and any such total is somebody's assembly of parts measured on different definitions.

What survives all three scopes is the ratio the question turns on. On the Palestinian Bureau's 2021 table the State of Palestine held 878 persons per square kilometre. Israel's Bureau reports its population growing by 146,000, an increase of 1.4%, over the 11.75 months to 22 April 2026, of which about 177,000 were infants born and about 21,000 immigrants arriving. Neither population is contracting, and both are sharing the same 27,000 square kilometres.

What does Israel's own statistical record show about its population?

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counted **806,000 residents at the establishment of the State in 1948**, against a 2026 population it puts at more than 12.5 times that figure.

The same release records over 3.5 million immigrants arriving since 1948, of whom about 1.68 million (47.8%) arrived from 1990 onward, plus about 158,000 immigrating citizens since 1970.

These are the Bureau's own official statistics for Israel's resident population, and they are the counterweight the density question needs, because the constraint is not one-sided. Israel's 2026 breakdown gives 7.790 million Jews and others (76%), 2.157 million Arabs (21.1%) and 296,000 foreigners (2.9%). The Bureau's definitions are its own: "Others" covers non-Arab Christians, other religions, and those registered as not classified by religion; "Arabs" covers Moslems, Arab Christians and Druze.

The growth has two components, and the ingathering half is documented in the founding instrument itself. The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, read on 14 May 1948 and published in Official Gazette Number 1, declares that the state “shall be open to Jewish immigration, and the ingathering of the exiles” in the clause the Knesset publishes as its English text. The Basic Law the Knesset adopted in 2018 restates it at clause 5. What followed is measurable. William Berthomière, writing in the *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* in 1995, recorded more than 500,000 migrants arriving in Israel from the former Soviet Union from 1989. H. Factor and J. Habib, modelling elderly service costs in Public Finance in 1993, put Israel’s population rise between 1990 and 1993 at about 10%, with projected growth above 30% by the end of that decade.

Later waves are counted the same way. Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics recorded 168,800 residents of Ethiopian origin at the end of 2022, comprising approximately 92,100 born in Ethiopia and 76,800 born in Israel to Ethiopian-born fathers, with 1,680 immigrants arriving from Ethiopia in 2022 alone.

Migration is not the whole of it, and the Bureau’s own arithmetic says so. Over the 11.75 months to 22 April 2026 it records about 177,000 infants born against about 21,000 immigrants arriving and about 48,000 deaths. Immigration built the state’s first decades; births now drive most of its annual increase, on the Bureau’s own components of change.

How many Palestinians are refugees or descendants of refugees?

The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine’s Technical Committee estimated **approximately 711,000** refugees from Israel-controlled territory in its report of 7 September 1949, published in the Commission’s general progress report of 23 October 1950. It is the earliest intergovernmental count, and its own authors describe it as only “as accurate as circumstances permit” after considering a census and concluding one was not advisable.

That is a count of an original cohort, not of the registered population today, and the two are different objects. Michael R. Fischbach’s archival history, published by Columbia University Press in 2003, gives the displacement as more than 726,000 people, over half the entire population, uprooted from late 1947 through 1948. A peer-reviewed article in the *Israel Law*

Review reports that in the course of the military operations about 400 Palestinian towns and villages were destroyed, resulting in the expulsion and flight of about 80% of the residents of the areas on which Israel was established. These are three measurements of three different quantities, and they are not summed.

Registration counts are the reason the claim extends past current residents of the West Bank and Gaza. PASSIA reproduced figures from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency counting close to 5 million registered Palestine refugees, with about 1.5 million living in refugee camps across the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Those are the agency's own registration figures on the agency's own eligibility rules, relayed by PASSIA, not a measured share of any population. WAFA, the Palestinian news agency, reported in 2022 that 66% of Gaza's population were refugees, which is a party's own reporting.

The two categories are not demographically identical, which is itself measured. Sulayman S. Al-Qudsi, writing in *International Migration* in 2000, compared refugee and non-refugee Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and found refugees somewhat better educated than non-refugees while showing only slightly higher fertility. The publisher withholds that paper's abstract and gates its full text, so the finding is carried at the level of the comparison the paper states.

So the refugee figure and the resident figure answer different questions. The Palestinian Bureau's 4,780,978 counts people present in the West Bank and Gaza on 1 December 2017. The registration count reaches a population dispersed across five jurisdictions, on definitions the registering agency sets.

What do historians actually dispute about the 1948 displacement?

Two archival historians working the same period reach different conclusions about intent, and both are named in the literature as the poles of the dispute. Benny Morris, in the second edition of *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), carries **roughly 700,000** as his own archival estimate of the displacement and attributes it to multiple causes varying by locality and phase.

Morris's causes, as he sets them out, include military attack and fear of attack, expulsions in certain sectors, and flight. He rejects both a single master expulsion plan and the claim that departures were voluntary. Ilan Pappé, in *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oneworld Publications, 2006), argues from overlapping material that the 1948 displacement was a planned ethnic cleansing, and his title is the home of that characterisation in the scholarly literature.

The two are not reconcilable on the record as it stands, and neither is a measurement of the other's claim. Morris works from Israeli military and state archives; Pappé states a moral position in his own text. The Anti-Defamation League publishes a standing page rejecting the ethnic-cleansing characterisation, which is an advocacy organisation's position and is labelled as one.

The intergovernmental record is narrower than either argument and deliberately so. The Conciliation Commission's Technical Committee wrote of "the refugees from Israel-controlled territory" and nowhere says anyone was expelled, driven out, or left voluntarily. It counted; it did not attribute cause. That distinction matters for anyone reading a displacement figure as an account of what happened: the 711,000 is a number, and the causes of the movement it measures are where Morris and Pappé divide.

A Turkish-language review by Seda Ermiş and Emine Erden Kaya in *Anadolu Strateji Dergisi* in 2024 sets out the same span as continuous narrative history, quoting the Genocide Convention's Article II act categories in definitional terms and relaying casualty figures from other authors rather than measuring any of its own.

What is common ground across the archival work is the scale and the period. What is disputed is intent, planning and the applicability of the word each author chooses. A report that presents either author's characterisation as settled has adopted one side of a live historiographical dispute in which both poles are peer-reviewed or university-press work.

Why do the population numbers themselves get disputed?

Every density figure rests on a numerator and a denominator, and named researchers contest both. Bennett Zimmerman, Roberta Seid and Michael L. Wise, in a 2006 Begin-Sadat Center

study, calculated **2.49 million** Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza through mid-2004 against the 3.83 million the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported, a gap of 1.34 million they characterised as a roughly 50% overstatement.

Their itemisation is specific: 325,000 residents living abroad, 210,000 East Jerusalem Arabs they say were double-counted in Israel's survey, a 113,000 unexplained jump over prior Israeli records, 238,000 in unmet birth forecasts, 70,000 in retroactively altered birth data, and a 310,000 immigration-versus-emigration error. The study is not peer-reviewed, was led by a business consultant, a historian and a physicist, and carries the policy thesis that Israel's demographic concern is overstated.

Professional demographers contest it. Sergio DellaPergola of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in a paired 2005 Jerusalem Center brief, built his Palestinian base from Israeli rather than Palestinian census data and still reached about 3.4 million in the West Bank and Gaza, near the official figures the study disputes. Yakov Faitelson restated the overcount thesis in *Middle East Quarterly* in 2009, and notes that the Palestinian Authority criticised the 2007 census for undercounting East Jerusalem, so the dispute runs in both directions.

Ian S. Lustick audited the campaign in the peer-reviewed *Middle East Journal* in 2013, concluding that it rests on "complex but systematic manipulation of data" rather than a genuine over-count, and documenting proposals to annex 60% or more of the West Bank attached to it.

The counting conventions are themselves documented as political. Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler and Lihi Ben Shitrit reviewed the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics Yearbook from 1967 forward in a 2020 POMEPS paper, recording that East Jerusalem moved into the general population count for Israel proper in the 1968 yearbook, that a 1970 footnote folded settlers into Israel's total, that settlement localities entered the count of Israeli localities by 1983, and that the separate territories chapter was removed in 1997. "Normalization" is those authors' analytic framing.

Israel's Bureau counts Jerusalem, including the neighbourhoods annexed after 1967, as a single municipal population: 60.5% Jews and others and 39.5% Arabs at the end of 2023, on preliminary estimates.

Why is density rising for both populations at once?

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics reported a total fertility rate of **2.89 children per woman** in 2022, and its own series by population group shows the Jewish and Muslim rates within Israel converging to within about a tenth of a child, with the Christian and Druze rates below replacement.

That convergence is the finding, and it runs against the expectation that one population's growth is driving the constraint. Barbara S. Okun, in *Population Studies* in 2016, examined why secular, native-born Jewish women in Israel hold above-replacement fertility despite high socio-economic status, attributing it to a constellation of factors: state and family support for childbearing, a dual emphasis on women's employment and fertility, strong familism and marriage, relatively egalitarian gender relations, and, as one factor among several, Jewish nationalism in an ethno-national conflict setting. Rachel Shenhav-Goldberg, Robert Brym and Talia Lenton-Brym read the same anomaly differently in the *Canadian Review of Sociology* in 2019, attributing it to religious and nationalist sentiment heightened by a perceived demographic threat, together with the world's most extensive publicly funded in vitro fertilisation system. The two are a genuine scholarly disagreement about the same measured rate.

On the Palestinian side the long trend is downward. Marwan Khawaja, in *Population Studies* in 2000, found the fertility transition well underway in the West Bank since about 1985, with a lull during the first Intifada, and no clear sign of a transition in the Gaza Strip, attributing a measured recent rise chiefly to changes in marital structure and higher marital fertility among younger women. A 2007 simulation by M. A. Sumour and colleagues reports Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics fertility inputs of 6.77 in 1992, 6.06 in 1994 and 5.93 in 1999, with an official projection near 3.06 for 2025.

Within Israel, L. Daniel Staetsky documented in *Population Studies* in 2019 that the Muslim total fertility rate fell from nearly 10 children per woman in the mid-1960s to about 4.5 in the mid-1980s, then held near 4.5 for roughly two decades, a stall he attributes to abrupt discontinuations in the declines of both the proportion married and marital fertility.

Philippe Fargues, in *Population and Development Review* in 2000, read the whole century's fertility on both sides as tracking national conflict and pronatal sentiment rather than a

smooth modernisation curve, and recorded that fertility was framed as national strength by Palestinians and Israelis alike. His is interpretive demographic analysis rather than a single measured sample.

How much of the West Bank do Palestinians administer today?

The signed Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement of 28 September 1995 divides the West Bank into three areas and hands the Palestinian Council **civil powers and responsibilities, including planning and zoning, in Areas A and B** only. In Area C, by the same text, “Israel will transfer to the Council civil powers and responsibilities not relating to territory.”

The Agreement’s Article XVII separates three jurisdictions, and the separation is the answer. Territorial jurisdiction covers West Bank territory “except for Area C” and “includes land, subsoil and territorial waters.” Personal jurisdiction applies “to all persons, except for Israelis.” Article XVII(1) lists what sits outside Council jurisdiction entirely: “Jerusalem, settlements, specified military locations, Palestinian refugees, borders, foreign relations and Israelis.” Article XII(5) ties the two together by definition: “‘the Settlements’ means, in the West Bank the settlements in Area C.”

No area percentage appears anywhere in that Agreement. Areas A and B are defined by a red line and shading on its map No. 1, and Area C is defined residually as whatever is left. Every share of the West Bank in circulation was therefore measured by some other body afterward. The lawyer Alaa Mahajna, writing for Arab Center Washington DC in 2026, states that Area C comprises around 60% of the West Bank and that prior to 1967, 18.4% of Area C was registered as state land, with 24.5% declared state land after the occupation, leaving around 57% subject to Israel’s land registration plan. He names no measuring body for any of the three shares, and the piece is a policy argument rather than a measurement.

The transfers the Agreement schedules did not complete. Annex I provides three further redeployments, each six months apart, “within 18 months from the date of the inauguration of the Council,” and Article XXXI(5) sets permanent status negotiations to commence no later than 4 May 1996.

Israel's own commissioned review found the state had built outside its own rules. The Sasson opinion, published in English by the Prime Minister's Office in March 2005, recorded 105 unauthorized outposts known to its author, "probably does not reflect the true number," of which 26 sat on State land, 7 on survey lands, 15 on Palestinian private property and 39 on mixed lands, with 18 unresolved. Its finding: "State and public authorities took part in breaking the law."

Does conflict coverage measurably change attitudes toward Jews?

Bahar Ozer, Milan Obaidi and Robin Bergh, in the International Journal of Intercultural Relations in 2025, primed British samples with war-in-Gaza material and measured hostility toward Jews, finding **two separate pathways**: political orientation associated with anti-Jewish hostility through social dominance orientation, and conservative orientation negatively associated with antisemitism through out-group identity fusion with the Palestinian people.

Their Study 1 ran with 354 participants and Study 2 with 490, and the second pathway is the one that bears on this question: an identity-based route on the left that conflates attitudes toward Israel with prejudice toward Jews. These are measured associations in experimental samples, not causal claims, and the authors' own framing is carried here.

An earlier study found the link ran through identification rather than exposure. L. Rowell Huesmann, Eric F. Dubow, Paul Boxer, Violet Souweidane and Jeremy Ginges, in the Journal of Research on Adolescence in 2012, surveyed 89 Jewish American and 180 Arab American high-school students and found that total media exposure to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict did not directly predict stereotypes. The association ran through identification with the groups as portrayed in the media. Both groups held more negative stereotypes about the out-group than the in-group, with ethnic identity correlating with implicit out-group stereotyping at $r = -0.70$.

Jeremy Harber, Dominika Bulska, Thomas E. Malloy and Julián Vila, in American Psychologist in 2026, ran three preregistered studies ($N = 373, 243$ and 493) and report that their Conspiracies Mediated Model of New Antisemitism accounted for over 55% of the

variance in anti-Israel attitudes. Their measured mediator is specific: conspiracy beliefs implicating Israel and Zionists mediated the association between antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes, while conspiracy beliefs about Jews unrelated to Israel did not, and a general conspiratorial mindset did not explain the results. The paper is abstract-sourced.

So the measured relationship is not that discussing this territory produces prejudice. It is narrower and it is conditional: in these samples, the association ran through identification with a portrayed group, through social dominance orientation, and through conspiracy beliefs naming Israel specifically. Each is a correlation in a stated sample with a stated bound, and none of the three studies establishes direction of cause.

Methodology

This report draws on four source types, each labelled where it appears.

Official and primary records supply the population and density figures: the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics' 2021 area and density table, its 2017 Population, Housing and Establishments Census, and its brief on the status of the Palestinian people at the end of 2025; Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics releases for Independence Day 2026, Rosh Hashana 5786, Jerusalem Day 2024, Israel in Figures 2023, and the population of Ethiopian origin; the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement of 28 September 1995 as published by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel as published by the Knesset; the Sasson opinion as published by Israel's Prime Minister's Office in March 2005; and the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine's general progress report of 23 October 1950, whose refugee estimate comes from its Technical Committee's appendix of 7 September 1949.

Peer-reviewed research supplies the fertility, displacement and attitudinal findings. Scholarly books supply the archival displacement histories: Morris (2004) and Pappé (2006) are cited as the named poles of a live dispute, and Fischbach (2003) for the displacement figure his publisher states.

Two limits bear on every density figure here. First, the last full Palestinian enumeration is the 2017 census; every later Palestinian total, including the denominators of density figures for

2018 onward, is a projection off that base, as the Bureau states on its own source lines.

Second, the two statistical offices do not share a scope: Israel's Bureau counts East Jerusalem residents and West Bank settlers inside Israel's total, while the Palestinian Bureau's territory is the West Bank and Gaza, and its 2017 census used administrative estimates for East Jerusalem because it could not enumerate there. No single register covers all of the territory between the river and the sea.

Party-reported figures are attributed as such: PASSIA's 7.1 million, WAFA's 66% refugee share for Gaza, and the UNRWA registration counts PASSIA relays are each the reporting body's own count on its own definitions.

The attitudinal studies in the final section are correlational. Where a source is a preprint, an abstract-only reading, or a think-tank estimate rather than a measurement, that status is stated at first use. Zimmerman, Seid and Wise (2006) is a contested think-tank estimate and is never presented as a measured population figure.

Conclusion

So how much room is there? On the Palestinian Bureau's own 2021 figures, the Gaza district held 9,683 persons per square kilometre and North Gaza 6,958, against 557 across the West Bank. Israel's Bureau counted 10.244 million residents in April 2026 on a territory that, with the West Bank and Gaza, runs to roughly 27,000 square kilometres. The smallness in the question is real, and it is the shared term.

What the registers establish, taken together, is that neither population is small and neither is shrinking. Israel grew from 806,000 residents in 1948 to more than twelve and a half times that on its own count, about 177,000 infants born in the last eleven and three-quarter months against about 21,000 immigrants arriving. Palestinian fertility fell from 6.77 in 1992 to an official projection near 3.06 for 2025, and Israeli fertility stood at 2.89 in 2022 with the Jewish and Muslim rates within a tenth of a child of each other. The Conciliation Commission put approximately 711,000 refugees from Israel-controlled territory in 1949, and UNRWA's registration now reaches close to 5 million across five jurisdictions. Every one of those numbers rests on a denominator that Zimmerman, Seid and Wise dispute, that Lustick

audited, and that Hirsch-Hoefler and Ben Shitrit traced through fifty years of a single yearbook's changing conventions.

The question as typed asks about need, and the registers answer a narrower thing: what each body counts, where, and on whose definitions. But the narrower answer carries the harder one. Two statistical offices measure the same ground and produce populations that cannot be added, refugee categories that cannot be reconciled, and a municipal count in Jerusalem that appears in one total and not the other. When Ozer and colleagues found that hostility toward Jews ran through identity fusion in one sample and social dominance in another, and Harber and colleagues found conspiracy beliefs naming Israel accounting for over half the variance in anti-Israel attitudes, they were measuring what happens downstream of a dispute in which the basic counts are themselves contested. Which raises the question this report cannot settle from either register: when the figures a person reaches for depend on which office did the counting, what carries the argument the rest of the way?

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do Palestinian and Israeli population totals not add up to one figure?

Because the two statistical offices measure different territories on different conventions. Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counts East Jerusalem residents and West Bank settlers inside Israel's total; the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics covers the West Bank and Gaza. The Israeli Bureau's own 2026 breakdown also holds three categories, 7.790 million Jews and others, 2.157 million Arabs and 296,000 foreigners, so a two-part split of its total is always short.

How recent is the last actual Palestinian census?

1 December 2017, the reference date of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics' third census, which counted 4,780,978 residents of the West Bank and Gaza. The Bureau has conducted three censuses in total, in 1997, 2007 and 2017. Every total after 2017, in the Palestinian series and in the World Bank's West Bank and Gaza series, is a projection off that base.

Which body publishes Gaza separately from the West Bank?

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics does, and effectively it alone. The World Bank's World Development Indicators carry a single entity, "West Bank and Gaza," with no Gaza-only series, and the UN Population Division publishes "State of Palestine" without disaggregating Gaza. Any Gaza-specific economic or density figure therefore traces to the Palestinian Bureau or is a combined figure mislabelled.

Why does Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics count settlers inside Israel's total?

The convention developed over decades rather than at once. Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler and Lihi Ben Shitrit, in a 2020 POMEPS paper, record that East Jerusalem entered the general population count for Israel proper in the 1968 yearbook, that a 1970 footnote folded settlers in as "Israeli residents in the Administrated Territories," and that the separate territories chapter was removed in 1997.

Who decided which parts of the West Bank Palestinians administer?

The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement of 28 September 1995, signed by Israel and the PLO and witnessed by the United States, the Russian Federation, Egypt, Jordan, Norway and the European Union. Its Article XI defines Areas A and B by a red line and shading on its own map and defines Area C residually as the remainder. The Agreement contains no area percentage anywhere in its text.

What is the difference between the 711,000 and the UNRWA registration figure?

They count different things. The 711,000 is the UN Conciliation Commission's Technical Committee estimate of refugees from Israel-controlled territory as at September 1949, a one-time cohort estimate its authors called only as accurate as circumstances permitted. UNRWA's registration, reported by PASSIA at close to 5 million, counts people currently registered under the agency's own eligibility rules across five jurisdictions, including descendants.

Which fertility rate is higher now, Israeli or Palestinian?

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics reported 2.89 children per woman for Israel in 2022. Palestinian fertility inputs reported by the Palestinian Bureau ran at 5.93 in 1999 with an

official projection near 3.06 for 2025. The two series measure different territories and are not published on a common basis, so they are read as two trends rather than compared directly at a point.

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METHOD BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

What Records Would Settle NAZA's Claims? The Counts Neither Side Has Published

Eight claims in the dispute over NAZA, the IDF record that would test each, and what has been published from it for this war.

NAZA

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Of **8** claims at the center of the documentary NAZA and the IDF's answer to it, the IDF's own records describe the rules for every one and publish a count that would settle none. Each claim could be tested by a record the IDF says it keeps: the expected civilian harm on each target card, the population estimate for each of 630 sectors, the suggestions its systems produced, the strikes it stopped, what its investigations found. Israel published some of those counts for the 2014 war, including a total of over 6,000 aerial strikes. For the war NAZA describes, the records examined here hold rules, examples and a few floors.

Key Findings

- Israel's May 2015 report, its own account, published a total of over **6,000** aerial strikes and more than a thousand specific warnings for the 2014 war; the records examined here give no equivalent totals for the current war.
- The IDF presentation, a party's own document, describes population estimates for 630 sectors of Gaza and publishes none of them, the figures against which NAZA's claim of neighborhoods a quarter full could be checked.
- The IDF presentation states that "Many strikes were cancelled" and Israel's Foreign Ministry that "countless attacks have been aborted," and neither gives a number.
- The Military Advocate General's Corps, a party's own count, reports 74 criminal investigations opened by August 2024 and publishes no findings from them.
- The Guardian reports that NAZA rests on testimony from 24 Israeli military insiders whom the IDF says it cannot identify, and no document from the film is in the records examined.

Which records would test NAZA's claims?

The IDF's own procedures, as it describes them, generate a record for each of the **8** claims set out below. The table pairs each claim with that record and with what has been published from it.

Claim	Record that would test it	What is published
Civilian deaths were built into approvals	Expected-harm estimate on each target card	One card, from 2014
Populated neighborhoods were struck	Population estimate for each sector	None of 630
Software chose the targets	Suggestions produced, reviewed and approved	Rules, no counts
Homes were struck with families inside	Target cards and warning logs for homes	One card; warnings sent
Strikes were stopped for civilians	Count of aborted or diverted strikes	"Many," "countless"; 18 clips
Violations were investigated	Outcomes of investigations	74 opened, no findings
Hamas fought from civilian sites	Share of targets that were such sites	A map; 2014 cases
The ceasefire was breached	Incidents against a stated standard	"Near daily," no total

Each row is taken up below, with a link to the Institute's fuller report on it. The pattern across the rows is the finding. The records describe rules precisely and give examples willingly; they almost never give the count that would show how often a rule held.

That is not unique to the current war. Israel's report on the 2014 war published some totals, and they are the benchmark for what a party has chosen to publish before. The records examined here, all of them the IDF's or the Israeli government's own, are set against that benchmark rather than against any outside standard.

Every figure below is a party's own count unless stated. The Institute has not viewed the film; its content enters here through its producer's reporting.

What would test the claim that civilian deaths were built into approvals?

The record that would test it is the expected-harm estimate on each target card, and Israel has published **one** card, a 2014 legal review for a strike on 8 July 2014. It lists the people present at the target and approves the strike on condition of a warning. The dispute over

approvals in the current war is examined in the Institute's report on [the IDF's targeting record](#).

NAZA's insiders, as The Guardian reports them, describe civilian deaths accepted as part of approval, and one interviewee speaks of "an approval for 500." The IDF stated on 14 September 2026 that it "has never planned, approved, or carried out a strike in Gaza in which 500 civilians or anything near that number were anticipated to be killed."

Both statements are about the same kind of number: the civilian harm expected when a strike was approved. The IDF's procedures, in its own account, require that number for every strike. Its page on its data systems states that each attack requires "an individual assessment of the anticipated military advantage and the incidental damage expected to civilians and civilian objects." Israel's May 2015 report states that excessiveness "is not measured using absolute numbers. It is assessed on a case-by-case basis."

The estimate therefore exists, on the IDF's description, for each approved strike. Neither side has published one for the current war. A single target card with its expected-harm figure, from any strike the film describes, would test both the interviewee's 500 and the IDF's denial at once.

What would test the claim about populated neighborhoods?

The record is the population estimate the IDF says it kept for each of **630** sectors of Gaza, and none has been published. The IDF presentation describes "continuous assessments of the population presence" in each sector, passed to the forces that strike. It names the team that kept them, a Southern Command unit "led by a Brigadier General" that included "legal advisers," so the record has an owner inside the IDF.

NAZA's insiders, as The Guardian reports them, describe "the destruction of neighbourhoods where the Israeli military estimated that up to 25% of residents were still sheltering in their homes." The claim names the kind of figure the sector map was built to hold. If the estimates for the neighborhoods the film describes were published beside the dates of the strikes there, the 25% could be checked.

What Israel has published instead are counts of what it sent. Its Foreign Ministry counted over 15 million text messages and over 4.5 million leaflets by 8 December 2023, its own figures, and states that “communications in Gaza is intermittent.” Those count messages, not the people who received them or the people who stayed.

The Foreign Ministry also states that the IDF “does not assume that there are no civilians in areas or sites where advance warnings had been given.” On that stated position, the number of people who stayed is exactly what entered each strike’s assessment. The Institute’s report on [neighborhoods that stayed populated](#) sets out the map and the warnings in full.

What would test the claim that software chose the targets?

The IDF publishes no count of what its systems suggested or of what became of each suggestion, the record that would test this claim. It states that Habsora, in operational use since **2021**, “suggests” objects to an analyst, and that a suggestion “cannot be solely relied upon to identify a target.”

The film’s insiders, as The Guardian reports them, describe “AI-based systems built to identify large numbers of potential low-ranking Hamas targets.” The IDF states that strike decisions “are made by human personnel only.” Its account names the stages a suggestion passes through: an analyst’s research, an authorized intelligence officer’s approval, a legal review, and a commander’s approval.

Each of those stages is a point at which a count could be kept: suggestions produced, suggestions researched, targets approved, strikes approved, targets rejected at each stage. The film’s claim is a claim about scale, and scale is the one thing the IDF’s description of its systems does not give.

The IDF’s answer to a New York Times investigation, as The Times of Israel reported it in December 2024, was that “officers always verified the information provided” by AI systems. A rate of verification, or of rejection, would turn that statement into a measure. The IDF’s page on the two systems, first published in June 2024 and updated in September 2026, answers the question “Does the IDF use AI to select targets in Gaza?” with “No,” and gives no

figure for either system. The Institute's report on [the approval chain](#) sets out the stages the IDF describes.

What would test the claim about homes and families?

The record is the set of target cards and warning logs for strikes on homes, and the one card Israel has published is from **2014**. It concerns a weapons store in a commander's home, lists the commander and his family at the target, and approves the strike on condition of a warning.

For 2014, Israel's May 2015 report published a count: specific warnings "prior to more than a thousand attacks against individual targets." It also stated that when the IDF attacked individual militants, "the attack was conducted without giving advance warning." For the current war, the Foreign Ministry counted over 45,000 individual phone calls to 8 December 2023, "urging people to temporarily leave areas of hostilities and individual targets," its own count, which does not separate homes from other targets.

The film's insiders, as The Guardian reports them, describe targets "bombed in their homes at night, in the knowledge attacks would also kill their families." Two counts would test that: how many strikes on homes were aimed at a person rather than a structure, the kind Israel's own account says are made without warning, and how many were preceded by a warning to the household.

The published card shows what such a record holds: the object, the people present, the conditions attached, and the "Number of bombs: One." Israel's 2015 report adds that target cards "may take different forms in different IDF units, their subject matter and purpose remain the same." Neither count appears in the records examined here. The Institute's report on [the one target card Israel has published](#) sets out the card and Israel's rules on warnings.

How often did the IDF stop a strike?

The IDF presentation states that "Many strikes were cancelled due to unexpected presence of civilians," and Israel's Foreign Ministry states that "countless attacks have been aborted or

avoided completely in order to prevent harm to civilians.” Neither record gives a number, and the presentation’s 3 examples of cancelled strikes include one dated to 2014. That dated example, from 14 July 2014, predates the current war.

The 18 clips of IDF targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute are the IDF’s own record of stopped strikes, dated from April 2024 to July 2026. The IDF has released such footage before: The Times of Israel reported in December 2023 that it published videos of airstrikes aborted because civilians were present.

The clips and the statements show that stopping happened. They cannot show how often, because they are selected and the totals behind them are not published. For 2014, Israel’s May 2015 report stated that “individual pilots exercised their discretion to cancel or delay planned strikes due to the presence of civilians,” and gave no count either.

A rate is what would matter to the film’s claim. Two numbers would supply it: strikes approved, and strikes stopped after approval. With both, the 18 clips could be placed against the whole; without them, they remain examples chosen by the party presenting them. The Institute’s report on [the question of targeting civilians](#) sets out what the clips show and what the IDF’s rules say about civilians near a target.

What have the investigations found?

The Military Advocate General’s Corps, its own count, had opened **74** criminal investigations in the Gaza war by 3 August 2024, and referred over 1,000 further incidents for factual assessment. It publishes no findings, charges or convictions from either.

The Corps states that civilian harm “in most cases” does not by itself indicate a reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct, which is the threshold for an investigation. The count therefore reflects the threshold as much as the incidents. Of the 74, the largest group concerns deaths of detainees in custody, and none is framed as concerning the selection or approval of targets.

The IDF states that its soldiers are required to report violations, and that the duty applied to the people interviewed for NAZA. The Corps’ counts are broken down by subject and give no

source for any referral, so they cannot show whether any report came from anyone who later spoke to the film.

The Corps states that its decisions are “subject to civilian oversight and can be challenged on appeal in front of Israel’s Attorney General, as well as before the Israeli Supreme Court.” A published list of closed files and appeals would show how often that oversight was used. The outcome of each investigation is the record that would show what the reporting route produced: how many closed without charges, how many led to indictments, and on what grounds. The Institute’s report on [the duty to report and refuse](#) sets out the duties, the route and the counts in full.

Where did Hamas place its military assets, by count?

The record that would test Israel’s own central claim is the share of targets that were civilian buildings used for military purposes, and the IDF presentation maps 3 categories of such sites around Khan Younis without counting them. Israel’s May 2015 report gives named cases from 2014 and no total.

The IDF’s answer to NAZA states that “Hamas continues to systematically operate from within the civilian environment.” Israel’s Foreign Ministry counts over 1,000 Hamas rockets that landed inside Gaza by December 2023, its own count and a floor, with no method. It states that Hamas conceals military assets “in and underneath hospitals, including the Al-Shifa hospital, which is the largest hospital in Gaza,” and gives no count of such sites.

This claim is Israel’s, not the film’s, and the same gap applies to it. A count of strikes on buildings the IDF classed as military objectives by use, with the use it recorded for each, would test it. Israel’s 2015 report states that forensic evidence of military use “is rarely available after an attack,” so such a count would rest on the IDF’s own intelligence records, which is where the target card already sits.

The claim and the film’s allegations are not alternatives. A strike on a home used as a command post can be lawful in its target and disputed in its expected harm. The Institute’s report on [civilian sites in Israel’s record](#) sets out the map, the cases and the law.

How often was the ceasefire breached?

The Board of Peace, in the only report Security Council resolution **2803** requires, states that violations of the Gaza ceasefire “continue to occur on a near daily basis, some of which are serious,” and gives no total. The plan the resolution endorses defines no violation and names no body to count one.

The IDF publishes a dated list of what it calls Hamas violations, its own account, with no total and no entry for any violation by Israel. Gaza’s Ministry of Health counts deaths since the ceasefire without linking them to incidents. Two of the IDF clips provided to the Institute are dated after the ceasefire began and show strikes diverted because children came near. The force the resolution charges with helping monitor the ceasefire had not deployed by May 2026, on the Board of Peace’s account, and the resolution imposes no duty to count incidents. The IDF’s list also carries its own date errors: entries from November 2025 are stamped 2026 on a page dated February 2026.

A record that would settle the question needs a standard first: a statement of what the ceasefire forbids. Only then can incidents be counted against it and attributed to a party. None of the documents examined here supplies the standard, so none of the parties’ ledgers can be read as a measure of how the ceasefire held.

The Institute’s report on [strikes during the ceasefire](#) sets out the instruments, the reporting body’s account and each party’s ledger.

What would verify the film’s own testimony?

The Guardian, which produced NAZA, reports that the film rests on testimony from **24** Israeli military insiders, and the IDF states, in its own statement of 11 September 2026, that their identity “cannot be verified, including whether they served in the IDF, in what capacity, or whether they were involved in the matters about which the allegations are being made.”

The film’s claims rest on testimony, as the producer’s reporting describes them, and no document from the film appears in the records examined here. The IDF’s answer is a denial and a set of published rules. Each side’s evidence is of a kind the other cannot test directly: the

IDF cannot cross-examine anonymous witnesses, and the film's account cannot be checked against target cards the IDF has not released.

The records that would test the testimony are the same ones that would test the IDF's denial: the target cards, estimates and approvals for the strikes the insiders describe. Released with identifying detail removed, a handful of them would show whether the approvals the film describes existed.

The Guardian quotes the directors describing their subject as "the orders themselves, the policies, the accepted practices, the language and logic that make those practices possible." Orders and policies, where written down, are records held inside the IDF, which is where both sides' evidence would meet. Absent those, the dispute rests on credibility rather than record, and the records examined here cannot settle it. The Institute has not viewed the film, and has not verified when or where the IDF's clips were recorded.

Methodology and limitations

This report draws together the records examined in the Institute's series on the documentary NAZA: an IDF targeting presentation and 18 clips of IDF footage provided to the Institute, the IDF's statements on the film, its page on its data systems, the Military Advocate General's Corps page on alleged misconduct, the Foreign Ministry's May 2015 report on the 2014 war and its papers of November and December 2023, Security Council resolution 2803, and the Board of Peace's report of May 2026. The film's claims come from The Guardian, which produced it; the film was not viewed.

The eight claims were chosen as the ones the series examined, not as a complete list of the film's allegations. A count is treated as published only where a record examined here states it. Every count cited is a party's own or the Board of Peace's own, and none is independently verified.

Conclusion

The IDF's own records set out how every one of NAZA's central claims could be settled. What records would settle them? Target cards with their expected-harm estimates, the sector population estimates, counts of what the IDF's systems suggested and what was approved, a rate of strikes stopped, the outcomes of investigations, and a standard for what the ceasefire forbids. The IDF says it keeps most of these, and has published almost none for this war.

The pattern is consistent across all eight: precise rules, chosen examples, floors instead of totals. Israel published more for 2014, including a total of strikes. The film offers testimony the IDF says it cannot verify. Each side holds the evidence the other lacks, and neither has released it.

A handful of target cards from the strikes the film describes would test both accounts at once, and Israel has already shown that it can publish one. If it released the next, whose account would the figure on it support?

Frequently Asked Questions

Has the IDF published how many strikes it carried out in Gaza?

The records examined here give no total for the current war. For the 2014 war, Israel's May 2015 report stated that the IDF "conducted over 6,000 aerial strikes against military objectives."

Has the IDF published its civilian harm estimates for any strike?

Israel has published one target card, from a strike on 8 July 2014, which lists the people present and approves the strike on condition of a warning. The records examined here contain none from the current war.

How many strikes did the IDF abort because civilians were present?

No record examined here gives a number. The IDF presentation says "many," Israel's Foreign Ministry says "countless," and the IDF has released footage of individual aborted strikes.

How many of NAZA's interviewees are there?

The Guardian, which produced the film, reports testimony from 24 Israeli military insiders. The IDF states that their identities cannot be verified.

Have IDF investigations found wrongdoing in Gaza strikes?

The Military Advocate General's Corps reported 74 criminal investigations opened by August 2024, its own count, and published no findings from them. None of the 74 is framed as concerning the approval of targets.

What would settle whether NAZA's claims are true?

The target cards, population estimates and approval records for the specific strikes the film describes would test both the film's claims and the IDF's denials. None has been published.

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EXPLAINER BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

What Must an IDF Soldier Do Who Sees a Violation? NAZA's Insiders and the IDF's Own Rules

The IDF says NAZA's interviewees had to report what they saw. Its ethics code, the black-flag test and 74 investigations show what that means.

NAZA

Military Advocate General

Illegal orders

Black flag

IDF ethics

Accountability



The IDF states that a soldier who witnesses a violation “is required under military orders to report it,” and that this “also applies to individuals who were interviewed for the film,” the documentary NAZA. The IDF’s own ethical code adds a duty not to follow illegal orders, and an Israeli military court set the test for a manifestly illegal order in **1958**: over such an order “should fly, like a black flag, a warning saying: ‘Prohibited!’” The Military Advocate General’s Corps, where reports go, counted 74 criminal investigations opened in the Gaza war by August 2024, its own count. None of the records examined here shows whether any of the film’s interviewees reported what they describe.

Key Findings

- The IDF’s statement on NAZA, a party’s own, states that a soldier who witnesses a violation “is required under military orders to report it,” and that “This also applies to individuals who were interviewed for the film.”
- The IDF’s ethical code, its own doctrine, requires that a soldier “will not use their weapon or power to harm uninvolved civilians and prisoners” and “do not follow illegal orders.”
- The Military Advocate General’s Corps, a party’s own count, opened **74** criminal investigations in the Gaza war by 3 August 2024, 44 of them concerning the deaths of detainees, and referred over 1,000 incidents for factual assessment.
- The military court judgment of October 1958 in the Kafr Qasim trial set the test for a manifestly illegal order in Israeli law, and every sentence it imposed was reduced on appeal.

What does the IDF say NAZA’s interviewees were required to do?

The IDF’s statement of **11 September 2026**, its own account, answers the film’s testimony with a duty: a soldier who witnesses a violation “is required under military orders to report it,” and “This also applies to individuals who were interviewed for the film.”

The statement pairs that duty with a challenge to the testimony. It states that the film “relies on anonymous testimonies from individuals whose identity cannot be verified, including whether they served in the IDF, in what capacity, or whether they were involved in the matters about which the allegations are being made.” Of one interviewee, the IDF said on 14 September 2026 that “nothing about the interviewee, not his service nor his role can be independently checked and verified.”

The film rests on those people. The Guardian, which produced it, reports testimony from 24 Israeli military insiders, and quotes the directors saying their subject is “the orders themselves, the policies, the accepted practices, the language and logic that make those practices possible.”

The two positions meet on a single question the records can partly answer: what the IDF’s rules require of a soldier who sees something unlawful, and where that report goes. The IDF’s code states the duty; Israeli case law states the test for an order a soldier must refuse; the Military Advocate General’s Corps states what happens to a report and publishes counts of what it opened.

What the records cannot answer is whether any interviewee used that route. The film’s insiders are anonymous, the IDF says it cannot identify them, and no record examined here shows a report from any of them. The Institute has not viewed the film; its content enters here through its producer’s reporting.

What does the IDF’s ethical code require of a soldier near civilians?

The IDF’s ethical code, its own doctrine, addresses civilians directly under the value it calls Purity of Arms: “The soldier will not use their weapon or power to harm uninvolved civilians and prisoners and will do everything in their power to prevent harm to their lives, bodies, dignity and property.”

The value opens with a limit on force itself: “An IDF soldier will only exercise their power or use their weapon in order to fulfill their mission and only when necessary. They will maintain

their humanity during combat and routine times.” Its other stated values include Human Life, Discipline, Professionalism, Camaraderie and a Sense of Mission.

Under Human Life, the soldier “will recognize the critical importance of human life,” and in combat “will put themselves and their fellow soldiers at risk only to the extent required to fulfill their mission.” The code states that it, “together with the practical rules derived from it, constitutes the ethical code.”

The code is a statement of the standard, and it is evidence of nothing more. It records what the IDF requires of itself. It cannot show whether any particular strike complied with it, and it carries no figure.

The IDF’s own footage offers something closer to practice. In the 18 clips of targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute, the IDF’s own record, every strike shown is stopped, diverted or held, and in 15 of the 18 the stated reason is people near the target. The clips are a selection, examined in the Institute’s report on [the question of targeting civilians](#), and they show the moment the code describes in its most favorable form: a weapon withheld because uninvolved people were close.

The film’s account is of the opposite case, where harm to uninvolved people was accepted in advance. The code and the clips describe the rule and its observance; the film describes its breach. None of the three measures how often each occurred.

When must an IDF soldier refuse an order?

The IDF’s ethical code, its own doctrine, states under Discipline that the soldier “will ensure they are only giving out legal orders, and do not follow illegal orders.” The sentence binds the officer who gives an order as well as the soldier who receives it.

The code does not say how a soldier is to tell an illegal order from a legal one. Israeli law supplies that test, and it comes from a military court’s judgment in 1958: “The distinguishing mark of a manifestly illegal order is that above such an order should fly, like a black flag, a warning saying: ‘Prohibited!’”

The test sets a high bar and a clear one. An order that is merely questionable, or unlawful in a way a soldier could not be expected to see, does not meet it. An order whose illegality is plain on its face does.

The film's subject sits on that line. Its directors, as The Guardian quotes them, describe "the orders themselves, the policies, the accepted practices." Whether any order the insiders describe was manifestly illegal, in the black-flag sense, or lawful but contested, is the question the test would decide, and deciding it needs the order itself.

No order the film describes appears in any record examined here. The IDF's presentation provided to the Institute sets out its process, its strike chart and one worked legal review from 2014, but it contains no operational order from the current war. The black-flag test can be stated from the record; it cannot be applied to the film's account without the orders the film describes.

Where does the black-flag test come from?

The black-flag test comes from the military court's judgment of **October 1958** in the trial of eleven defendants for the killing of civilians at Kafr Qasim on 29 October 1956. The trial, according to the document library of the Akevot Institute, "spanned 100 different sessions between March 1957 and January 1958."

The Akevot record states the outcome: "Eight of the defendants were convicted and three were acquitted." The longest sentence, imposed on the battalion commander, was 17 years. On 3 April 1959 the appeal court reduced all eight sentences, and the longest were further commuted by the Chief of Staff and the President.

The Akevot record ends the sequence on 4 March 1960: "Less than eighteen months after the sentencing in the trial of the eleven, all convicted prisoners are free."

The case therefore stands in Israeli law for two things at once. The ruling established that an order to kill civilians carries the black flag and must be refused, and it convicted eight of the eleven men tried. The sentences it imposed were cut on appeal and by commutation until every convicted man was free within eighteen months.

The Akevot Institute, an Israeli research and archive institute that publishes primary records of the conflict, obtained the release of hundreds of sealed transcript pages through the Military Court of Appeals. The record it publishes is the Israeli military court's own. The Cardozo Israeli Supreme Court Project, which documents Israeli jurisprudence, records the black-flag passage in its profile of the judge who wrote it.

The case is nearly seventy years older than the war the film describes, and it concerns a different kind of act. It is cited here for the standard it set, and for the record of what followed a conviction under it.

What does international law require of commanders who learn of a breach?

The Fourth Geneva Convention of **1949**, to which Israel is a party, states in Article 146 that each party “shall be under the obligation to search for persons alleged to have committed, or to have ordered to be committed, such grave breaches,” and to “bring such persons, regardless of their nationality, before its own courts.”

The same article requires each party to “take measures necessary for the suppression of all acts contrary to the provisions of the present Convention other than the grave breaches.” The duty to investigate is the state's; the duty to report, in the IDF's statement, is placed on the soldier.

Additional Protocol I places the link in the chain of command. Article 87(1) requires parties to “require military commanders, with respect to members of the armed forces under their command and other persons under their control, to prevent and, where necessary, to suppress and to report to competent authorities breaches of the Conventions and of this Protocol.” Israel is not a party to Additional Protocols I or II; its May 2015 report states that it “abides by their provisions inasmuch as they reflect rules of customary international law.”

Read together, the instruments and the IDF's statement describe three duties: the soldier reports, the commander prevents, suppresses and reports, and the state searches for and prosecutes. The IDF's code adds a fourth at the level of the order: an order that is manifestly illegal is not to be obeyed.

Each duty presupposes that the person who saw the breach can be identified and that the report reaches a body able to act on it. The film's testimony comes from people the IDF says it cannot identify, which is where the IDF's statement and the film's account part.

Where does a report of misconduct go in the IDF?

The Military Advocate General's Corps states, its own account, that it "is subject only to the law on professional matters and operates with full independence," and that its decisions are "subject to civilian oversight and can be challenged on appeal in front of Israel's Attorney General, as well as before the Israeli Supreme Court." It publishes its process on a page first dated **24 February 2024**.

Incidents requiring factual assessment go first to the General Staff's Fact-Finding and Assessment Mechanism. The Corps states that the mechanism was created during the 2014 Gaza conflict on a recommendation of the Turkel Commission, and now operates as "a permanent body which conducts factual assessments."

Israel's May 2015 report, its own account, describes the Corps' standing. Its lawyers "are not subordinate to the commanders they advise," and the Military Advocate General "is appointed by the Minister of Defence (a civilian authority), not by the IDF Chief of General Staff." The Foreign Ministry paper of November 2023 states that "IDF legal advisers are not subject to the IDF chain of command on professional matters, but report directly to the Military Advocate General."

The route runs, then, from a soldier or a report to a factual assessment, to a decision by the Corps whether to open a criminal investigation, and from that decision to appeal before the Attorney General and the Supreme Court. Each stage is the Israeli state's own, and the independence the Corps claims is its own description of itself.

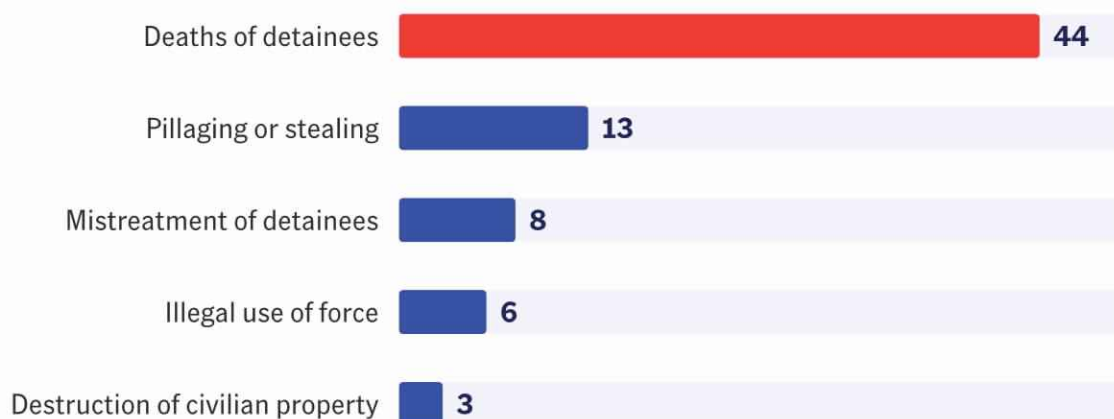
The mechanism the Corps describes assesses incidents. Anonymous testimony about policies and practices, as the film's is described, is a different kind of account from an incident, and the records examined here do not say how the Corps treats one.

How many criminal investigations has the Military Advocate General opened?

The Military Advocate General's Corps, a party's own count, had opened **74** criminal investigations in the Gaza war as at 3 August 2024. The Corps states that it referred over 1,000 further incidents to the Fact-Finding and Assessment Mechanism, hundreds of them still under assessment.

Criminal investigations opened by the MAG Corps

GAZA WAR, AS AT 3 AUGUST 2024, BY SUBJECT



Source: Military Advocate General's Corps, Israel Defense Forces, updated 3 August 2024; a party's own count of investigations opened.

The breakdown is the Corps' own: 44 concerning the deaths of detainees held by the IDF, 13 alleged pillaging or stealing, 8 alleged mistreatment of detainees, 6 alleged illegal use of force, and 3 alleged destruction of civilian property without military necessity.

The largest share concerns detainees in IDF custody. Six concern the illegal use of force, the category nearest to the film's subject, and none in the Corps' list is framed as concerning the selection or approval of targets.

The counts are of investigations opened, not of findings, indictments or convictions, and the page gives none of those. The over 1,000 referrals are incidents sent for factual assessment,

not cases in which any wrongdoing was found. Both figures are the IDF's own, unaudited, and dated August 2024.

The records examined here give no later count. They do not show how many of the 74 closed, how many led to charges, or how many of the over 1,000 referrals became investigations after August 2024. The records examined here give no breakdown of the over 1,000 referrals by subject, so the share concerning strikes cannot be read from them. The count is the only published measure of what the reporting route produced, and it stops two years before the film.

What decides whether a civilian death is investigated?

The Military Advocate General's Corps states, its own account on its **2024** page, that in armed conflict "death or injury to a civilian or harm to civilian objects, while tragic and regrettable, in most cases do not by themselves indicate a reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct, as they can be explained as reasonable aftermath of lawful operational activity."

That sentence is the threshold that produces the counts above. A civilian death alone does not open a criminal investigation; a reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct does. The number of investigations is therefore a function of the threshold applied as much as of the number of incidents.

The threshold helps explain the shape of the Corps' list. Its largest category concerns deaths of detainees in custody, outside combat, and a count of investigations cannot be read as a count of civilian deaths in strikes.

It also explains why the film's account and the Corps' counts do not meet. NAZA's insiders, as The Guardian reports them, describe civilian harm accepted within the approval process itself. A strike carried out inside that process, and within the approved expectation of harm, could on the Corps' stated threshold be explained as "reasonable aftermath of lawful operational activity" unless something else raised a suspicion.

What would raise one is the kind of evidence the film's testimony describes: an order, a policy or a practice that made the harm unlawful in advance. That evidence would need to reach the

Corps in a form it could assess. The IDF's statement invites exactly that, and says the interviewees were obliged to provide it.

What do the records not show about reports from NAZA's interviewees?

The IDF's statement of **11 September 2026**, its own account, says the interviewees were required to report what they witnessed, but no record examined here shows whether any of them did, what was reported, or what became of a report.

The Corps publishes counts of investigations opened by subject, not by source, so its figures cannot show whether any came from people who later spoke to the film. Its counts stop in August 2024. The film's interviewees are anonymous, and the IDF states that it cannot verify their service, their role or their involvement.

That leaves each side's claim unanswerable from the other's record. The IDF cannot show that the insiders failed to report, because it cannot identify them. The film cannot show that reports were made and ignored without identifying the people who made them. Neither record reaches the other.

The black-flag test, the code's duty to refuse and the treaty duties to report all assume an identified witness and an identifiable order. The film's testimony, by its design, has neither in public. The IDF's answer, by its design, points to a route the testimony did not take in public.

The IDF's statement of 11 September names the duty and the route, and the records examined here show no inquiry opened into the matters the film describes. A measure that would test both accounts is simple to state: how many reports reached the Corps about target selection or approval, from whom in the chain of command, and what was decided about each. None of the records examined here supplies it.

Methodology and limitations

This report sets the IDF's answer to the documentary NAZA against the rules and records that govern reporting and refusal in the IDF: the IDF's statements of 11 and 14 September

2026, its ethical code, the Military Advocate General's Corps page on alleged misconduct, the Foreign Ministry's May 2015 report and November 2023 legal paper, the Kafr Qasim trial record published by the Akevot Institute, and the treaty text of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol I. The film's claims come from The Guardian, which produced it; the film was not viewed.

The Corps' counts are its own and are not audited; they count investigations opened, not findings. The Kafr Qasim record is cited for its dates, outcome and the standard it set; no death toll is given here, and no defendant is named. The 18 clips are a selection published as received.

Conclusion

The IDF's answer to NAZA turns the film's testimony back on its witnesses. What must an IDF soldier do who sees a violation? On the IDF's own rules, report it, refuse any order that flies the black flag, and withhold force from uninvolved civilians, and the IDF states that those duties bound the film's interviewees. An Israeli military court set the black-flag test in 1958, the Military Advocate General's Corps describes an independent route for reports, and it counted 74 investigations opened by August 2024.

The records stop where the film begins. They show the duties and the route, and counts of what the route opened. They do not show a single report from anyone who later spoke to the film, and the film does not show one either.

A duty to report is only as visible as the reports it produces. If the Corps published how many reports it received about how targets were chosen and approved, and what it decided about each, would the film's insiders turn out to have been silent, or unheard?

Frequently Asked Questions

Are IDF soldiers required to report violations?

The IDF states that a soldier who witnesses a violation "is required under military orders to report it." It said on 11 September 2026 that the duty also applied to the people interviewed

for NAZA.

Can an IDF soldier refuse an order?

The IDF's ethical code states that soldiers "do not follow illegal orders." Israeli law requires refusal of a manifestly illegal order, one over which "should fly, like a black flag, a warning saying: 'Prohibited!'"

What is the black flag test?

It is the standard, set by an Israeli military court in 1958, for an order so plainly unlawful that a soldier must refuse it. It comes from the judgment in the Kafr Qasim trial.

Who investigates alleged IDF misconduct?

The Military Advocate General's Corps decides whether to open criminal investigations, after incidents are assessed by the General Staff's Fact-Finding and Assessment Mechanism. Its decisions can be appealed to Israel's Attorney General and Supreme Court.

How many criminal investigations has the IDF opened in the Gaza war?

The Military Advocate General's Corps reported 74 criminal investigations opened as at 3 August 2024, its own count. They are investigations opened, not findings or convictions.

Does a civilian death automatically lead to an IDF investigation?

No. The Military Advocate General's Corps states that civilian harm "in most cases" does not by itself indicate a reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct, which is the threshold for a criminal investigation.

Did NAZA's interviewees report what they saw to the IDF?

No record examined here says. The interviewees are anonymous, and the IDF states that it cannot verify their service or role.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

Does Hamas Fight From Civilian Sites, as the IDF Says in Answer to NAZA? What Israel's Own Records Show

Israel's own records back the IDF's answer to NAZA with a map and cases, not a count. What they show about Hamas and civilian sites.

NAZA

Human shields

Civilian sites

Hospitals

Gaza

IDF targeting



Israel's own records support the IDF's claim that Hamas fights from civilian sites with a map and with cases, not with a count: an IDF presentation plots **3** kinds of military site across the Khan Younis area without numbering them, and Israel's May 2015 report names homes, schools, mosques and a hospital compound used for military purposes in the previous war. The IDF put the claim at the center of its answer to the documentary NAZA. Israel's Foreign Ministry adds that over 1,000 rockets fired by Hamas and other groups landed inside Gaza, its own count. The same 2015 report states that forensic evidence of military use "is rarely available after an attack."

Key Findings

- The IDF presentation, a party's own document, maps **3** categories of military site in the Khan Younis Brigade area, rockets, tunnel shafts and command and control sites, and gives no count or date.
- Israel's May 2015 report, its own account, states that in 2014 Hamas and other groups used "a significant number of residential buildings, schools, mosques, and even medical and U.N. facilities" for military purposes, and gives cases rather than a total.
- Israel's Foreign Ministry states that over 1,000 rockets fired by Hamas and other armed groups landed inside Gaza by December 2023, its own count, and gives no method.
- The Fourth Geneva Convention, to which Israel is a party, states that "The presence of a protected person may not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations."

What does the IDF say about civilian areas in its answer to NAZA?

The IDF's statement of **11 September 2026**, its own account, answers NAZA with a claim about the other side: "Hamas continues to systematically operate from within the civilian environment, embedding its operatives and military infrastructure among the population and exploiting civilian areas for terrorist purposes."

The statement sets that claim beside its denial. The IDF states that it “categorically rejects these allegations,” and that “the IDF strikes military targets and makes unprecedented efforts to minimize harm to civilians.” The film’s account, as The Guardian reports it, is about the IDF’s conduct: AI-based systems that identified targets “who were then bombed in their homes at night.”

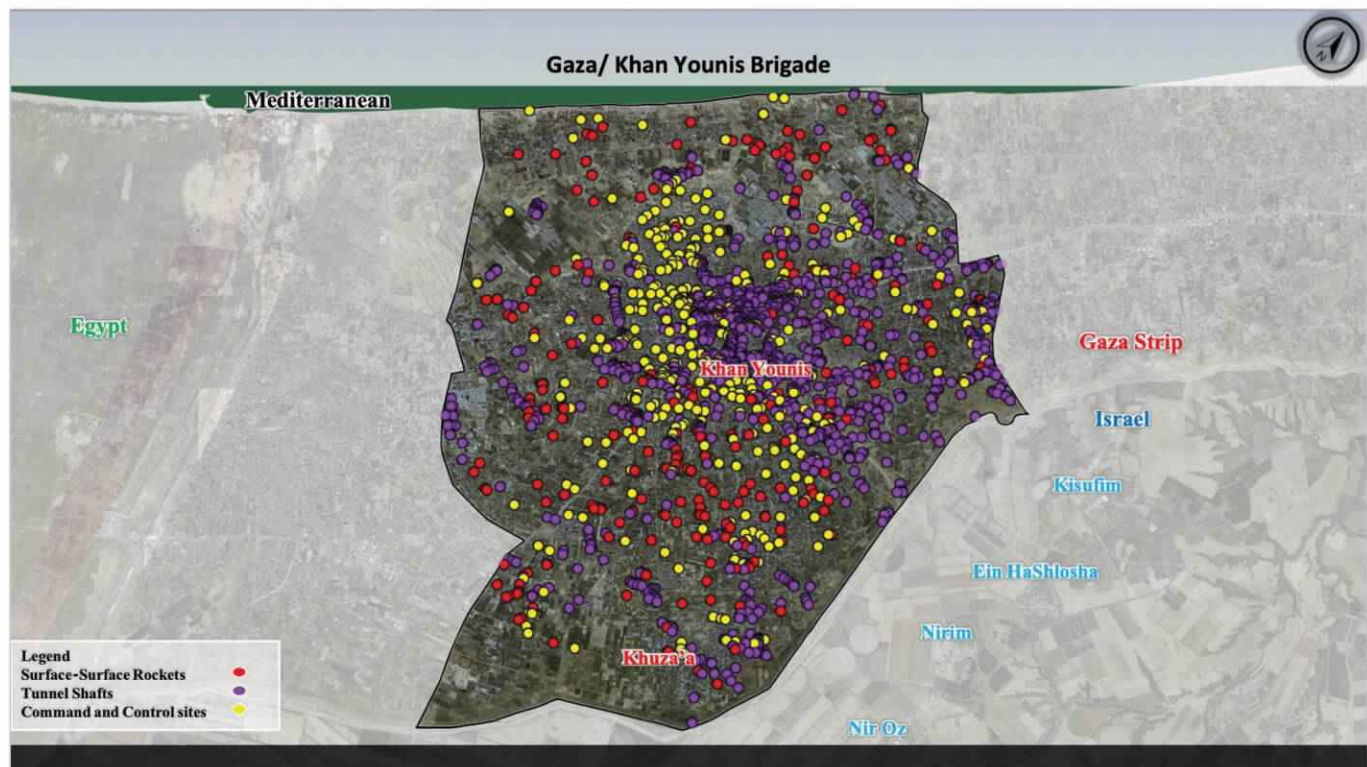
The two accounts concern different parties, and the law treats them separately. A force that places military assets among civilians breaches one set of rules; the force that attacks them remains bound by another. Article 51(8) of Additional Protocol I says so: a violation of the ban on shielding does not release the other side from its obligations toward civilians. Israel is not a party to Additional Protocols I or II; its May 2015 report states that it “abides by their provisions inasmuch as they reflect rules of customary international law.”

The claim is the center of Israel’s official position. Israel’s Foreign Ministry states, in answers updated to 8 December 2023, that “ Hamas has spent the last 16 years systematically embedding and dispersing its military operations and assets throughout the entirety of Gaza.” The Foreign Ministry paper of November 2023 states that “it cannot be concluded from the mere fact that seeming ‘civilians’ or ‘civilian objects’ have been targeted, that an attack was unlawful.”

The Institute has not viewed the film; its content enters here through its producer’s reporting.

What does the IDF’s Khan Younis map show?

The IDF presentation, its own document, opens with 4 slides of a single map headed “Gaza/ Khan Younis Brigade,” with a legend of three categories: “Surface-Surface Rockets,” “Tunnel Shafts” and “Command and Control sites.” The markers cover the built-up area of Khan Younis and the ground around it.



The map's legend: surface-to-surface rockets in red, tunnel shafts in purple, command and control sites in yellow. The presentation gives no count or date for the markers.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 4.

The map names places on both sides of the border: Khan Younis and Khuza'a in Gaza, and across the fence four Israeli communities, Kisufim, Ein HaShlosha, Nirim and Nir Oz. Some smaller labels are not legible in the copy provided.

The map is the only picture of the enemy's military sites that the IDF presentation records, and the closest the records come to a spatial account of the claim. It spreads the three categories across the whole brigade area, with the command and control markers densest at the center of Khan Younis.

It is also the thinnest evidence the records contain. The slides give no count of markers, no date for the survey, no source for the positions, and no indication of which sites were struck, and the presentation itself is undated. The Institute has not counted the markers, because a count of symbols on an undated slide would present an estimate the IDF did not make.

The map's role in the presentation is to set the problem the rest of the deck answers: military objectives embedded in a populated area, and a process for attacking them. Neither the map

nor the statement gives a number for how much of Gaza's military infrastructure sat inside civilian buildings.

How does Israel's 2014 record describe homes used for military purposes?

Israel's May 2015 report, its own account, states that in the 2014 war Hamas and other groups used "a significant number of residential buildings, schools, mosques, and even medical and U.N. facilities for military operational purposes, most often as command and control centres or as arms depots." It gives cases, not a total.

The Foreign Ministry report states that "Commanders in Hamas's Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades also made widespread use of residences for military purposes, often situating command and control centres inside their homes." Among its cases is a strike on 8 July 2014 on a weapons depot and planning site in a senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad commander's home, which the IDF considered a target "not because" he lived there, "but because the site was used as an operational planning site." That case is the one target card Israel has published, examined in the Institute's report on [strikes on homes where families live](#).

A larger building shows the other method. Hamas, the report states, "situated several command and control centres on multiple floors of the 'Zafer 4' building," and the IDF struck it on 23 August 2014 "After providing several effective advance warnings to the building's occupants and neighbours, and verifying that it was fully vacated." It adds: "No civilians were harmed in the attack."

Israel describes the practice as a strategy. Embedding military operations in civilian areas, the report states, "is not ancillary to their main military objectives; nor is it an inevitability of combat within the Gaza Strip. Rather, it is a deliberate and systematic strategy designed to draw IDF forces into combat inside densely populated areas."

Every case here is from 2014 and rests on Israel's own intelligence. The report names the commanders whose homes it describes; this report does not. It gives no count of homes used or struck, and none of its cases concerns the current war.

What does Israel say about schools, mosques and other protected sites?

Israel's 2015 report, its own account, names 6 neighborhoods where it says schools were used in 2014 for "weapons storage, command and control of operations, and rocket launches": Beit Lahiya, Jabalia, Sheikh Radwan, Shuja'iyeh, Al-Tuffah and Al-Zaitoun. It states that such use "rendered these facilities military objectives under the Law of Armed Conflict."

The Foreign Ministry report states that the IDF attacked schools rarely: "in a very few cases, military necessity compelled Israel to attack educational facilities that were used for military purposes," and in none of them was the object a school run by UNRWA, the United Nations agency for Palestine refugees. It gives no count of the "very few cases."

On mosques, it states that Hamas and other groups "routinely used mosques all over the Gaza Strip for various military purposes." In a mosque in Khuza'a on 29 July 2014, after a firefight, IDF forces found "a weapons stockpile and two entrances to combat tunnels in the basement prayer room," and the report prints photographs. A strike on a tunnel inside a mosque in Al-Zaitoun on 9 August 2014 was carried out "before the time for morning prayers," after warnings to neighbouring homes.

The IDF strike chart records one question on such places, "Proximity to Sensitive Sites?", as the fifth of its eight steps. The Foreign Ministry report states that sensitive sites include "hospitals, educational facilities, cultural property, religious sites, large food factories, power stations" and U.N. facilities, and that "All levels of command receive notice of the location and nature of sensitive sites." On the IDF's procedure, proximity is a question asked before a strike, not a bar to it.

The evidence has the same shape throughout. Each claim about a category of site comes with one or two dated cases and no count, and each case is Israel's account of its own operation. The cases are specific enough, with dates, places and in one case photographs, to be checkable in principle.

What does Israel say about hospitals?

Israel's 2015 report describes one hospital case from **2014** in detail, its own account: militants, it states, "repeatedly fired at IDF forces from, and set up military surveillance devices within, the Al-Wafa hospital compound" in July of that year. It adds that the IDF "repeatedly warned" authorities in Gaza and international organisations that the military use must stop.

The Foreign Ministry report states that the IDF struck the compound on 23 July 2014, after those warnings "went unheeded" and after "confirming multiple times that staff members and other civilians were no longer present." It notes that medical facilities have "special (though not absolute) protection from attack," and that IDF orders "strictly limited the circumstances in which such objects could be attacked."

For the current war, Israel's Foreign Ministry makes the claim in general terms, its own position. The Foreign Ministry paper of November 2023 states that " Hamas systematically conceals some of its most valuable and extensive military centers and assets in and underneath hospitals, including the Al-Shifa hospital, which is the largest hospital in Gaza." Its December 2023 answers state that Hamas built tunnels "with access points located in homes, mosques, schools and even hospitals."

The treaty rule on hospitals turns on warning. Article 19 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, to which Israel is a party, states that a civilian hospital's protection "shall not cease unless they are used to commit, outside their humanitarian duties, acts harmful to the enemy," and may cease "only after due warning has been given, naming, in all appropriate cases, a reasonable time limit and after such warning has remained unheeded."

The 2014 case, as Israel tells it, follows that sequence: military use, warnings, a strike after the warnings failed. The current-war statements name a hospital and a pattern, and the records examined here contain no comparable case file for any hospital in this war.

What does Israel say Hamas did to keep civilians in place?

Israel's May 2015 report, its own account, quotes a Hamas manual recovered in Shuja'iyyeh in **2014**, "A Chapter in Urban Combat," which states that "The soldiers and commanders [of the enemy] must limit their use of weapons and tactics that lead to the harm and unnecessary

loss of people and [destruction of] civilian facilities.” Israel cites it as evidence that the constraint was understood and used.

The Foreign Ministry report states that in 2014 Hamas and other groups “significantly increased the risk of harm to Gaza’s civilians” by “conducting military operations in civilian areas” and by encouraging, “and even coercing,” civilians “to ignore IDF warnings and remain in the zone of hostilities.” It adds that militants donned “civilian garb” and disguised themselves “as medical personnel.”

Israel makes the same claim for the current war. Israel’s Foreign Ministry states that Hamas “consistently and forcibly acts to frustrate these efforts, including by setting up roadblocks, threatening civilians not to leave, and issuing calls to ignore IDF recommendations to evacuate.” Its December 2023 answers describe “Hamas’s repeated efforts to endanger civilian lives by keeping them in areas of increased danger.”

The Institute’s report on [neighborhoods that stayed populated](#) sets out the IDF’s warnings and its statement that warned areas are never assumed empty. Israel’s account of why people stayed is the other half of that picture: on its telling, some remained because they were kept there.

The records give no count of people prevented from leaving, of roadblocks, or of calls to stay. The manual is a 2014 document quoted in Israel’s translation, and the current-war statements are the Ministry’s characterization of the other party. Under Article 51(8) of Additional Protocol I, even where that account holds, the attacking force’s obligations toward the civilians who remained do not change.

How many Hamas rockets does Israel say fell inside Gaza?

Israel’s Foreign Ministry states that “Over **1,000** missiles fired by Hamas and other armed groups have landed in Gaza,” in answers updated to 8 December 2023, its own count. It gives no method and no source.

The Ministry continues: “These rockets, indiscriminately fired at Israel, have instead exploded within the Gaza Strip. Evidence shows that these rockets exploded in schools and

near hospitals, causing untold civilian harm.” It adds that “the likelihood that many hundreds of these rockets have landed in dense urban areas suggest that they are a significant cause of civilian casualties.”

The claim has a precedent in Israel’s account of 2014. The Foreign Ministry report of 2015 states that “Rockets and mortars fired by these organisations at Israel’s civilian population fell short inside the Gaza Strip,” and that “secondary explosions triggered by IDF attacks on weapons depots located inside civilian homes caused damage to the surrounding areas.” It gives no count of rockets that fell short.

The IDF presentation’s map places rocket launch sites inside and around Khan Younis, and a rocket that falls short from such a site lands in or near the same populated area. That is the mechanism the Ministry’s claim rests on, and its own wording marks the limit: “the likelihood” that “many hundreds” landed in dense areas “suggest” a significant cause.

The figure is a floor, a party’s own, and cumulative to December 2023. It gives no count of people killed or injured by rockets that fell short, and no record examined here separates such deaths from others.

What does the law say when a party fights from civilian areas?

The Fourth Geneva Convention of **1949**, to which Israel is a party, states in Article 28 that “The presence of a protected person may not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations.” The rule binds the party that places its forces among civilians.

Additional Protocol I adds a duty on the defending side. Article 58 requires parties, “to the maximum extent feasible,” to “avoid locating military objectives within or near densely populated areas,” and Article 51(7) forbids using civilians “to shield military objectives from attacks.” The Rome Statute lists as a war crime “Utilizing the presence of a civilian or other protected person to render certain points, areas or military forces immune from military operations.” Israel is not a party to the Rome Statute.

The same instruments bind the attacking side. Article 51(8) states that a violation of the shielding ban does not release the other party from its obligations toward civilians, “including the obligation to take the precautionary measures provided for in Article 57.” A military objective inside a home remains a lawful target; the civilians around it remain protected, and the expected harm to them is weighed.

Israel’s own statements accept that structure. The Foreign Ministry report of 2015 states that collateral damage is lawful “so long as it is not expected to be excessive in relation to the anticipated military advantage from an attack on a military objective.” The Military Advocate General’s Corps states that civilian harm “in most cases do not by themselves indicate a reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct.”

On the law as Israel states it, the claim that Hamas fights from civilian sites establishes that such sites may be targets. It does not settle whether any strike on one was proportionate, which is decided strike by strike and is the question the film raises.

What can Israel’s records not show about civilian sites?

Israel’s 2015 report states, its own account, that “forensic evidence that a particular site was used for military purposes is rarely available after an attack,” because such evidence “is usually destroyed in the attack or, if time allows, removed.” Its cases therefore rest on intelligence and on what forces found on the ground.

That limit runs through every record here. The IDF presentation’s map gives positions with no count, date or source. The 2015 report gives named cases and no totals. The Foreign Ministry’s current-war statements give a pattern, a hospital and a floor of 1,000 rockets. None gives the number of civilian buildings used for military purposes, the share of targets that were such buildings, or the civilian harm in strikes on them.

The strongest evidence in the records is specific and old: dated 2014 cases with places, precautions and in one instance photographs. The records for the current war are statements of a pattern and an undated map. The 2014 cases show how Israel says it handled such sites; they cannot show how often the same pattern held after October 2023.

The film's claims and Israel's answer meet here without touching. NAZA, as The Guardian reports it, concerns how targets were chosen and what civilian harm was accepted; Israel's answer concerns where the enemy placed its assets. Both can be true at once, and neither record measures the other.

A count would join them: how many strikes in the current war hit buildings the IDF classed as military objectives by use, and with what expected and actual harm. No record examined here supplies it.

Methodology and limitations

This report sets the IDF's answer to the documentary NAZA against Israel's own records of where Hamas placed military assets: the first four slides and the strike chart of an IDF presentation provided to the Institute, the IDF's statement of 11 September 2026, the Foreign Ministry's May 2015 report on the 2014 war, its answers updated to 8 December 2023 and its November 2023 legal paper, and the Military Advocate General's Corps page on alleged misconduct. The film's claims come from The Guardian, which produced it; the film was not viewed.

Every factual claim about Hamas here is Israel's own account, published by a party to the conflict, and is not independently verified. The Hamas manual is quoted in Israel's translation. The presentation and its map are undated, and the Institute did not count the map's markers.

Conclusion

The IDF's answer to NAZA points at the other side, and Israel's own records back it with a map and a set of cases. Does Hamas fight from civilian sites, on those records? Israel documents homes used as command posts, schools used for weapons and rocket fire, a mosque with tunnels beneath its prayer room and a hospital compound used to fire on troops, and it counts over 1,000 rockets that fell back into Gaza. The documentation is specific for 2014 and general for the war since.

What the records do not do is count. They show that the practice occurred and how Israel says it responded, not how much of Gaza's military infrastructure sat in civilian buildings, or what share of the strikes the film describes were on such sites.

The law Israel accepts makes the claim matter and limits what it proves: a site used for military purposes may be struck, and the people around it still weigh in the balance. When one party's case rests on where the enemy hid and the other's on what the striking force accepted, what record would show both at once?

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the IDF's claim about Hamas and civilian areas?

The IDF states that "Hamas continues to systematically operate from within the civilian environment, embedding its operatives and military infrastructure among the population."

Does using a civilian building for military purposes make it a lawful target?

Israel's May 2015 report states that military use of schools "rendered these facilities military objectives under the Law of Armed Conflict." Any attack on such a site remains subject to proportionality and precautions.

What happened at the Al-Wafa hospital in 2014, on Israel's account?

Israel's 2015 report states that militants fired on IDF forces from the compound in July 2014. It says the IDF warned repeatedly and struck on 23 July after confirming that staff and civilians had left.

How many Hamas rockets does Israel say landed in Gaza?

Israel's Foreign Ministry states that over 1,000 rockets fired by Hamas and other armed groups landed in Gaza, in answers updated to 8 December 2023. It gives no method or count of casualties from them.

Is human shielding a war crime?

The Rome Statute lists using the presence of civilians to make places or forces immune from attack as a war crime, and the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits it. Israel is a party to the Fourth Geneva Convention and not to the Rome Statute.

Does the IDF's strike process check for hospitals and schools?

The IDF's strike chart asks "Proximity to Sensitive Sites?" before a strike. Israel's 2015 report states that all levels of command receive notice of sensitive sites, including hospitals, schools and religious sites.

Why can't Israel's claims about specific sites be checked after a strike?

Israel's 2015 report states that forensic evidence of military use "is rarely available after an attack" because it is destroyed or removed.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

Did IDF Strikes Stop at the Gaza Ceasefire? What Its Own Footage and the Ceasefire Record Show

Two IDF clips show strikes diverted after the Gaza ceasefire began. What they, resolution 2803 and each party's ledger show about how it held.

NAZA

Ceasefire

IDF strike footage

Resolution 2803

Board of Peace

Gaza



Two of the 18 clips of IDF targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute are dated after the Gaza ceasefire took effect on 10 October 2025, and both record a strike diverted because children were near the target. The documentary NAZA premiered eleven months into that ceasefire. The plan the ceasefire rests on, endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2803, never uses the word “violation,” and the body it charges with reporting states that violations occur “on a near daily basis” without giving a number. On the records examined here, IDF strikes continued after the ceasefire began, and no body publishes a count of how often it was breached.

Key Findings

- 2 of the 18 IDF clips, a party’s own footage, are dated 29 May and 12 July 2026; both end with a munition diverted because a child, then four minors, approached the target.
- Resolution 2803 (2025), adopted by 13 votes to none with 2 abstentions, endorses a plan whose text contains the word “violation” nowhere and names no body to count breaches.
- The Board of Peace, in the only report the resolution requires, states that violations “continue to occur on a near daily basis, some of which are serious,” and publishes no total.
- The IDF publishes a dated list of what it calls Hamas violations of the ceasefire, its own account, with no total, no rate, and no entry for any violation by Israel.
- Gaza’s Ministry of Health, the other party’s own count, reports 1,359 people killed since the ceasefire, to 10 September 2026, without separating combatants from civilians.

What do the IDF’s clips show after the ceasefire began?

In 2 of the 18 clips of IDF targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute, the IDF’s own record, the date on screen falls after the ceasefire of 10 October 2025. Both end with the munition diverted because children came near the target.



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: MAY 29, 2026 · 0:05

Watch out, a child is coming, we are going to divert

He is coming, we are going to divert

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 d4e4edaed9bd7c43aae7fea6108e9250abd98568c8c8f0e286de362e65c24c78

On 29 May 2026 the subtitles read “Watch out, a child is coming, we are going to divert,” then “He is coming, we are going to divert.” On 12 July 2026 they read “Four people approaching, ten seconds,” then “Four minors, currently not very close,” and “Divert [ammunition].”



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: JULY 12, 2026 · 0:07

Four people approaching, ten seconds

Four minors, currently not very close

Divert [ammunition]. Divert [ammunition] [sic]

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 d4cf3b12ccfd06c8924ad95373faeae7c3a46f048458a83728af518430ac33a0

Each clip records a strike already under way, seven and nine months into the ceasefire, redirected in its last seconds. Neither shows the target, the reason it was being struck, or where the munition landed. The two clips dated just before the ceasefire, 25 and 28 September 2025, record the same kind of stop, one called off and one diverted.

The clips establish that the IDF was carrying out strikes in Gaza on those two dates and stopped those two. They do not measure how many strikes the IDF carried out during the ceasefire, or how many it stopped. The 18 are a selection made before they reached the Institute, published exactly as received; the full set is set out in the Institute's report on [the IDF's targeting record](#).

The film they arrived alongside concerns the war itself. The Guardian, which produced NAZA, reports that it rests on testimony from 24 Israeli military insiders about “the secret systems used in the war on Gaza.” The ceasefire period is where the IDF’s own footage runs past the film’s account.

When did the ceasefire take effect, and on whose account?

The IDF, in its own account, dates the ceasefire to noon on Friday **10 October 2025**, when “a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas came into effect.” Its summary of the terms is its own.

The IDF states that the conditions “consist of a 20-point plan, whose first phase stated that Hamas would return all 48 of the remaining hostages in Gaza, and fully disarm.”

Gaza’s Ministry of Health, the other party, records its casualty counts from “the ceasefire of 11 October,” a day later. Neither record explains the difference.

Date	Event	Record
10 October 2025	Ceasefire takes effect	IDF statement
13 October 2025	Trump Declaration signed	Four mediating states
17 November 2025	Resolution 2803 adopted	Security Council vote
26 January 2026	Last deceased hostage returned	Board of Peace report
15 May 2026	Board of Peace report filed	Board of Peace
29 May 2026	Strike diverted, child near target	IDF footage
12 July 2026	Strike diverted, four minors near target	IDF footage
10 September 2026	NAZA reported at its premiere	The Guardian

The written instruments came after the start. The plan itself is dated 29 September 2025. On 13 October 2025 four states signed the Trump Declaration at Sharm el-Sheikh: the United States, Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye. Neither Israel nor Hamas signed it, and it contains no ceasefire term; its nearest operative sentence is “We hereby commit to the resolution of

future disputes through diplomatic engagement and negotiation rather than through force or protracted conflict.”

On 17 November 2025 the Security Council adopted resolution 2803, by 13 votes to none with China and Russia abstaining. Its first paragraph “Endorses the Comprehensive Plan, acknowledges the parties have accepted it, and calls on all parties to implement it in its entirety, including maintenance of the ceasefire, in good faith and without delay.”

So the ceasefire has a start the two parties date a day apart, a plan drafted by a third party, a declaration signed by the four states that brokered it, and a Council endorsement 38 days after it began.

What does the ceasefire text say must stop?

The plan annexed to resolution **2803** states that “all military operations, including aerial and artillery bombardment, will be suspended, and battle lines will remain frozen until conditions are met for the complete staged withdrawal.” That sentence, in the plan’s third point, is the whole of its cessation clause.

The point opens: “If both sides agree to this proposal, the war will immediately end. Israeli forces will withdraw to the agreed upon line to prepare for a hostage release.” The plan does not name, describe or map that line. The IDF’s statements refer to a “yellow line,” a name that appears nowhere in the plan or the resolution, and no document examined here maps either.

The plan never uses the word “ceasefire.” The word enters the record through the Council, whose first operative paragraph calls for “maintenance of the ceasefire,” and it appears three times in the resolution’s operative text. The plan speaks instead of a war that will “immediately end” and of operations that “will be suspended.”

Neither document uses the words “violation,” “breach,” “enforce” or “sanction.” The texts therefore say what stops, air and artillery bombardment and all military operations, and say nothing about what counts as failing to stop, who decides that it has happened, or what follows when it does.

That absence shapes every record below. A party that describes an incident as a violation is applying its own test, and a body that reports violations has no definition to count against. No document examined here says whether either IDF strike in the ceasefire-period clips fell inside or outside what the ceasefire allowed.

Who is charged with monitoring the ceasefire?

Resolution **2803** gives the monitoring role to a temporary International Stabilization Force, which shall “assist the BoP in monitoring the implementation of the ceasefire in Gaza.” That clause, in the resolution’s seventh paragraph, is the whole of the monitoring mandate.

The BoP is the Board of Peace, which the resolution establishes “as a transitional administration with international legal personality.” The plan names the President of the United States as its chair. The resolution’s only reporting duty, in its tenth paragraph, “Requests the BoP provide a written report on progress related to the above to the UN Security Council every six months.” The duty is to report progress, and the text sets no duty to count, classify or publish incidents.

The plan’s only “independent monitors” sit in its thirteenth point and supervise something else: “a process of demilitarization of Gaza under the supervision of independent monitors,” to be “verified by the independent monitors.” They are monitors of weapons decommissioning, not of the ceasefire, and the plan does not say who they are.

The force given the monitoring role had not deployed seven months in. The Board of Peace reported in May 2026 that “Preparations for deployment are well advanced” and that “Efforts are ongoing in force generation and deployment.” Five states signed the founding declaration of contributors on 19 February 2026: Albania, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo and Morocco.

The Board reports a separate coordination body, a Civil-Military Coordination Centre established on 17 October 2025 and “involving 50 partner nations and organizations.” Its report gives no incident count from that centre either. As of the Board’s report of 15 May 2026, two weeks before the first of the two clips, the body the Council charged with helping

monitor the ceasefire was still being assembled, and the clause that charges it imposes no obligation to publish what it observes.

How often has the ceasefire been violated, on the reporting body's account?

The Board of Peace, in the only report resolution **2803** requires, states that “violations continue to occur on a near daily basis, some of which are serious, and their human consequences, civilians killed, families living in fear, and continued impediments to humanitarian access, cannot be minimized.” The report gives no total, no rate, and no attribution of any violation to either party.

The report, dated 15 May 2026, covers 17 November 2025 to 14 May 2026 and reached the Council as the annex to a letter from the United States. It opens that paragraph: “Seven months into the ceasefire, the guns have largely fallen silent across Gaza for the first time in two years.” Elsewhere the Board of Peace states that “The ceasefire has held despite considerable challenges and violations during the reporting period,” and that “every violation, from whatever quarter, risks unraveling what has been painstakingly built.”

The report is the Board's own account of its own work. Its finding on the principal obstacle, “ Hamas' refusal to accept verified decommissioning,” is its own attribution, not the determination of any court or inquiry.

The absence of a count is not a gap in the Board's compliance. The resolution asked for a report on progress, and the Board supplied one. “Near daily” is nonetheless the entire quantification of violations in the only document the ceasefire's own instrument requires, and “civilians killed” in the same sentence carries no number.

A second report falls due six months after the first, around November 2026. Until then the record holds one reporting period, one qualitative description, and no series from which a rise or fall in violations could be read. Anyone citing a number of violations for the ceasefire is citing a body other than the one the Council charged with reporting.

What does the IDF count as a violation?

The IDF publishes a dated list of what it calls Hamas violations of the ceasefire, its own account, on a page dated **19 February 2026**, and gives no total. The page presents its entries as “IDF press releases addressing each ceasefire violation by Hamas since the start of the agreement.”

The IDF states the test it applies: “All these activities constitute a clear violation of the understandings of the ceasefire, and the IDF has been responding in accordance with the ceasefire agreement, eliminating terrorists who pose a threat to our troops and citizens of Israel.” The test is the IDF’s own, because the governing text defines no violation.

The recurring incident is a crossing of the line. The IDF records, in an entry of 20 October 2025: “the IDF identified several terrorists who crossed the yellow line and approached IDF troops operating in the Shejaiya area, posing an immediate threat to them. The troops fired toward the terrorists who crossed the yellow line in order to remove the threat to them.” A heading of 22 November reads: “Another Violation of the Ceasefire Agreement: An Armed Terrorist Crossed the Yellow Line on a Humanitarian Route, Fired at IDF Soldiers, And Was Eliminated.”

The list records only violations the IDF attributes to Hamas and other armed groups, and none by Israel. The words “terrorist” and “eliminated” are the IDF’s own. It gives no count of people killed in the incidents it lists, and its dates need checking before use: nineteen entries in its November block carry the year 2026 on a page dated February 2026, and so must be November 2025 entries with the wrong year.

The IDF’s statement on the film, of 11 September 2026, describes its conduct in the present tense: “the IDF strikes military targets and makes unprecedented efforts to minimize harm to civilians.” The two ceasefire-period clips are its own footage of two strikes stopped for children in that period. Its list of violations is its own account of why it was striking at all, and neither gives a figure for how often either occurred.

What does Gaza’s Ministry of Health count since the ceasefire?

Gaza's Ministry of Health reported **1,359** people killed since the ceasefire it dates to 11 October, in its daily report of 10 September 2026, its own count and not independently verified. The same report gives 4,571 injured since the ceasefire and 831 bodies recovered from rubble.

The ministry is a health ministry under the authority governing Gaza, a party to the war, and its figures are its own. The Ministry of Health reported cumulative totals on the same day of 73,670 killed and 174,682 injured since October 2023. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the Palestinian statistics office, estimates Gaza's population at about 2.13 million at the end of 2025, an estimate rather than a count. The ministry publishes no split between combatants and civilians, and it adds records to its totals by administrative approval: 160 were added during August 2026 on the approval of what it calls a martyrs' approval committee.

The ministry's count and the IDF's list measure different things. The ministry counts deaths it has registered; the IDF lists incidents it calls violations and says it responded to. Neither record says how many of the 1,359 died in the incidents on the IDF's list, and neither is set against the other by any body examined here.

The two counts therefore cannot be combined into a measure of how the ceasefire held. A reader holding both knows that the IDF says it fired on people who crossed the line, that the ministry says 1,359 people were killed in the same period, and that no record links the two numbers.

The IDF's two clips from the ceasefire period stand apart from both. They are the only records examined here that show a strike during the ceasefire at the moment of decision, and in each the IDF records a decision to divert.

What did the ceasefire's first phase deliver, on the parties' own accounts?

The Board of Peace reports that the last deceased hostage was recovered and returned to Israel on **26 January 2026**, closing the exchange at the centre of the plan's first phase. It states

that of 251 people taken captive on 7 October 2023, 168 were returned alive, the last of them on 13 October 2025.

Israel's Foreign Ministry counted 48 hostages still held on 14 September 2025, its own count, the same 48 the IDF's page says the first phase required Hamas to return. On the other side of the exchange, the Board reports that Israel released 250 prisoners serving life sentences and some 1,700 Gazans detained after 7 October 2023.

The aid side has its own count. COGAT, the Israeli defense ministry unit that coordinates entry into Gaza, records 1,778,363 metric tons of food entering the Strip between 10 October 2025 and 7 June 2026, its own count. The tonnages rest on declarations by the humanitarian organizations and suppliers shipping the goods, not on weighing at the crossings.

The first phase's other term, on the IDF's account, was that Hamas would "fully disarm." The plan puts disarmament in a later process under independent monitors, and the Board's report names "Hamas' refusal to accept verified decommissioning" as the principal obstacle, its own attribution.

On the parties' and the Board's accounts, then, the exchanges the first phase promised were completed within four months, aid entered under a count kept by one party, and, on the Board's account, Hamas had not accepted verified decommissioning by May 2026. Each of those statements rests on a record kept by a body with a stake in the outcome, and each is dated.

What can the clips and the records not show about the ceasefire?

The IDF's two ceasefire-period clips, its own record, show strikes diverted on 2 dates; they do not show the target, the reason it was struck, or how many other strikes were carried out that month. No record examined here supplies that count.

The gap runs through every document. The plan defines no breach; the resolution imposes no duty to count; the monitoring force had not deployed by May 2026. The Board of Peace

reports violations “on a near daily basis” with no number, the IDF lists incidents with no total, and the Ministry of Health counts deaths without linking them to incidents.

A measure of how the ceasefire held would need three things no body publishes: a stated standard for what the ceasefire forbids, a record of each strike and each incident against that standard, and an attribution of each to a party. Each party publishes its own version of the second, on its own test, for its own side of the ledger.

The film’s questions sit before all of this. NAZA’s insiders, as The Guardian reports them, describe how targets were chosen during the war. Whether the same system chose targets after 10 October 2025 is not addressed in any record examined here. The two clips show that strikes were still being carried out, and that the same kind of stop still happened. Their dates are part of the footage as supplied, and the Institute has not verified when or where either clip was recorded.

Methodology and limitations

This report sets the two IDF clips dated after 10 October 2025 against the documents that govern the Gaza ceasefire: Security Council resolution 2803 of 17 November 2025 with its annexed plan and recorded vote, the Trump Declaration of 13 October 2025, the Board of Peace’s report of 15 May 2026, the IDF’s page listing what it calls ceasefire violations, the Gaza Ministry of Health’s daily report of 10 September 2026, and counts published by Israel’s Foreign Ministry and COGAT. The film’s claims come from The Guardian, which produced it; the film was not viewed.

The clips appear exactly as received, with their checksums; their dates are part of the footage as supplied and have not been verified. A clip counts as post-ceasefire where its on-screen date falls after 10 October 2025.

Every count here is a party’s own or the Board’s own. The ministry’s figures, the IDF’s list, COGAT’s tonnages and the Foreign Ministry’s hostage count are each self-reported and not independently verified. No body examined here publishes a count of ceasefire violations against a stated standard.

Conclusion

The IDF's own footage answers the title's first question plainly. Did its strikes stop at the ceasefire? They did not: two of its clips record strikes under way in May and July 2026, each diverted in its last seconds because children came near. Its own list of incidents says it kept firing on people who crossed the line, which it counts as violations by the other side. Gaza's Ministry of Health counts deaths through the same months. The ceasefire held in the sense its reporting body uses, and strikes continued inside it.

What no record supplies is a way to judge them. The plan suspends all military operations and defines no breach; the force charged with monitoring had not arrived; the report the Council required describes violations near daily and never counts one. Each party keeps its own ledger, on its own test, for the other side's conduct.

A ceasefire whose texts never say what breaks it leaves every strike inside it to be judged by the side that carried it out, or by the side it struck. Who, on the present record, is in a position to say whether the two strikes the IDF chose to stop were ones the ceasefire allowed it to begin?

Frequently Asked Questions

When did the Gaza ceasefire begin?

The IDF states that the ceasefire came into effect at 12:00 on Friday 10 October 2025. Gaza's Ministry of Health dates its counts from the ceasefire of 11 October, and the Security Council endorsed the plan behind it on 17 November 2025.

Who signed the Trump Declaration of 13 October 2025?

The United States, Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye signed it at Sharm el-Sheikh. Neither Israel nor Hamas signed it, and it contains no ceasefire term.

What is the yellow line in Gaza?

It is the name the IDF's statements give to the line its forces hold in Gaza. The plan speaks only of "the agreed upon line" and does not map it, and no published instrument examined

here defines the yellow line.

Who monitors the Gaza ceasefire?

Resolution 2803 charges an International Stabilization Force with assisting the Board of Peace “in monitoring the implementation of the ceasefire.” The Board reported in May 2026 that the force was still being assembled.

Does resolution 2803 say what counts as a ceasefire violation?

No. Neither the resolution nor the plan it endorses uses the word “violation,” and neither names a body to decide whether one has occurred.

How many people have been killed in Gaza since the ceasefire?

Gaza’s Ministry of Health reported 1,359 killed since the ceasefire, to 10 September 2026, its own count and not independently verified. It does not separate combatants from civilians.

Did the IDF stop strikes during the ceasefire because civilians were near?

Two of the IDF clips provided to the Institute, dated 29 May and 12 July 2026, record a munition diverted because a child, then four minors, approached the target. They are a selection and do not show how often that happened.

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Joint statement by four states; the Federal Register notes that an original was not available for verification.

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The Hanover Institute for Public Policy studies the inputs fueling antisemitism in the United States and publishes what the evidence shows. Its work is content analysis, computational social science, and other data-driven research, and its reports take no policy positions.

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EXPLAINER BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

Does AI Decide Who the IDF Strikes, as NAZA Alleges? What Its Own Approval Chain Shows

The IDF's nine targeting stages name no software. What they, its account of Habsora and Lavender, and 18 clips show about NAZA's AI claim.

NAZA

IDF targeting

Artificial intelligence

Habsora

Lavender

Gaza



The IDF's own targeting presentation sets out **9** stages from intelligence collection to execution, names no software in any of them, and puts a qualified commander's approval at the eighth. NAZA's interviewees, The Guardian reports, describe AI-based systems built to identify large numbers of potential low-ranking Hamas targets. The IDF states that strike decisions "are made by human personnel only," and describes its two named systems as a tool that points analysts toward objects and a database that is not a list of targets. Its records show who approves a strike. They do not show how a target first entered the process, or how often a system's suggestion became one.

Key Findings

- The IDF presentation, a party's own document, sets out **9** targeting stages, with legal review seventh and commanders' approval eighth, and names no system or software at any stage.
- The IDF states that Habsora, in operational use since 2021, "cannot be solely relied upon to identify a target," and that Lavender "is a general-purpose database," "not a list of confirmed military operatives eligible to attack."
- Israel's May 2015 report, its own account, states that a senior commander may approve, suspend or abort a pre-planned attack after a legal adviser's binding opinion, and that such advice "will not be available in real time" for time-sensitive targets.
- In 6 of the 18 clips of IDF footage provided to the Institute, the subtitles use a recommendation or an acknowledgment, "I recommend" or "Copy that"; no subtitle in any clip refers to a system or a score.
- The Guardian reports NAZA's insiders describing AI systems that identified "large numbers of potential low-ranking Hamas targets"; no IDF record examined gives a count of targets suggested, approved or rejected.

What does NAZA allege about AI and targeting?

The Guardian, which produced NAZA, reports that its **24** Israeli military insiders describe “AI-based systems built to identify large numbers of potential low-ranking Hamas targets, who were then bombed in their homes at night, in the knowledge attacks would also kill their families.” The allegation concerns selection: that software proposed whom and where to strike, and in large numbers.

The directors put it more concretely in an interview with the same newspaper. The insiders, The Guardian reports, “tell us how they helped develop an AI mapping tool that trawled for phone signals and recommended apartment buildings in Gaza to bomb.” The claim is about where targets came from, not only about who approved them.

The IDF’s own answer of 11 September 2026 addresses both. It states that “decisions regarding the selection and approval of strikes in the IDF are made by human personnel only, in accordance with IDF guidelines, and not by artificial intelligence.” It adds that the film “relies on anonymous testimonies from individuals whose identity cannot be verified, including whether they served in the IDF, in what capacity, or whether they were involved in the matters about which the allegations are being made.” Of one interviewee, the IDF said three days later that “nothing about the interviewee, not his service nor his role can be independently checked and verified.”

Two questions sit inside the dispute and they are not the same question. The first is whether software generated the candidates. The second is whether a person decided to strike them. The IDF’s denial answers the second directly and names “selection” as well. Its published records, set out below, describe the second in detail and the first in a few sentences. The Institute has not viewed the film; its content enters here through its producer’s reporting.

What does the IDF say Habsora and Lavender do?

The IDF states that its system Habsora was “first utilized in an operational setting in **2021**,” its own account, and that it “suggests to the intelligence analyst to focus his or her research on certain physical objects with greater potential of a military affiliation with a terror group.” On the IDF’s description, the system proposes where to look, and a person looks.

The same page, first published on 18 June 2024 and updated on 14 September 2026, sets two conditions on that suggestion. “A suggestion from ‘Habsora’ cannot be solely relied upon to identify a target without being thoroughly explored by the intelligence analyst, and approved by an authorized intelligence officer.” The analyst researches; a second officer approves the result as a target.

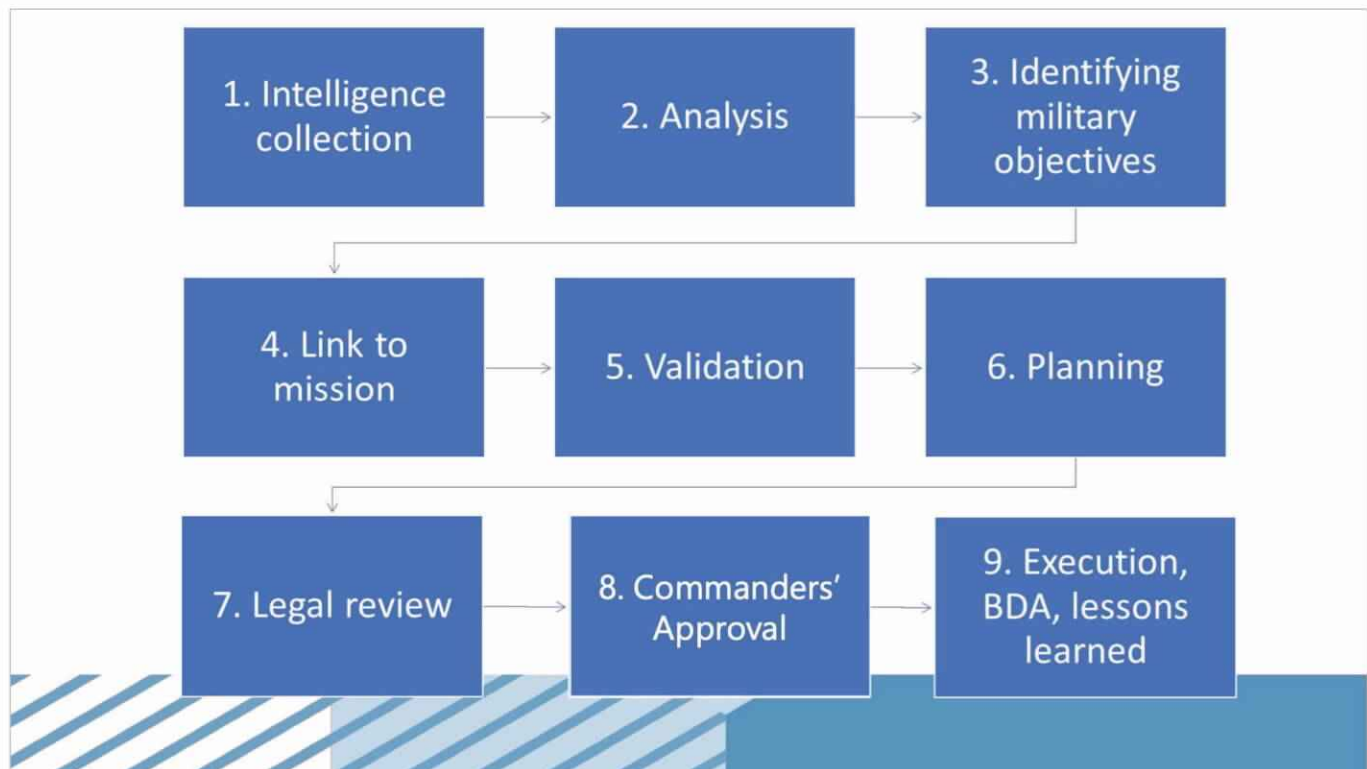
Of the second system, the IDF states that “‘Lavender’ is a general-purpose database,” and that “this is not a list of confirmed military operatives eligible to attack.” The page’s questions and answers, added in the 2026 update, ask “Does the IDF use AI to select targets in Gaza?” and answer with one word: “No.”

The two descriptions use different verbs for a first step. The directors’ tool “recommended apartment buildings”; the IDF’s system “suggests” physical objects for research. They part at the step after: the film’s account is of suggestions that became strikes, and the IDF’s is of suggestions that a person researched and another approved.

The IDF page gives no figure for how many suggestions either system produced, how many an analyst reviewed, or how many became targets. Its account is of the rule each suggestion passes through, not of how many passed. The Institute’s report on [the IDF’s targeting record](#) sets out the rest of the presentation those rules sit beside.

Where would a system sit in the IDF’s nine stages?

The IDF presentation, its own document, lists 9 stages and repeats the list on four of its 18 slides: intelligence collection, analysis, identifying military objectives, link to mission, validation, planning, legal review, commanders’ approval, and execution with battle damage assessment and lessons learned. None of the nine names a system, a database or any software.



The nine-stage target process as the presentation draws it.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 6.

The presentation does not place Habsora or Lavender anywhere. The IDF's separate description does place Habsora's output with "the intelligence analyst," and on the presentation's own list the analyst's work is the first three stages: collection, analysis and the identification of military objectives. The IDF's page adds an authorized intelligence officer who approves the result as a target, a step the presentation's list does not name separately.

Israel's May 2015 report on the 2014 war, its own account, describes the same sequence in more words. The procedures "call for the collection of intelligence about the nature of a potential target," which "is relied upon to confirm that the potential target constitutes a military objective," and the input from intelligence and planning "undergoes timely re-evaluation and re-validation according to IDF procedures." That matches the presentation's fifth stage, validation.

The pattern across the three records is the same. The later stages, from validation to approval, are described in some detail, with named roles, conditions and outcomes. The first

three, where the allegation as The Guardian reports it places the software, are named in a word or two each and described nowhere at length.

That is not a finding that anything happened in those stages, or that nothing did. It is the shape of what the IDF has published: its records say most about the later stages and least about the first ones, which is where the allegation sits.

Who approves a strike, in the IDF's own account?

The IDF presentation puts approval at the eighth of its stages and describes the approving commander as “an officer who has been professionally and operationally qualified for this role and possesses the authority to authorize strikes against designated targets.” It gives no rank, and no count of commanders who hold that authority.

Commanders' Approval

The approving commander is an officer who has been professionally and operationally qualified for this role and possesses the authority to authorize strikes against designated targets

The eighth stage, commanders' approval, as the presentation describes it.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 16.

The IDF's page on its data systems states the separation in two sentences: "intelligence officers who identify targets are not the ones who also decide to strike those targets," and "operational commanders are those who approve strikes." On the IDF's account, then, the officer who approves a suggestion as a target and the commander who approves the strike are different people, one in intelligence and one in operations.

Israel's May 2015 report describes what the approving commander can do. After receiving the professional opinions, including a legal adviser's, "a senior commander may (i) approve the attack (where appropriate, subject to certain conditions), (ii) suspend the attack (for instance, because more information about potential collateral damage is necessary), or (iii) abort the attack altogether." The report states that "commanders may add additional conditions for carrying out the attack" beyond the legal ones.

Put together, the IDF's own records name four roles between a system's suggestion and a strike: the analyst who researches it, the intelligence officer who approves it as a target, the legal adviser who reviews it, and the commander who approves, suspends or aborts.

None of the records gives a figure for how long each role took over a target, how often a target was sent back, or how many were aborted at approval. The Institute's report on [the question of targeting civilians](#) sets out what the IDF's rules say the approving commander weighs.

What part do the IDF's lawyers play?

Israel's May 2015 report, its own account, states that IDF legal advisers "are not subordinate to the commanders they advise," and that the Military Advocate General "is appointed by the Minister of Defence (a civilian authority), not by the IDF Chief of General Staff." It adds that "Legal opinions of the MAG Corps are binding upon the IDF, including with regard to the legality of individual attacks."

The Foreign Ministry repeated the point in November 2023, stating that "IDF legal advisers are not subject to the IDF chain of command on professional matters, but report directly to the Military Advocate General." The Military Advocate General's Corps states of its own head that "The MAG is subject only to the law on professional matters and operates with full independence."

The legal review is the presentation's seventh stage, and the one review Israel has published shows what it produces. The target card for a strike on 8 July 2014 is marked "Conditional," on "the provision of an effective advance warning." The Institute's report on [the one target card Israel has published](#) sets out its contents.

- Top Secret -				
Target ID: [REDACTED]				
Intell Type of Target: Arms cache i military commander. Function: The target is an a Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Kh commander. The house is bc operational planning site for i operatives for the coordination Location: Abasan Al-Kabir, c Affiliation: Palestinian Islamic Presence at target: The milita and Palestinian Islamic Jihad Description: The target is pa 23*23m in size. The target structure measuring 13*13m i the roof of the structure is k concrete structure measuring tanks, 2 solar panels, and tl shack. Weaponry located at the target [REDACTED] the manufacture of projectiles Sensitive sites: There are no 100m radius of the target. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Intelligence by [REDACTED] Aerial footage [REDACTED]	Legal Review Status: Conditional Military Objective: Arms cache and operational meeting place in a residential building Conditions: the provision of an effective advance warning. Recommendations: Real- time visual surveillance Reviewed by [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]		ives jet - store at whilst il ce, nce acking"). Not Approved	Legal Review Status: Conditional Military Objective: Arms cache and operational meeting place in a residential building Conditions: the provision of an effective advance warning. Recommendations: Real- time visual surveillance Reviewed by [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]
		Planning in 2. Option 3	Conditions ☒ Real-time visual surv. ☒ Nighttime ☒ Indiv. warning to civilians in target ☐ Indiv. warning to civil. in surrounding structures ☒ Legal conditions ☐ [REDACTED]	

The worked legal review, the target card Israel published in 2015 for a strike on 8 July 2014. The redactions and the enlarged panel are in the original.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 15.

The same 2015 report states where the lawyer is absent. In time-sensitive situations, "particularly in dynamic, fast-moving ground combat," "certain input, such as fact-specific legal advice, will not be available in real time," and commanders "rely on the training they have received, as well as directives that specify the checks and authorisations required prior to carrying out attacks."

On Israel's own account, then, a legal adviser reviews pre-planned attacks and may not review the fastest ones. None of the records says what share of strikes in the current war were pre-planned and what share time-sensitive, so none says how many passed a legal review before they were carried out.

Does membership alone make someone a target, in Israel's view?

The IDF presentation defines a military target in 2 parts, and the second is people: “A Member of an enemy armed force, a member of an organize [sic] armed group, or a civilian directly participating in hostilities (for such time that he does so).” The definition carries no rank.

Military target:

1. Objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose total or partial destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage.
2. A Member of an enemy armed force, a member of an organize armed group, or a civilian directly participating in hostilities (for such time that he does so)

The presentation's definition of a military target. The spelling “organize” is in the original.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 8.

Israel's May 2015 report, its own account, states the rule the definition applies. Hamas's military wing “is an organised armed group, and its members are therefore lawful targets of attack at all times and in all places (except for when such persons are hors de combat or entitled to special protection due to their particular function).” The Foreign Ministry's November 2023 paper states that the IDF “only targets persons who are members of organized armed groups or civilians directly participating in the hostilities.”

On that stated rule, the rank in the Guardian's allegation, "low-ranking," does not decide whether a member may be attacked. What the rule leaves to the facts is membership itself: who is a member, and on what evidence.

The 2015 report describes how that is decided for a group but not for a person. Whether an entity counts as an organised armed group rests on "comprehensive, timely intelligence assessments (which are reviewed and updated as necessary) and consultations with military lawyers as well as with the highest military echelons," under oversight "by Israel's highest legal echelons, including the Ministry of Justice."

For an individual, the records say less. The IDF describes Lavender as "not a list of confirmed military operatives eligible to attack," which says what the database is not rather than how any person's membership was confirmed. That confirmation is the step the film's account of large numbers of low-ranking targets turns on, and the step the IDF's records do not describe.

Does the IDF say each strike is weighed on its own?

The IDF states, on a page first published in **2024**, its own account, that its procedures require "an individual assessment of the anticipated military advantage and the incidental damage expected to civilians and civilian objects" for each attack, and "do not permit carrying out strikes on a category basis, without conducting individual assessments per strike."

The rule answers the film's allegation in its own terms. A system that produced targets by category, such as every member of a group, would on the IDF's stated procedure still require a separate weighing for each strike. Israel's Foreign Ministry stated the same in December 2023: proportionality is "to be applied to each and every attack independently."

The treaty text sets the duty on people. Article 57(2)(a)(i) of Additional Protocol I requires that "those who plan or decide upon an attack shall do everything feasible to verify that the objectives to be attacked are neither civilians nor civilian objects." Israel is not a party to Additional Protocols I or II; its May 2015 report states that it "abides by their provisions inasmuch as they reflect rules of customary international law."

The IDF answered a New York Times investigation in December 2024 in similar terms. The Times of Israel reports that the IDF told the newspaper that “officers always verified the information provided” by AI systems, and denied that AI tools were anything more than a “starting point” of the target selection process. It also reports that the IDF confirmed its rules of engagement changed when the war broke out, while maintaining that its practices stayed consistent with international law.

An individual assessment is a rule about process, and the IDF states it plainly. Whether it held in each strike is the question the film raises and the records examined here do not answer, because none of them records an individual assessment for any strike of the current war.

What do the IDF’s clips show about who stops a strike?

In 6 of the 18 clips of IDF targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute, the IDF’s own record, the subtitles use the language of a chain of decision: a recommendation, “I recommend,” or an acknowledgment, “Copy that” or “Copy.” No subtitle in any of the 18 refers to a system, a database or a score.

Wording in the subtitles	Clips	Dates
“I recommend”	2	22 May 2024, 27 June 2025
“Copy” or “Copy that,” without a recommendation	4	17 May, 24 May, 8 August and 14 August 2024
Neither	12	The remaining clips



IDF FOOTAGE · STRIKE ABORTED OR CANCELLED · ON SCREEN: MAY 22, 2024 · 0:11

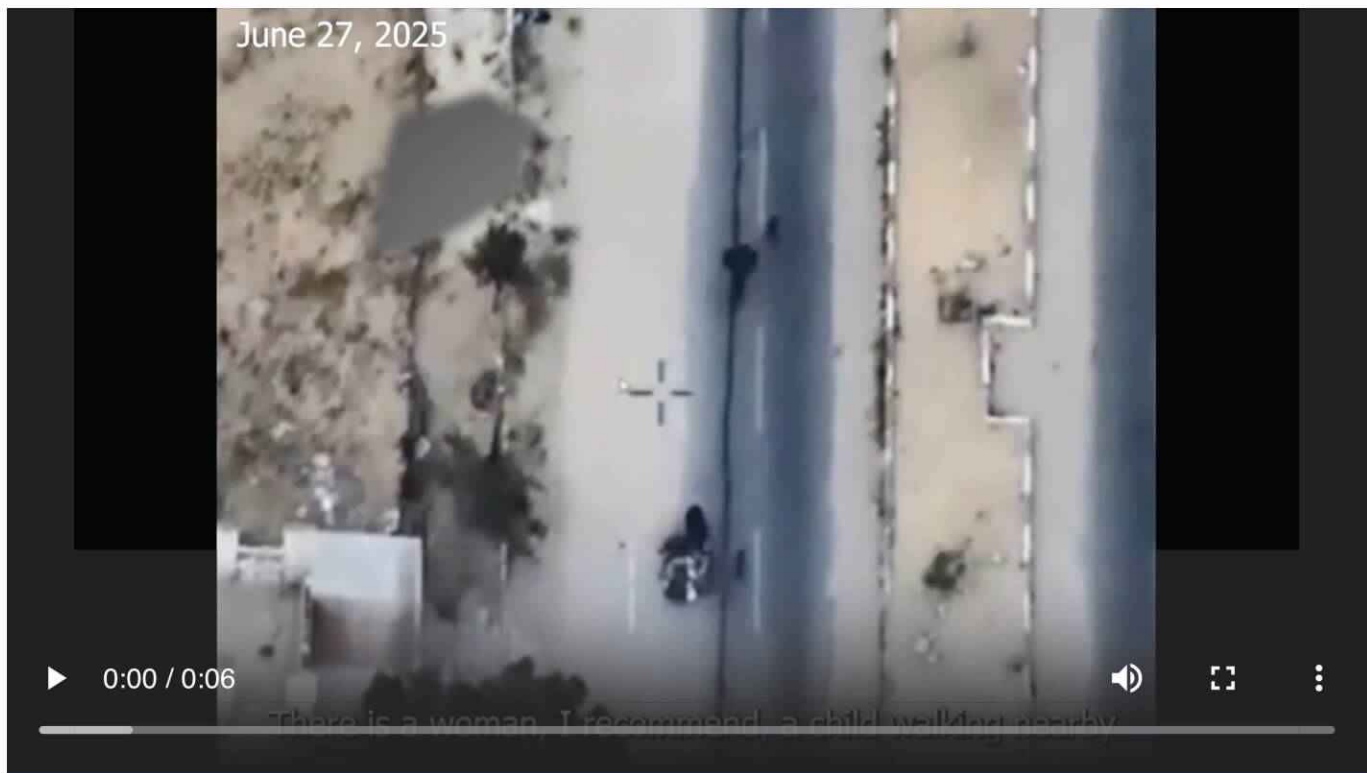
There are people there

I recommend to abort, there is a group of five people now, even more, possibly children and more. A lot
A lot, it's an appropriate time to abort

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA - 256 c3945b980e225aa9f563d63e6c7438a54240582bf286e0852da852d82bf46eb8

On 22 May 2024 one voice says "I recommend to abort, there is a group of five people now, even more, possibly children and more." On 27 June 2025: "There is a woman, I recommend, a child walking nearby," then "Copy that, divert [ammunition]." The recommendation and the order that follows it come in separate lines, which the subtitles attribute to no one by name.



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: JUNE 27, 2025 · 0:06

There is a woman, I recommend, a child walking nearby

There are two children

Copy that, divert [ammunition]

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 130f6e5e881de62eb2515c8bf3c933e3726d01cc5219fb5643e1ed49c1b8bf71

Article 57(2)(b) of Additional Protocol I provides that an attack “shall be cancelled or suspended if it becomes apparent” that it may be expected to cause excessive civilian harm. The clips show that kind of cancellation, subtitled as spoken exchanges, in the last seconds before a strike.

What they cannot show is where the target came from. Every clip begins at the end of the process, at the ninth stage, execution, and none shows how the target was proposed or approved. The 18 are a selection made before they reached the Institute, published here exactly as received, and the absence of a system in their subtitles is evidence about the moment of stopping, not about selection.

What can the IDF's records not show about target selection?

The IDF's records examined here publish no count of targets suggested by a system, approved as targets, approved for strike, suspended or aborted, for any period of the war. Each record describes a rule or an example; none gives the number of times the rule was applied.

The gap falls where the dispute is. The film's insiders, as The Guardian reports them, speak of the first stages, where software proposed buildings and people. The IDF's presentation names those stages in a word or two, its data page describes the two systems in general terms, and its 2015 report describes the collection of intelligence in a few sentences.

The testimony on the other side cannot be checked either. The IDF states that the film's interviewees cannot be verified as to whether they served, in what capacity, or whether they were involved in what they describe, and the Institute has not viewed the film. Neither account of the first stages can be set against a published record of them.

What the records do settle is the stated structure. On the IDF's own account, a system suggests, an analyst researches, an intelligence officer approves a target, a legal adviser reviews a pre-planned attack, and a commander approves, suspends or aborts; the footage shows strikes stopped in their last seconds.

The allegation, as The Guardian reports it, concerns how many targets the systems produced and what followed, and on that the records hold no figures. A report of how many system suggestions reached each stage, and how many stopped at each, would test the film's account and the IDF's at once.

Methodology and limitations

This report sets the published account of the documentary NAZA against the IDF's own records: an IDF targeting presentation provided to the Institute, 18 clips of IDF footage, the IDF's statements on the film, the IDF's page on its data systems, the Military Advocate General's Corps page on alleged misconduct, and the Israeli government's published statements of its targeting law, principally the Foreign Ministry's May 2015 report on the

2014 war and its papers of November and December 2023. The film's claims come from The Guardian, which produced it; the film was not viewed.

The presentation is undated, and its worked legal review is a 2014 case that Israel published in 2015. The clips appear exactly as received, with their checksums, and the Institute has not verified when or where they were recorded. A clip is counted for recommendation or acknowledgment where its subtitles contain "I recommend," "Copy" or "Copy that"; clips containing both are counted once, under recommendation.

Every record here is a party's own account of its own procedures, evidence of the stated standard and not of compliance with it. The Times of Israel's account of the IDF's reply to the New York Times is that outlet's report of a response.

Conclusion

The IDF's own records answer half of the title's question and leave the other half open. Does AI decide who the IDF strikes? On the IDF's account, no: a system suggests, and four roles of people stand between the suggestion and the strike, from the analyst to the commander who may abort. The presentation names no software at any of its nine stages, the IDF describes its database as not a list of targets, and in the footage every stop is subtitled as something said, none as a system's output.

The film's claim, as The Guardian reports it, is about the step before them: that software identified large numbers of targets, who were then bombed. On that, the IDF's records hold rules and no counts. They say each strike is assessed individually and that suggestions are verified; they do not say how many suggestions there were, or how many were stopped.

The IDF's answer and the film's both rest on the first stages of a process whose later stages alone are documented. If the IDF published how many of its systems' suggestions reached a commander, and how many a commander stopped, which of the two accounts would the figures leave standing?

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Habsora?

The IDF describes Habsora as a system first used operationally in 2021 that suggests to an intelligence analyst which physical objects to research for a possible link to an armed group. The IDF states that its suggestion cannot on its own identify a target without an analyst's research and an authorized intelligence officer's approval.

What is Lavender?

The IDF describes Lavender as "a general-purpose database" and states that it is "not a list of confirmed military operatives eligible to attack." The IDF's published page gives no further account of what the database holds.

Does the IDF use AI to select targets in Gaza?

The IDF states that it does not, and that decisions on the selection and approval of strikes are made by people only. The Guardian reports that NAZA's interviewees describe AI-based systems that identified large numbers of targets.

Who approves an IDF airstrike?

The IDF presentation describes an approving commander qualified for the role and holding the authority to authorize strikes. Israel's May 2015 report states that a senior commander may approve an attack, with or without conditions, suspend it, or abort it.

Are IDF legal advisers independent of the commanders they advise?

Israel's May 2015 report states that they are not subordinate to those commanders and that the Military Advocate General is appointed by the Minister of Defence. The Foreign Ministry stated in November 2023 that legal advisers report directly to the Military Advocate General on professional matters.

Can an IDF strike go ahead without a legal review?

Israel's May 2015 report states that in time-sensitive situations fact-specific legal advice "will not be available in real time," and commanders rely on training and directives. It gives no share of strikes carried out that way.

Why can't the film's claims about AI be checked against the IDF's records?

The IDF's published records describe the rules for each stage but give no count of targets a system suggested or of how many were approved or stopped. The IDF states that the film's interviewees cannot be verified.

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NAZA

IDF targeting

Distinction

Civilians

Gaza

Strike footage



The IDF's own targeting presentation names **3** kinds of person who may be attacked, and a civilian is one of them only "for such time" as he takes part in hostilities. Israel's own report on the 2014 Gaza war states that the IDF "did not deliberately target civilian objects or civilians not directly participating in hostilities." The documentary NAZA alleges that in the current war civilians were attacked in the knowledge that they would die. In 18 clips of IDF targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute, every strike stops, 15 of them after people are seen near the target, and none shows a strike that went ahead with civilians in view.

Key Findings

- The IDF's targeting presentation, a party's own document, defines a military target as objects and **3** kinds of person, the third "a civilian directly participating in hostilities (for such time that he does so)," the limit Article 51(3) of Additional Protocol I sets.
- Israel's own May 2015 report on the 2014 Gaza war states that the IDF targeted people only "where there was reasonable certainty" that they were fighters or taking part in hostilities, and that it "did not deliberately target" other civilians.
- In 18 clips of IDF targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute, the reason given for stopping is a person in **15**, trucks in 1 and nothing on screen in 2; 10 end with the instruction to divert a munition.
- The IDF's strike chart, in its own presentation, asks "Civilians in Target?" with a Yes and a No and draws no branch for either answer.
- The IDF confirmed in December 2024 that its rules of engagement changed when the current war broke out, The Times of Israel reported, and did not publish them.

What does NAZA allege about the IDF and civilians?

NAZA rests on testimony from **24** anonymous Israeli military and intelligence insiders. The Guardian, which produced the film, reports that they describe low-ranking Hamas targets "bombed in their homes at night, in the knowledge attacks would also kill their families," and

the destruction of neighborhoods where the military “estimated that up to 25% of residents were still sheltering in their homes.”

The directors, quoted by The Guardian, say their subject is “the orders themselves, the policies, the accepted practices, the language and logic that make those practices possible.” The IDF’s answer, in its own statement of 11 September 2026, is that it “categorically rejects these allegations,” that it “strikes military targets and makes unprecedented efforts to minimize harm to civilians,” and that the film “relies on anonymous testimonies from individuals whose identity cannot be verified.”

The question in the title can be asked two ways, and Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions treats them as two rules. Israel is not a party to Additional Protocols I or II; its May 2015 report on the 2014 war states that it “abides by their provisions inasmuch as they reflect rules of customary international law.” Article 51(2) says that “The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack.” Article 51(5)(b) separately forbids “an attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.”

The first rule concerns a civilian as the target. The second concerns a civilian as the expected harm of an attack on something else. The film’s accounts, as The Guardian reports them, involve both: people identified for attack, and the families killed with them. The IDF records set out below speak to both rules. They show who the IDF says may be attacked, the questions its process asks about civilians, and 18 moments in which a strike stopped. They are the IDF’s own records, and each is labelled that way where it is used.

Whom does the IDF’s presentation say may be attacked?

The IDF’s targeting presentation, its own document, lists 3 kinds of person as military targets: “A Member of an enemy armed force, a member of an organize [sic] armed group, or a civilian directly participating in hostilities (for such time that he does so).” The first part of the same slide defines targetable objects.

Military target:

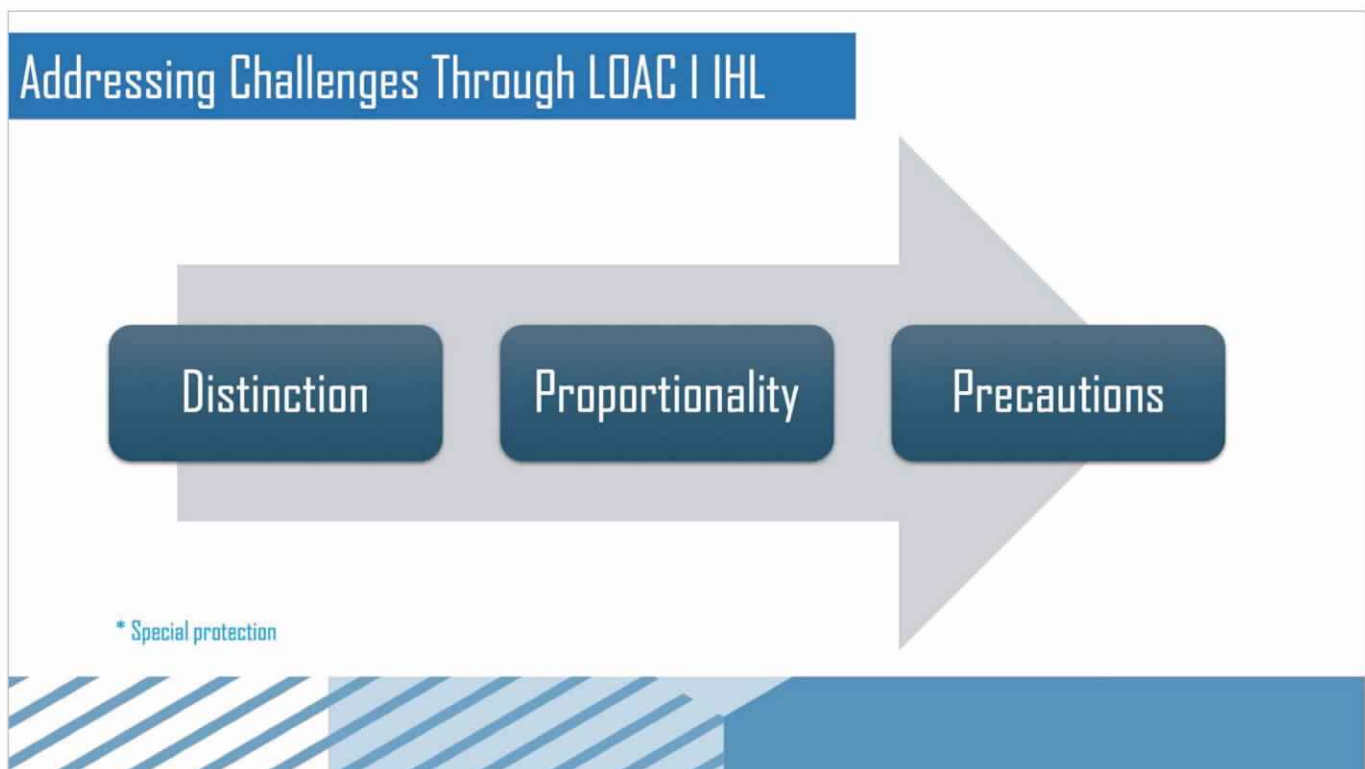
1. Objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose total or partial destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage.
2. A Member of an enemy armed force, a member of an organized armed group, or a civilian directly participating in hostilities (for such time that he does so)

The presentation's definition of a military target. The spelling "organize" is in the original.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 8.

The parenthesis is the part that answers the question, and the IDF presentation states it without qualification. Article 51(3) of Additional Protocol I says that civilians keep their protection "unless and for such time as they take a direct part in hostilities," and the presentation's wording tracks that limit. Israel's own report on the 2014 war, published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May 2015, states the same rule: civilians who take a direct part "become legitimate targets for attack during and for such time as they so participate in hostilities." The report adds that the IDF gives its personnel "a list of activities amounting to direct participation in hostilities, which accords with the relevant guidelines given by Israel's Supreme Court."

The definition comes after a slide that frames the whole deck in three words, "Distinction," "Proportionality" and "Precautions," with a note for "Special protection." Distinction is the principle at issue in the title: attacks are to be directed at military targets and not at civilians.



The three principles the presentation sets out, with a note for special protection.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 5.

What the presentation does not say is how a person seen from the air is placed in one of the three categories, or who decides that a civilian is taking part in hostilities at a given moment. Its definition fixes the rule. It does not show the rule being applied to anyone, and the IDF's published list of activities amounting to direct participation, mentioned in the 2015 report, is not in any record examined here.

Who counts as a civilian in Israel's stated view?

Israel's own report on the 2014 war, dated May 2015, states that members of organized armed groups "may be attacked at any time by the sole virtue of their membership," and that members of Hamas's military wing are lawful targets "at all times and in all places." On that view a member off duty is not a civilian at all.

The report defends the position in a footnote. A member of an organized armed group, it says, "need not have a 'continuous combat function' in order to be targetable under customary international law," and it acknowledges that this holds "notwithstanding the

approach taken in the interpretative guidance prepared by the ICRC.” The phrase in quotation marks is the test in the International Committee of the Red Cross guidance the footnote cites, and Israel’s report states that a member need not meet it.

The same report draws a line on the other side. “The IDF did not target Hamas lawmakers, politicians or law-enforcement officials because of their affiliation with Hamas,” it states, and “The IDF recognises that civilians affiliated with Hamas are not lawful targets as such.” Which groups count as organized armed groups is settled, it says, by intelligence assessments and “consultations with military lawyers,” overseen by “Israel’s highest legal echelons, including the Ministry of Justice.”

This is where the two accounts part before any strike is planned. The Guardian reports the film’s interviewees describing “large numbers of potential low-ranking Hamas targets.” Under Israel’s stated view, rank does not decide the question; membership does. Under the test the footnote sets aside, function would. The records examined here state Israel’s legal position. None of them shows how membership was established for any person struck in the current war, or how many of the people the film describes would qualify under either test.

What does the IDF’s strike chart do when civilians are in the target?

The IDF’s strike chart, in its own presentation, asks “Civilians in Target?” and offers 2 answers, Yes and No, without drawing a branch from either; every arrow runs forward to “Permission to Strike.” The chart records that the question is asked, not what follows from each answer.



The strike approval chart: eight steps, four of them yes-or-no gates.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 18.

What follows is set out in Israel's own statements of the law. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, answering questions on the war in December 2023, states that proportionality "is to be applied to each and every attack independently" and that "Israeli strikes that do not meet this threshold have been, and will continue to be, aborted." Its November 2023 paper on the legal aspects adds that "compliance is conduct-oriented, not result-oriented": an attack is judged on what was expected when it was ordered.

On that account, a Yes at the civilian gate is not a stop by itself. It enters an estimate of expected harm, which is weighed against the military advantage the commander anticipates. Israel's 2015 report says the estimate always required "a timely assessment regarding the presence of civilians," and that civilians who stayed despite warnings were not treated "as voluntary human shields and thus legitimate targets for attack." Nor, it states, did the IDF "discount such civilians for purposes of its proportionality analyses."

The chart therefore places the film's allegation precisely. The dispute is not over whether the question is asked; the IDF's own chart shows that it is. It is over the answer and its weight,

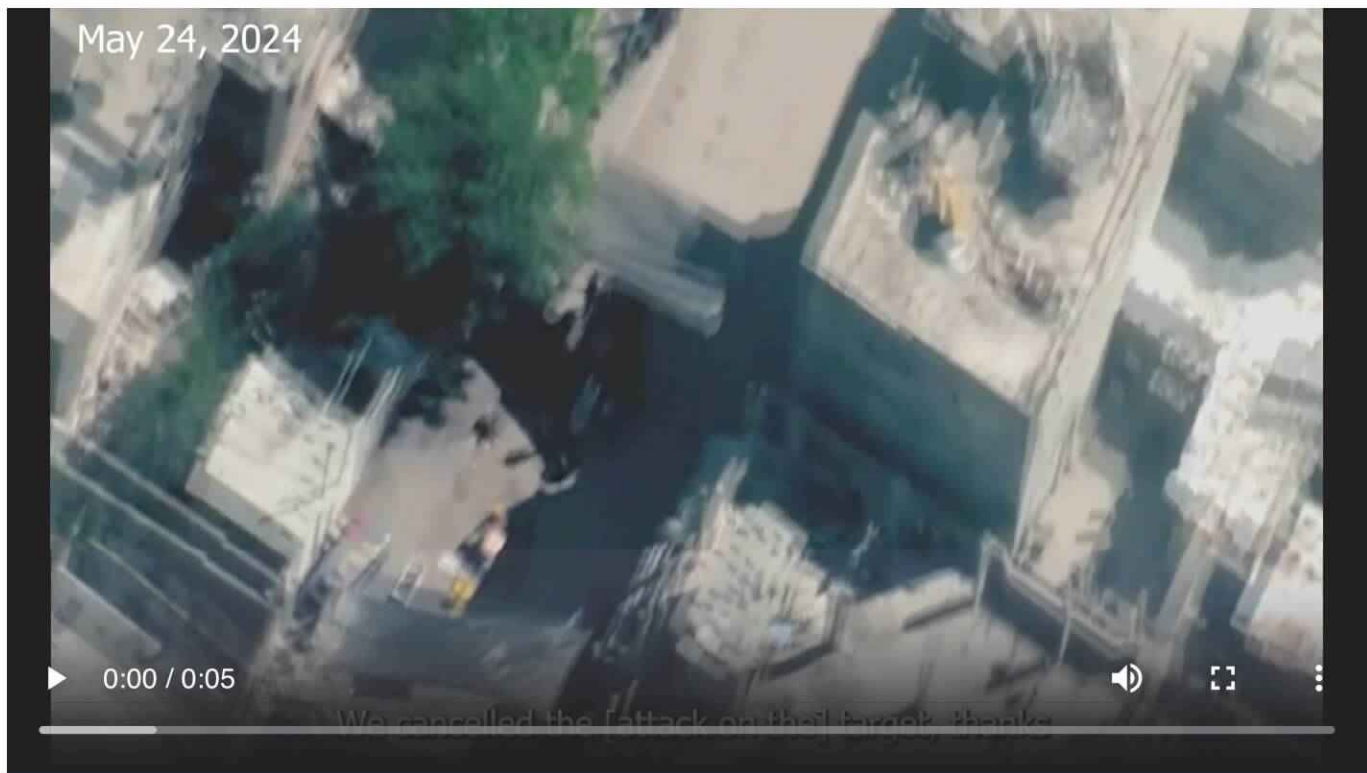
which the chart does not record and which the IDF has not published for any strike. The dispute over [a single strike estimate of 500](#), which the IDF denies ever approving, is a dispute about that weight.

What happens in the IDF's footage when people appear near a target?

In the **18** clips of IDF targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute, the IDF's own record, every exchange ends in a stop, and the reason given is a person in 15: groups, a cyclist, a woman in a car, children. One stop is for trucks, and two give no reason on screen.

Reason given on screen	Clips	Example from the subtitles
People near the target	15	"Copy that, cancelled due to uninvolved [civilians]"
Trucks	1	"Divert, don't harm the trucks"
No reason on screen	2	"This is an active area"

One clip uses the law's own word, as the IDF footage shows. On 24 May 2024 the strike is called off and the reply is "Copy that, cancelled due to uninvolved [civilians]," with the bracketed word supplied in the subtitles.



IDF FOOTAGE · STRIKE ABORTED OR CANCELLED · ON SCREEN: MAY 24, 2024 · 0:05

We cancelled the [attack on the] target, thanks

Copy that, cancelled due to uninvolved [civilians]

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 c44b5af11767000cb8cfab5e46d2ab939ee4c0826f5c39590cdf3d43df565156

In two clips the target itself appears to be a person, and what stops the strike is the person beside him. On 14 August 2024 the exchange is “We suspect that there is a woman in the car with him,” then “Stand by while we confirm.” On 10 December 2024 it is “Isn’t that a child near him?” then “Divert, divert, divert. I diverted.”



IDF FOOTAGE · HELD TO CONFIRM · ON SCREEN: AUGUST 14, 2024 · 0:06

We suspect that there is a woman in the car with him

Stand by while we confirm

Copy, we are standing by

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 e86c28d8b65a71e6bfa7dbf3968c7b086251f554a55fd334d917791a33a6ef51



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: DECEMBER 10, 2024 · 0:03

Isn't that a child near him?

Divert, divert, divert. I diverted

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 2eb4430fc852a7df06871ebbe66a9f205871dd4a2ab8a1d6df1356a93e978244

The footage shows civilians treated as a reason to stop. It shows nothing either side of that moment: not who the target was, not whether it was struck later, and not any strike that went ahead with people in view. The clips are a selection, made before they reached the Institute, and they are published here exactly as received.

How many of the stopped strikes had the munition already been released?

In 10 of the 18 IDF clips, on the IDF's own footage, the last instruction is to divert, the word Israel's 2015 report uses for redirecting a bomb "after the bomb had been dropped but before it hit its target." The other 8 end in an abort, a cancellation or a hold, with no instruction to divert.

How the 18 IDF clips endLAST INSTRUCTION ON SCREEN, APRIL 2024 TO JULY 2026



Source: IDF targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute, 18 clips, classified by the last instruction on screen.

The 2015 report explains the stakes of that difference through one case from 8 July 2014 in Khan Yunis. Civilians warned out of a residential building had left, but “a number of people were nevertheless identified as approaching or returning to the premises after the bomb had been dropped but before it hit its target.” At that stage, the report states, “given the type of bomb, there was no technical possibility of diverting the bomb or aborting the attack,” and “eight civilians lost their lives in this exceptional incident.”

A diversion is therefore a last-seconds decision that depends on the weapon. The latest clip in the set shows how short the interval can be. On 12 July 2026 the exchange counts down, “Four people approaching, ten seconds,” reports “Four minors, currently not very close,” and ends “Divert [ammunition].”



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: JULY 12, 2026 · 0:07

Four people approaching, ten seconds

Four minors, currently not very close

Divert [ammunition]. Divert [ammunition] [sic]

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 d4cf3b12ccfd06c8924ad95373faeae7c3a46f048458a83728af518430ac33a0

The ten diverted clips do not show where the munition landed after it was redirected. The 2015 case shows the other outcome: a bomb that could not be diverted, and civilians who were not seen until it had been released. The records examined here contain one example of each, from two different wars, and no count of either.

What did Israel say about targeting civilians after the 2014 war?

Israel's own report on the 2014 Gaza war, dated May 2015, states that the IDF targeted people only "where there was reasonable certainty that they were members of organised armed

groups or civilians directly participating in hostilities,” and that “The IDF did not deliberately target civilian objects or civilians not directly participating in hostilities.”

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs report acknowledges the deaths that followed. “Uninvolved civilians were killed during the 2014 Gaza Conflict,” it states. “Israel did not intend these casualties and regrets that they occurred.” It also records strikes stopped for civilians who were not legally required to stop them. Pilots, it says, “exercised their discretion to cancel or delay planned strikes due to the presence of civilians, even when not so required by the law,” including an attack on a weapons manufacturing site in al-Maghazi on 10 July, aborted when “a large group of people” was seen near the target, and one on a rocket launching site in Al-Shati on 13 July, aborted “after spotting three civilians walking near the site.”

Commanders, the report adds, “refrained from carrying out attacks in light of the potential for civilian harm, even where such harm may have been considered proportionate.” The presentation provided to the Institute makes the same point on its seventeenth slide, “Many strikes were cancelled due to unexpected presence of civilians,” with one dated example: 14 July 2014, the same date as the IDF video the 2015 report cites for the two July aborts.

The report is Israel’s own account of its own conduct, and every example in it comes from a war that ended nine years before the current one began. It gives no count of strikes cancelled for civilians. No equivalent report on the current war is among the records examined here.

Did the IDF’s rules on civilian harm change in the current war?

The IDF confirmed in December **2024** that its rules of engagement changed when the war broke out, as The Times of Israel reported, responding to an investigation by The New York Times, and maintained that its practices remained consistent with international law. The IDF did not publish the rules.

The same exchange carries the IDF’s account of how targets were verified. The IDF told the newspaper, The Times of Israel reported, that “officers always verified the information provided” by artificial intelligence systems, and denied that such tools were anything more than a “starting point” of target selection. The investigation’s figures for how many civilian

deaths could be approved per strike came from officers the newspaper did not name. The IDF published no figure of its own in reply, and none appears in any IDF record examined here.

The confirmation fixes the date of the records. The 2015 report, the legal review on the presentation's fifteenth slide and its one dated cancellation all date from 2014. The presentation itself carries no date; one of its evacuation notices dates from February 2024 and its worked examples from ten years earlier, so it describes a process across two wars and does not say which rules each slide reflects.

The 18 clips are the only records here dated inside the current war, from April 2024 to July 2026. They show strikes stopping under whatever rules applied on those days. They cannot show what the changed rules permitted when no one called a stop, which is the conduct the film's interviewees describe.

How does Israel decide whether a civilian death was a crime?

The IDF's Military Advocate General's Corps, in its own account, states that in armed conflict "death or injury to a civilian or harm to civilian objects, while tragic and regrettable, in most cases do not by themselves indicate a reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct." It had opened **74** criminal investigations by 3 August 2024, 6 of them into alleged illegal use of force.

The threshold is the other half of the deliberate-targeting question, as the Military Advocate General's Corps states it. Under it, a civilian death is not treated as evidence of intent; an investigation needs a reason to suspect that the death was not "reasonable aftermath of lawful operational activity," in the Corps' words. The same account records more than 1,000 incidents referred for factual assessment. Both figures are the IDF's own counts of its own process, and they count investigations opened, not findings. The findings other named bodies have issued are set out in the Institute's report on [claims of deliberate targeting](#).

The IDF also placed a duty on the film's own sources. A soldier who witnesses a violation "is required under military orders to report it so that the need to open an investigation can be examined," it said on 11 September 2026. "This also applies to individuals who were interviewed for the film."

No IDF record examined here counts the strikes stopped because civilians were present, or the strikes that went ahead with civilians in the target. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote in December 2023 that “countless attacks have been aborted or avoided completely in order to prevent harm to civilians,” and the IDF has published footage of such abortions before, as The Times of Israel reported on 18 December 2023. Countless is the Ministry’s word, not a number. Without the count of approvals, stops and strikes, neither the 18 clips nor the film’s cases can be placed against the whole.

Methodology and limitations

This report sets the published account of the documentary NAZA against the IDF’s own records: a targeting presentation and 18 clips of footage provided to the Institute, the IDF’s statement on the film, and the Israeli government’s published statements of its targeting law, principally the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ May 2015 report on the 2014 Gaza war. The film’s claims come from The Guardian, which produced it; the film itself was not viewed. Treaty wording is quoted from Additional Protocol I.

The 18 clips were provided to the Hanover Institute by a source on 17 September 2026 and appear exactly as received, each with the SHA-256 checksum of its file. The Institute classified each clip by the last instruction on screen, and by the reason the exchange gives for stopping: a person or people, a vehicle, or none stated. The dates and subtitles are part of the files as supplied, and the Institute has not independently verified when or where any clip was recorded.

Every record here is a party’s own account, and the clips and the presentation’s examples are selections, so none supports a rate or a finding about any strike the film describes. The 2015 report describes the rules of 2014, which the IDF has confirmed changed in the current war; where it is quoted, its date is given.

Conclusion

The IDF’s own records answer the question in the title with a rule and a set of examples. Does the IDF deliberately target civilians? The presentation limits targetable civilians to those

taking part in hostilities, and only while they do. The strike chart asks whether civilians are in the target. Israel's 2015 report states that the IDF did not deliberately target civilians in the 2014 war. In 18 recorded exchanges from the current one, the strike stops each time, and in 15 the reason is a person on the ground.

The same records show where the allegation lies beyond their reach. Israel's stated view counts a member of an armed wing as a target at all times and in all places, so the line between a civilian and a fighter is drawn before any strike, and drawn without the test in the Red Cross guidance its report sets aside. The civilian gate on the chart has no recorded consequence, and the rules that weighed its answer changed when the war began.

A strike that stopped leaves a clip; a strike that went ahead leaves an outcome and, somewhere, an estimate. If the estimates for the strikes that proceeded were ever set beside the 18 that did not, which of them would show the rule, and which the exception?

Frequently Asked Questions

Does international law allow attacks that kill civilians?

Additional Protocol I forbids making civilians "the object of attack" in Article 51(2) and forbids attacks whose expected civilian harm "would be excessive" against the anticipated military advantage in Article 51(5)(b). An attack on a military target that kills civilians is judged under the second rule, which Israel's own statements describe as applied "to each and every attack independently."

When can a civilian be attacked under the IDF's definition?

The IDF's presentation allows it only for "a civilian directly participating in hostilities (for such time that he does so)." Israel's 2015 report says the IDF gives personnel a list of activities that count, in line with guidelines from Israel's Supreme Court; the list itself is not published in the records examined here.

Why does Israel treat off-duty members of Hamas's military wing as targets?

Israel's May 2015 report states that members of organized armed groups may be attacked "by the sole virtue of their membership," and states that a member need not have a "continuous combat function," the test in the Red Cross guidance it cites. It states separately that civilians affiliated with Hamas are "not lawful targets as such."

Were the 18 IDF clips chosen to show strikes being stopped?

The clips were selected before they reached the Institute, and every one ends in a stop, so they cannot show how often strikes stopped or went ahead. The IDF has published footage of aborted strikes before, as The Times of Israel reported in December 2023.

What does it mean when the IDF footage says "divert"?

In Israel's own 2015 report, diverting refers to redirecting a bomb "after the bomb had been dropped but before it hit its target," which the report says is not always technically possible. Ten of the 18 clips end with that instruction.

Has the IDF published its rules of engagement for the current war?

No IDF record examined here contains them. The IDF confirmed in December 2024, as The Times of Israel reported, that the rules changed when the war broke out, and maintained that its practices remained consistent with international law.

Has any IDF soldier been prosecuted over the strikes NAZA describes?

None of the records examined identifies a prosecution for any strike the film describes, and the film, as reported, identifies none by date or place. The IDF's Military Advocate General's Corps reported 74 criminal investigations opened by 3 August 2024, its own count, across all alleged misconduct in the war.

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Did the IDF Strike Neighborhoods It Knew Were Still Populated? What Its Own Sector Map Shows

The IDF kept a 630-sector map of who stayed in Gaza. What it, Israel's warning counts and IDF footage show about NAZA's claim on populated areas.

NAZA

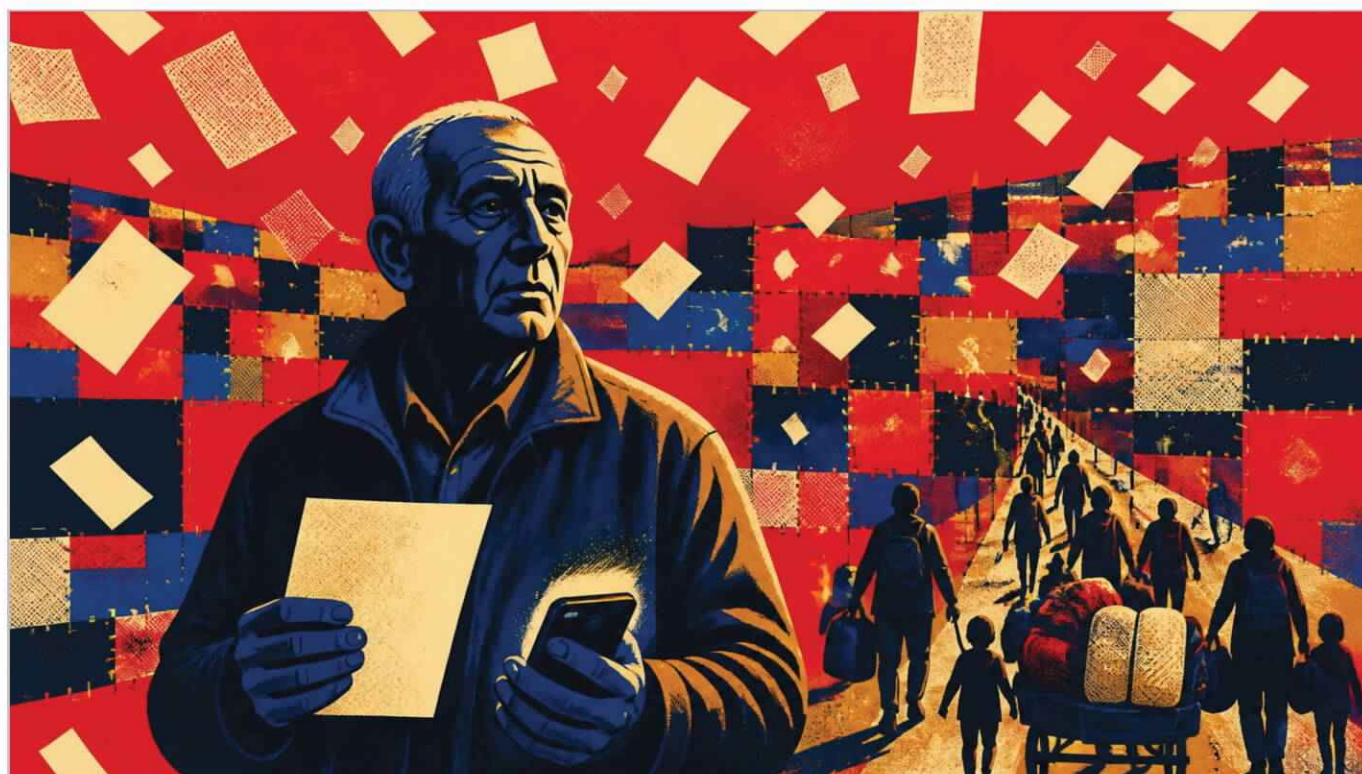
IDF targeting

Evacuation

Warnings

Gaza

Sector map



The IDF's own presentation records that a Southern Command team divided Gaza into **630** sectors and made "continuous assessments of the population presence" in each, so that forces would be "aware of civilian presence in each sector." The documentary NAZA alleges that neighborhoods were destroyed where the military estimated that up to 25% of residents were still at home. On the IDF's own account, then, how many civilians remained in a sector was measured rather than unknown, and Israel's Foreign Ministry states that the IDF "does not assume that there are no civilians in areas or sites where advance warnings had been given." None of the IDF records publishes a single sector's estimate, or what was struck in a sector after it was made.

Key Findings

- The IDF presentation, a party's own document, records a map dividing Gaza into **630** sectors with "continuous assessments of the population presence" in each, kept by a team led by a brigadier general.
- The Guardian reports NAZA's interviewees describing neighborhoods destroyed where the military "estimated that up to 25% of residents were still sheltering in their homes"; no IDF record examined gives a sector estimate to set against it.
- Israel's Foreign Ministry counted over 15 million text messages and over 4.5 million leaflets sent to Gaza by 8 December 2023, its own figures, and states that a warned area is not assumed to be empty.
- The IDF presentation reproduces a February 2024 notice of daily four-hour pauses in named neighborhoods, three of them in Rafah, and an urgent warning to 7 numbered blocks that "The area you are in is considered a dangerous combat zone!"
- Israel's Foreign Ministry stated in December 2023 that the IDF "is well aware of the increased number of civilians in southern Gaza," where it said operations were necessary.

What does NAZA allege about populated neighborhoods?

The **24** Israeli military insiders who testify in NAZA give, The Guardian reports, accounts of “the destruction of neighbourhoods where the Israeli military estimated that up to 25% of residents were still sheltering in their homes.” The allegation carries its own measurement: the military, on the interviewees’ account, knew roughly what share of a neighborhood had stayed.

The directors, as The Guardian quotes them, say their subject is “the orders themselves, the policies, the accepted practices.” The IDF’s own answer of 11 September 2026 is that it “categorically rejects these allegations,” and that “ Hamas continues to systematically operate from within the civilian environment, embedding its operatives and military infrastructure among the population and exploiting civilian areas for terrorist purposes.”

The treaty text addresses both halves of that exchange. Article 51(5)(a) of Additional Protocol I treats as indiscriminate “an attack by bombardment by any methods or means which treats as a single military objective a number of clearly separated and distinct military objectives located in a city, town, village or other area containing a similar concentration of civilians or civilian objects.” Article 51(7) forbids using “the presence or movements of the civilian population” to render “certain points or areas immune from military operations.” Article 51(8) adds that a violation of that prohibition does not release the other side from its obligations toward civilians, including the precautions of Article 57. Israel is not a party to Additional Protocols I or II; its May 2015 report on the 2014 war states that it “abides by their provisions inasmuch as they reflect rules of customary international law.”

The question in the title therefore has a factual part and a legal part. The factual part is what the IDF knew about who remained. The IDF’s own records answer it more directly than they answer anything else in this dispute, because the IDF describes an instrument built to measure exactly that. The legal part, what was done with the knowledge, is the part the records leave open. The Institute has not viewed the film; its content enters here through its producer’s reporting.

What does the IDF’s sector map measure?

The IDF presentation, its own document, describes a team “led by a Brigadier General, and made up of intelligence experts, Arabists, legal advisers, OSINT specialists and more,” whose

mission was “to assess the overall presence of civilians throughout the Gaza Strip.” Its tool was a map of **630** sectors, each with “continuous assessments of the population presence that is there.”

The Southern Command operated a team led by a Brigadier General, and made up of intelligence experts, Arabists, legal advisers, OSINT specialists and more, whose mission has been to **assess the overall presence of civilians throughout the Gaza Strip and to message them effectively in accordance with IDF operations.**

One such tool this team has developed is a layered map which divides Gaza into 630 sectors. For each sector, the unit made continuous assessments **of the population presence that is there, while maintaining contact with key communal leaders in those sectors.**

This map is then disseminated both internally, so that forces are aware of civilian presence in each sector, as well as the presence of critical civilian sites such as shelters, in an area; and disseminated externally – as a “common language” tool used to effectively convey to the Gazan population precisely where the IDF intends to operate and where are the safer regions.

Relevant features of this map are disseminated to the Gazan population in a variety of ways, including through the millions of leaflets, phone calls, and text messages which have been disseminated by the IDF since the start of the war.

The presentation’s account of the sector map and the team that kept it.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 10.

The slide states two uses. Internally, the map was disseminated “so that forces are aware of civilian presence in each sector, as well as the presence of critical civilian sites such as shelters.” Externally, it served as a “‘common language’ tool used to effectively convey to the Gazan population precisely where the IDF intends to operate and where are the safer regions.” The team kept “contact with key communal leaders in those sectors.”

Mapping Civilian Evacuation



The presentation's evacuation map, divided into numbered sectors.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 11.

Israel's Foreign Ministry describes what appears to be the same mechanism in its answers on the war, updated to 8 December 2023, under a name the presentation does not use: the "Civilian Harm Mitigation Unit," made up of senior commanders, intelligence officers, Arabic-speaking soldiers and legal advisers. The Ministry states that the unit "constantly monitors in real time the implementation of these evacuation recommendations, including by using open-source tools such as social media, as well as intelligence sources," and that "Updated data is continuously fed to IDF air, naval and ground forces operating in Gaza."

Both documents describe an estimate held per sector, kept current, and passed to the forces that strike. Neither gives the estimate for any sector on any date, and the presentation gives no count of civilians anywhere. The instrument is described in detail; its readings are not published. That is the gap the 25% figure falls into.

How does the IDF tell residents to leave a sector?

The IDF presentation, its own document, reproduces 2 notices built on the sector map: a timetable of daily pauses in the fighting, and an urgent order to leave named blocks. Both address residents by place, which is what the map was built to allow.



A notice of daily pauses in named neighborhoods, most of them in Rafah, in the translation the presentation labels “Translated from Arabic by Google.” The last line is cut off in the original.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 12.

The first, in the translation the slide labels “Translated from Arabic by Google,” announces that military activities “will be suspended locally and temporarily from ten (10:00) in the morning until two (14:00) in the afternoon in order to provide supplies” on named days in named neighborhoods.

The notice runs from “Today, Saturday (10/2) in the administrative district in Rafah” through the El Geneina and Al-Salam neighborhoods of Rafah, to “Tuesday (13/3)” for “the Jaffa and Al-Brook neighborhood in Deir al-,” where the slide cuts off. Saturday 10 February 2024 fits the weekday, which dates the notice to the current war; the “13/3” is on the slide and appears to be a slip for 13 February.

The second notice is an urgent warning to seven numbered blocks, among them “Block 2348 in the Al-Shuhadaa neighborhood, Blocks 2325 and 2347 in the Ain Jaulut and Al-Farouq neighborhood.” “The area you are in is considered a dangerous combat zone!” it reads. “For your safety, the IDF appeals to you immediately evacuate from this area and go to the known shelter in Deir al-Balah.” It closes: “He who was warned was exused [sic]!”



تحذير عاجل!

إلى المتواجدين في
 بلوك 2348 في حي الشهداء
 بلوكات 2325 و 2347 في حي عين جالوت والفاروق
 بلوك 662 في حي السلام
 بلوك 2322 في حي اليرموك
 بلوك 2324 في حي بيسان
 بلوك 2326 في حي الشهداء

المنطقة التي تتواجدون بها تعتبر منطقة قتال خطيرة!
 جيش الدفاع الإسرائيلي يعمل بشدة في منطقة سكنكم!!!
 من أجل سلامتكم، جيش الدفاع الإسرائيلي يناشدكم بالإخلاء الفوري من
 هذه المنطقة والتوجه إلى المأوى المعروفة في دير البلح

وقد أعذر من أنذر!
 جيش الدفاع الإسرائيلي

Translation:
 Urgent warning
 To those present in:
 Block 2348 in the Al-Shuhadaa neighborhood, Blocks 2325 and 2347 in the Ain Jaulut and Al-Farouq neighborhood.
 Block 662 in the Al-Salam neighborhood
 Block 2322 in the Yarmouk neighborhood
 Block 2324 in the Bisan neighborhood
 Block 2326 in the Shuhada neighborhood
 The area you are in is considered a dangerous combat zone!
 The IDF is operating in the area with force!
 For your safety, the IDF appeals to you immediately evacuate from this area and go to the known shelter in Deir al-Balah
 He who was warned was exused!

The urgent warning to seven numbered blocks, in the English translation the presentation supplies. The spelling “exused” is in the original.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 13.

The block numbers are the sector map in use. Israel’s Foreign Ministry states that IDF messages “often include detailed information as to when to evacuate (including from specific areas and individual targets), the safe routes to be used, and where aid may be obtained.” The notices record what residents were told, not how many left, which is the number the sector estimate was meant to hold.

How many warnings has Israel counted?

Israel's Foreign Ministry counted **over 15 million** text messages sent to Gaza by 8 December 2023, its own figure and the largest of the channels it lists. It counted calls and leaflets separately, and every count covers only the first two months of the war.

The other channels, in the Ministry's words, were "over 12 million pre-recorded phone calls," "over 4.5 million leaflets" and over 45,000 individual phone calls "urging people to temporarily leave areas of hostilities and individual targets."

Channel	Count to 8 December 2023	What it counts
Text messages	Over 15 million	Messages sent, not people reached
Pre-recorded phone calls	Over 12 million	Calls placed
Leaflets	Over 4.5 million	Leaflets dropped
Individual phone calls	Over 45,000	Calls about areas and individual targets

The four channels cannot be added into a number of warnings or of people warned. One resident could receive a text, a call and a leaflet about the same sector, and the Ministry states that the IDF distributed its messages "via multiple channels." It also states that "communications in Gaza is intermittent," which bears on how many of the messages arrived.

The 2014 figures in Israel's May 2015 report on that war, its own account, are smaller and more local. For Beit Lahiya on 13 July 2014 the IDF "dropped 10,000 leaflets from the air" in the morning and "another 10,000 leaflets" in the early afternoon, with recorded calls between 6:15 and 9:15. Before the ground operation in Shuja'iyyeh it used "over 150,000 leaflets," telling residents to go to central Gaza City, within four named streets.

Every count here measures what was sent. None measures who remained. The sector estimates would measure exactly that, and they are the figures no record here contains. Israel's Foreign Ministry says the mechanism "has proven effective in the current hostilities and has saved many lives," its own assessment, and gives no figure behind it.

Does a warning empty a neighborhood, in Israel's own view?

Israel's Foreign Ministry states in its November **2023** paper on the legal aspects of the war, its own position, that "the IDF does not assume that there are no civilians in areas or sites where advance warnings had been given: strikes in such locations, too, are conducted in accordance with LOAC, including the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack."

The 2015 report on the previous war says the same thing twice. "After providing a warning, the IDF did not assume that a relevant site or area had been evacuated," and "the provision of a warning never, on its own, affected a proportionality assessment." Civilians who stayed despite warnings, it states, were not regarded "as voluntary human shields and thus legitimate targets for attack," and the IDF did not "discount such civilians for purposes of its proportionality analyses."

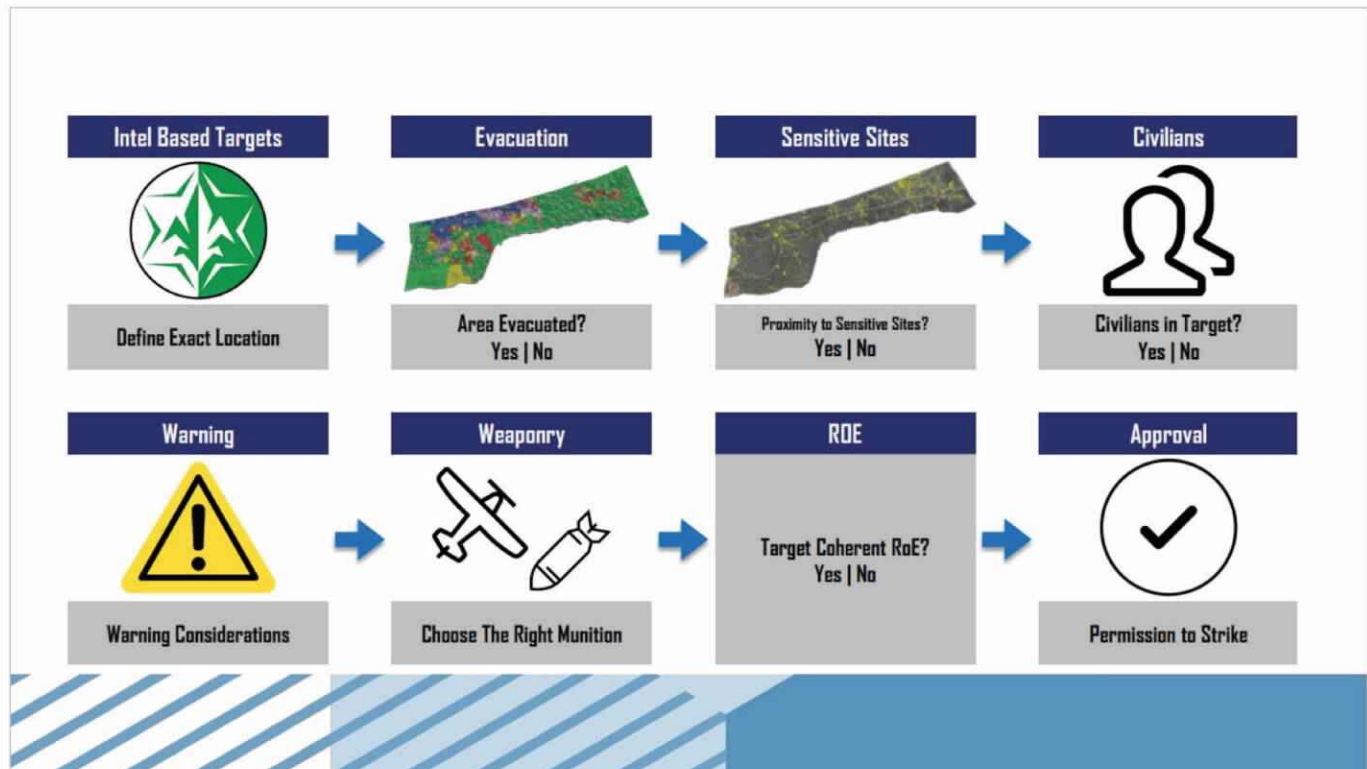
On Israel's own stated position, then, a warned neighborhood is still a populated one for the purpose of a strike, and whoever stayed is counted in the expected harm. That is the position the sector map was built to serve: an estimate of how many remained, fed to forces, so that the people who did not leave enter the calculation.

The Foreign Ministry paper also records why some did not leave. It states that Hamas "consistently and forcibly acts to frustrate these efforts, including by setting up roadblocks, threatening civilians not to leave, and issuing calls to ignore IDF recommendations to evacuate." That is Israel's own characterization of the other party, and under Article 51(8) of Additional Protocol I it does not change the obligations owed to the civilians who remained.

Whether a given strike in a populated sector breached those obligations is, in Israel's system, a question for the Military Advocate General's Corps, which states that harm to civilians, "while tragic and regrettable, in most cases do not by themselves indicate a reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct." The records settle the first part of the title's question on the IDF's own terms: it says it knew neighborhoods could stay populated after warnings, and counted those who stayed.

What does the IDF's strike chart ask about evacuation?

The IDF's strike chart, in its own presentation, puts **1** question about evacuation, "Area Evacuated?", with a Yes and a No, as the second of its eight steps. No branch is drawn from either answer; the next steps are "Warning Considerations," the choice of munition, and three more checks before "Permission to Strike."



The strike approval chart. "Area Evacuated?" is the second step, and neither answer leads anywhere but the next box.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 18.

On the chart, then, a No at the evacuation step does not stop a strike by itself, just as a warning does not settle it. The answer passes forward to the other gates, among them "Civilians in Target?", and to the proportionality assessment that Israel's statements say governs each attack. The sector map is where the evacuation answer would come from.

Israel's own statements record occasions on which the answer changed the timing. In 2014, the May 2015 report states, the IDF "delayed its ground manoeuvre in the area of Shuja'iyyeh for more than 24 hours in order to facilitate further evacuations of civilians." In the current war, the Foreign Ministry states, "The IDF has repeatedly delayed intensifying its operations

in northern Gaza so as to allow for continued evacuation,” and has “unilaterally established humanitarian corridors and local pauses in the fighting,” of which the Rafah notice is one.

The film’s account is of the other cases, where a sector was, on the interviewees’ telling, estimated to be a quarter full and struck regardless. The Times of Israel reports that the IDF, answering a New York Times investigation in December 2024, confirmed that its rules of engagement changed when the war broke out, while maintaining that its practices stayed consistent with international law.

The dispute over [the 500 figure](#), which the IDF denied on 14 September 2026 ever approving, concerns one strike’s estimate; the 25% figure concerns a sector’s. Both are readings from instruments the IDF describes and does not publish.

What does IDF footage show in areas with many people?

In 3 of the 18 clips of IDF targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute, the IDF’s own record, operators describe a crowd or an active area: “We detect a lot of people,” “We detected many people there,” and “This is an active area.” The first two end with a munition diverted; the third, dated 25 September 2025, ends “We will not attack.”



IDF FOOTAGE · STRIKE ABORTED OR CANCELLED · ON SCREEN: SEPTEMBER 25, 2025 · 0:03

This is an active area

We will not attack

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 60b42c22ca0f1f4481cf67980f626bde41311e75c93ca3da664ebe50bc03af2e

The exchange of 25 September 2025 is the shortest statement in the set of the judgment the film contests. The subtitles do not say what “active” means, and the clip does not show the area around the target. It records a decision not to strike in a place the operators describe that way, fifteen days before the ceasefire of 10 October 2025.

The other two show strikes redirected for crowds. On 25 December 2024: “We detect a lot of people,” then “Abort, abort. Abort, divert [ammunition].” On 11 July 2025: “Wait, we are diverting, guys,” and “We detected many people there, we are diverting.”



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: DECEMBER 25, 2024 · 0:03

We detect a lot of people

Abort, abort. Abort, divert [ammunition]

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 fd8afabb5ffdb8b5b483b51102b058ae79e871b15fd3cf1fbb28b1ea391f9c51



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: JULY 11, 2025 · 0:04

Wait, we are diverting, guys

We detected many people there, we are diverting

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 9f7fa1d9c7eb4f5b4d51b95fd60219aa7b8f3c8a01a772eb8dd46ba46cc2d113

The clips show crowds as a reason to stop. They cannot show a sector-level decision, because each is a single target seen from above for a few seconds, and they cannot show what happened to the target later or to other targets in the same neighborhood. Two more clips record smaller groups approaching a target, “A group of people approaching” and “People approaching,” and are not counted here. The 18 are a selection made before they reached the Institute, and they are published here exactly as received.

What does Israel say about operating where evacuees went?

Israel’s Foreign Ministry stated in December **2023**, its own position, that “The IDF is well aware of the increased number of civilians in southern Gaza, and utilizes the entirety of the measures described above in order to mitigate harm to civilians in these areas.” It added: “It

is impossible to dismantle Hamas's military capabilities without operating in southern Gaza."

The statement joins two facts the IDF's own records establish separately. The evacuation orders sent people south: the block notice on the presentation's thirteenth slide directs residents to "the known shelter in Deir al-Balah," and the Foreign Ministry states that the IDF "has been urging civilians to temporarily evacuate northern Gaza." Its November 2023 paper adds that the IDF "has designated a 'humanitarian zone' in the southwestern part of Gaza." Operations then followed into the south, as the Rafah notice of February 2024 shows.

The scale of the movement is recorded by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the Palestinian statistics office, which states that of roughly 2.2 million people living in Gaza on the eve of the war, nearly two million were displaced. That is a cumulative figure for the war as a whole, not a count for any one sector or month.

On Israel's own account, the areas that received evacuees became the areas where civilian presence was highest, and the IDF knew it. The Ministry lists its reasons for operating there: rockets launched from the south, senior commanders directing operations there, military assets, and hostages. That is its own statement of the military advantage it anticipated, the other side of the proportionality weighing the sector estimates were meant to inform.

The Institute's report on [shootings in areas described as safe](#) examines what other bodies recorded in those areas. The IDF records examined here give the warnings and the reasons, and no sector estimate for any place in the south before or after operations there.

Methodology and limitations

This report sets the published account of the documentary NAZA against the IDF's own records: slides ten to thirteen and eighteen of an IDF presentation provided to the Institute, 18 clips of IDF footage, the IDF's statements on the film, and the Israeli government's published statements, principally the Foreign Ministry's answers on the war updated to 8 December 2023, its paper on the legal aspects of 2 November 2023, and its May 2015 report on the 2014 war. The film's claims come from The Guardian, which produced it; the film was not viewed.

The presentation is undated. Its Rafah notice is dated to February 2024 from its weekday and dates, and its block notice carries no date. Its notices are quoted in the English the slides supply; the Institute did not retranslate the Arabic. The clips appear exactly as received, with their checksums, and the Institute has not verified when or where they were recorded. A clip counts as concerning a crowd where the exchange refers to “a lot of people,” “many people” or “an active area.”

Every record here except the displacement figure is a party’s own account. The Foreign Ministry’s warning counts are floors and count messages sent. None of the records gives a sector’s population estimate, so none supports a finding about the share of residents present in any neighborhood struck.

Conclusion

The IDF’s own records describe the knowledge the film says it had. Did the IDF strike neighborhoods it knew were still populated? On its own account it kept track of whether they were: a team estimated civilian presence in 630 sectors, continuously, and fed the estimates to the forces that strike. Israel’s Foreign Ministry states that a warned area is never assumed to be empty and that those who stay are counted. It also states that the IDF knew civilians had crowded into the south and operated there anyway, for reasons it lists.

What the records withhold is every reading. Not one sector estimate appears in them, for any neighborhood on any date, and so the film’s figure of a quarter of residents still at home cannot be set against the IDF’s own number. The strike chart asks whether an area was evacuated and draws no line from the answer.

The sector map exists, on the IDF’s own description, precisely so that someone knew how many people were in each neighborhood before it was struck. If its readings for the neighborhoods the film describes were published beside the orders that followed, what would the gap between them measure?

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the IDF's Civilian Harm Mitigation Unit?

Israel's Foreign Ministry describes it as a unit of senior commanders, intelligence officers, Arabic-speaking soldiers and legal advisers that maintains the numbered evacuation map and monitors evacuations in real time. The IDF presentation describes a Southern Command team of the same makeup led by a brigadier general.

How did Gaza residents know which sector they were in?

The Foreign Ministry states that the numbered map was "shared with the public in Gaza and with international organizations on the ground," and points to its publication on the IDF website and in announcements on the IDF's Arabic social media. The notices on the IDF presentation address residents by block number and neighborhood name.

Did the IDF pause fighting to let civilians move or get supplies?

The IDF presentation reproduces a February 2024 notice of daily pauses from 10:00 to 14:00 in named neighborhoods of Rafah and a further one cut off at the page edge, "in order to provide supplies." Israel's Foreign Ministry states that the IDF "unilaterally established humanitarian corridors and local pauses in the fighting."

Does international law allow strikes in areas civilians were told to leave?

Additional Protocol I requires warnings where circumstances permit, and Israel's Foreign Ministry states that strikes in warned areas remain subject to distinction, proportionality and precautions because civilians may remain. A warning does not turn a populated area into a lawful target on its own.

Where does the 25% figure in NAZA come from?

The Guardian reports it as the film's interviewees' account of an estimate made by the Israeli military. No IDF record examined here publishes an estimate for any sector, so the figure cannot be checked against the IDF's own numbers.

How many people did the IDF's warnings reach?

No record examined here says. Israel's Foreign Ministry counts messages sent, over 15 million texts and over 4.5 million leaflets by 8 December 2023, and states that communications in

Gaza were intermittent.

Did the IDF delay operations to allow evacuation?

Israel's Foreign Ministry states that the IDF "repeatedly delayed intensifying its operations in northern Gaza so as to allow for continued evacuation." Its May 2015 report states that in 2014 a ground operation in Shuja'iyyeh was delayed more than 24 hours for the same reason.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

Does the IDF Bomb Homes Knowing Families Are Inside? What Its Own Target Card Shows

The one target card Israel has published lists a family at the target. What it, and Israel's rules on warnings, show about NAZA's claim.

NAZA

IDF targeting

Target card

Warnings

Gaza

Homes



Israel's own report on the 2014 Gaza war prints **1** worked target card for a strike on a house, and it lists a family among those present: "The military commander, his family, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives." The strike was approved on condition of a warning because, the Foreign Ministry report states, the objective was the building and not the people inside. When the target was a person, the same report states, the attack was made without warning, and its example is a commander in a residential home. The documentary NAZA alleges that in the current war people were bombed at home at night in the knowledge that their families would die. The IDF records describe both kinds of strike on a home and publish a worked card only for the first.

Key Findings

- Israel's own May 2015 report prints one target card, for a strike on 8 July 2014, listing as present "The military commander, his family, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives," with approval conditional on "an effective advance warning."
- The 2015 report ties the warning to the objective: the steps were possible because "the objective was the structure (and the weaponry therein) and not any persons inside."
- Attacks on "a number of individual militants" in 2014 were made "without giving advance warning," the same report states, and its example is a senior commander struck in "a residential home."
- Israel's stated view, in its 2015 report, holds members of Hamas's military wing to be lawful targets "at all times and in all places," and the IDF presentation's definition of a target says nothing about location.
- The IDF gave specific warnings before "more than a thousand" attacks on individual targets in 2014, by its own count; neither that figure nor any other in the records says how many homes were struck without one.

What does NAZA allege about strikes on homes?

NAZA's **24** anonymous insiders describe, The Guardian reports, potential low-ranking Hamas targets "who were then bombed in their homes at night, in the knowledge attacks would also kill their families." The Guardian published the allegation as the headline of its interview with the directors: "They know the house they are bombing is full of children."

The allegation has three parts, and the IDF records speak to each differently. The first is the place: a home. The second is the time: night. The third is knowledge: that a family was inside when the strike was approved. The directors say, as The Guardian quotes them, that their subject is not rogue conduct but "the orders themselves, the policies, the accepted practices," so the claim is about a pattern rather than a single strike, and the film, as reported, identifies no strike by date or address.

The IDF's answer, in its own statement of 11 September 2026, is that it "categorically rejects these allegations" and that " Hamas continues to systematically operate from within the civilian environment, embedding its operatives and military infrastructure among the population." On the IDF's account, what is struck is military infrastructure placed among civilians; on the film's, as reported, it is people in their homes at night. The two accounts differ on what was being struck, and on what was known about the people inside.

Treaty law requires one precaution for exactly this case. Article 57(2)(c) of Additional Protocol I says that "effective advance warning shall be given of attacks which may affect the civilian population, unless circumstances do not permit." Israel is not a party to Additional Protocols I or II; its May 2015 report states that it "abides by their provisions inasmuch as they reflect rules of customary international law." The IDF records below show when Israel says it gave that warning for a home, and when it says it did not. The Institute has not viewed the film; its content enters here through its producer's reporting. The counts of [families killed in single strikes](#) come from other bodies and are set out separately.

What does the IDF's worked target card record about a family?

The State of Israel published **1** complete target card for a strike on a house, in its own May 2015 report on the 2014 war, and the same card is the fifteenth slide of the IDF presentation provided to the Institute. It records an arms cache in a Palestinian Islamic Jihad commander's house in Abasan al-Kabir, struck on 8 July 2014.

- Top Secret -

Target ID: [REDACTED]

Intell Type of Target: Arms cache (military commander). Function: The target is an a Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Kh commander. The house is bc operational planning site for I operatives for the coordination Location: Abasan Al-Kabir, c Affiliation: Palestinian Islamic Presence at target: The milita and Palestinian Islamic Jihad Description: The target is pa 23*23m in size. The target structure measuring 13*13m i the roof of the structure is k concrete structure measuring tanks, 2 solar panels, and tl shack. Weaponry located at the target the manufacture of projectiles Sensitive sites: There are no 100m radius of the target. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Intelligence by [REDACTED] Aerial footage [REDACTED]	Legal Review Status: Conditional Military Objective: Arms cache and operational meeting place in a residential building Conditions: the provision of an effective advance warning. Recommendations: Real-time visual surveillance Reviewed by [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]	ives jet - store at whilst il se, nce cking"). ot Approved	Legal Review Status: Conditional Military Objective: Arms cache and operational meeting place in a residential building Conditions: the provision of an effective advance warning. Recommendations: Real-time visual surveillance Reviewed by [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]
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Planning in 2 Option 3	Conditions ☒ Real-time visual surv. ☒ Nighttime ☒ Indiv. warning to civilians in target ☐ Indiv. warning to civil. in surrounding structures ☒ Legal conditions ☐ [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
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The target card for a strike on a house on 8 July 2014, as it appears in the IDF presentation. Israel's May 2015 report prints the same card whole; the redactions and the enlarged panel are in the original.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 15.

The Foreign Ministry report prints the parts the slide covers. Its intelligence panel lists as present at the target "The military commander, his family, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives." Its operational directives call for a strike by fighter jet to destroy the weapons store "whilst avoiding harm to civilians," with one bomb. The legal review, visible on the slide, is marked "Conditional," and the condition is "the provision of an effective advance warning."

The conditions ticked on the card are real-time visual surveillance, a nighttime strike, an individual warning to civilians in the target and the legal conditions. The box for an individual warning "to civil. in surrounding structures" is not ticked. The night was the commander's addition, the report states, alongside the recommended surveillance.

So the one card Israel has published for a house records exactly what the film alleges was known: a family inside. It records a different response to that knowledge: a condition that the family be warned before the bomb was released. The Foreign Ministry report states that "the IDF is unaware of any claim of fatality or harm as a result of the attack," which is its own

account. The card is from the 2014 war, published by Israel in 2015, and it is one card out of a total neither record gives. The rest of the presentation it comes from is set out in the Institute's report on [the IDF's targeting records](#).

Why did the target card require a warning?

Israel's Foreign Ministry states the reason in one sentence of its own 2015 report: "Such steps could be taken due to the fact that the objective was the structure (and the weaponry therein) and not any persons inside; thus, it was considered feasible to provide advance warning and to undertake additional precautions in order to ensure that no persons would be harmed as a result of the attack."

The warning, on that account, was possible because no one inside was the target. The Foreign Ministry report states the same point about the house in its section on residential buildings: the IDF "considered this site a legitimate military target not because" the commander, a member of an organized armed group, "lived there, but because the site was used as an operational planning site and because a large number of weapons had been stored there." It adds that secondary explosions during the strike "further confirmed that it was a disguised weapons depot."

The report's other examples of homes follow the same pattern. A commander's house used as a command center in Jabalia was struck on 9 July 2014 "only after providing several warnings to civilians, making sure they had evacuated," with three "roof knocks" first. A multistory building used for command centers was struck on 23 August "after providing several effective advance warnings to the building's occupants and neighbours" and verifying that it was "fully vacated." The report states that "No civilians were harmed in the attack."

Each of these is a strike on a building used for military purposes, warned and emptied first. None is a strike on a person in the building. The report is Israel's own account of its own conduct in 2014, and the families in these examples are the ones it says were warned out. The strikes the film describes are the other kind.

When does Israel say a home is struck without warning?

Israel's Foreign Ministry states in its own 2015 report that in 2014 the IDF "attacked a number of individual militants (in which cases, the attack was conducted without giving advance warning)." Its example of the rule is a senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad commander who "at the time was located in a residential home in the Gaza Strip together with other senior militants."

The Foreign Ministry report states the exception in law. A warning is not required, it says, "where the element of surprise is necessary for the success of a military operation (e.g., where a target is a militant who would escape if warned)." In the residential-home case, "The IDF reasonably expected that providing a specific warning prior to the attack would frustrate the strike's objective." The Ministry of Foreign Affairs restated the same exception for the current war in November 2023: where "the strike is aimed at a militant who may exploit the warning to escape," there is "no legal requirement" to warn.

What the strike is aimed at	Warning, in Israel's own statements	Example given
The building, as a weapons store or command site	Required as a condition, with roof knocking where warnings went unheeded	The 8 July 2014 target card
A person inside the building	Not given, because it "would frustrate the strike's objective"	A commander in a residential home, 2014

The two rows are Israel's own account of two kinds of strike on a home. The first is the one it published in full. The second is the one the film describes, and for it the records examined here hold no card, no count and no statement of who else was in the house. The report does not say whether a family was present in its residential-home example; it names only "other senior militants."

May a member of an armed group be attacked at home, in Israel's stated view?

Israel's Foreign Ministry states in its own 2015 report that members of Hamas's military wing are lawful targets "at all times and in all places," except when they are out of combat or protected by a special function. It adds that such members "are legitimate targets under

customary international law, even when they are not in the act of preparing or conducting military activities.”

The IDF presentation’s definition of a person as a military target is silent on place. It lists “A Member of an enemy armed force, a member of an organize [sic] armed group, or a civilian directly participating in hostilities,” and puts a time limit only on the third. Under Israel’s stated view, a member at home is a member, and his home does not change his status. What the home changes is the harm expected to others, which is weighed under proportionality. The Institute’s report on [who Israel counts as a civilian](#) sets out the membership test in full.

The report acknowledges that the IDF struck members where they lived. Because such persons “often conducted their military activities from within presumptively civilian sites,” it states, “the IDF in many cases had little choice but to target them in these locations.” One 2014 case it gives is a strike on a commander in another militant’s house, which injured him and killed a second commander and the homeowner; “According to media reports, four civilians were also killed as a result of the strike.” The report presents the strike as lawful and attributes the four deaths to media reports.

The IDF Military Advocate General’s Corps states the bar for examining such deaths. In armed conflict, it states in its own account, “death or injury to a civilian or harm to civilian objects, while tragic and regrettable, in most cases do not by themselves indicate a reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct.” A family’s death in a strike on a member at home is therefore not, on that standard, by itself a reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct.

How does the IDF’s strike chart treat warnings and evacuation?

The IDF’s strike chart, in its own presentation, asks 1 question about evacuation, “Area Evacuated?”, with a Yes or a No, and treats warning as “Warning Considerations” rather than as a gate. No branch is drawn from either answer, and every arrow runs on to “Permission to Strike.”



The strike approval chart. Evacuation is a yes-or-no question and warning a set of “considerations”; no branch is drawn from either.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 18.

The wording leaves room for the exception Israel states. A warning is required “unless circumstances do not permit,” in the treaty’s words, and the chart leaves room for the circumstance the 2015 report describes, a target who would escape if warned. The chart does not say which targets on it received a warning.

Israel’s Foreign Ministry states two limits on what a warning can do, in its own 2015 report. “After providing a warning, the IDF did not assume that a relevant site or area had been evacuated,” and “the provision of a warning never, on its own, affected a proportionality assessment.” Civilians who stayed despite warnings, it states, were not treated “as voluntary human shields and thus legitimate targets for attack,” nor discounted “for purposes of its proportionality analyses.”

Roof knocking is the report’s last step. “In certain instances where warnings were unheeded or unfeasible,” the Foreign Ministry report states, the IDF “fired a low-explosive projectile at the target’s roof,” to give “civilians in or near the target a last opportunity to seek safety.” The report calls this “a progressive precaution that went beyond the requirements of

international law.” It is described for strikes on buildings, and the records examined here describe no roof knock before a strike aimed at a person.

How many homes did the IDF warn before striking?

The IDF issued specific warnings before “more than a thousand attacks against individual targets” in the 2014 war, the Foreign Ministry report states in Israel’s own account, typically “through telephone calls to civilians inside or near buildings that were military objectives.” The same report counts “over 6,000 aerial strikes” in that war.

The two figures are floors and they count different things: warned attacks on individual targets, and all aerial strikes. The report does not say how many strikes hit homes, how many homes were warned, or how many were struck with no warning because a person inside was the target. Dividing one figure by the other would produce a share the report does not publish.

For the current war, Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs counted “over 45,000 individual phone-calls urging people to temporarily leave areas of hostilities and individual targets” by 8 December 2023, alongside mass text messages, recorded calls and leaflets. The Foreign Ministry legal paper of November 2023 states the individual call in narrower terms: the IDF “in some cases made individual phone-calls to occupants of targets, warning them of impending attacks.” Both are the Ministry’s own counts and descriptions, and neither separates calls to homes from calls about areas.

The rules behind these counts are dated. The target card, the residential-home exception and the thousand warnings all describe 2014. The IDF confirmed in December 2024, as The Times of Israel reported, that its rules of engagement changed when the current war broke out, and it did not publish them. Whether the balance the 2015 report describes, warning weighed against surprise, moved with the rules is not recorded in any document examined here.

What can aerial footage show about people inside a building?

The **18** clips of IDF targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute, the IDF's own record, show people outside targets: on routes, in yards, beside a building. In one, dated 8 August 2024, the strike on a building is aborted twice, first for "A certain cyclist," then for "two kids in the south." No clip shows the inside of a building.



IDF FOOTAGE · STRIKE ABORTED OR CANCELLED · ON SCREEN: AUGUST 08, 2024 · 0:12

A certain cyclist is arriving in a proximity to the building

Currently not clear

Copy that, aborted. Update me when he leaves

He left, but two more people just arrived

Currently not clear, there are two kids in the south

Copy that, we are aborting

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

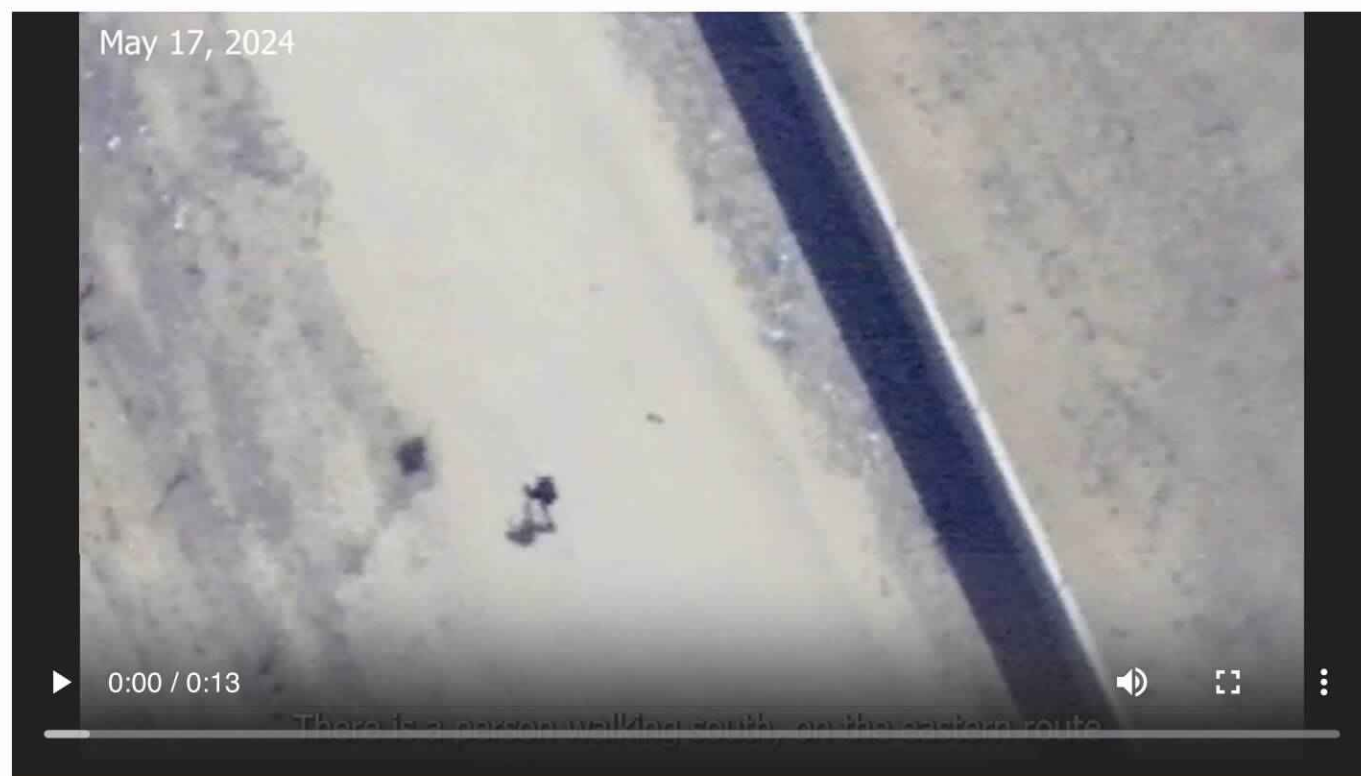
SHA-256 a7e47d15c0fcbef5053da8e09ac1b371ac8524643baceba711dc728957c4cd86

What the camera cannot see, intelligence has to supply. The 2014 target card's "Presence at target" line comes from its intelligence panel, not from the footage, and the IDF presentation states that the IDF uses "visual and intelligence means to ensure that the area is clear of

civilians” wherever feasible. For a family indoors, the answer to the chart’s question “Civilians in Target?” is an intelligence judgment made before the strike.

Israel’s Foreign Ministry records how that judgment can fail, in its own 2015 report. In a strike on a residential building in Khan Yunis on 8 July 2014, residents were warned and left, but people were “identified as approaching or returning to the premises after the bomb had been dropped,” and “eight civilians lost their lives.” The report calls it “this exceptional incident.”

The footage also shows the kind of estimate the last seconds require. On 17 May 2024 the report is “There is a person walking south, on the eastern route,” and “He will probably pass close to the target during execution [of the attack], about fifty meters,” before “Copy that, aborted.”



IDF FOOTAGE • STRIKE ABORTED OR CANCELLED • ON SCREEN: MAY 17, 2024 • 0:13

There is a person walking south, on the eastern route

He will probably pass close to the target during execution [of the attack], about fifty meters

Copy that, aborted

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 3dde5e34a1f27bc77bbe53d465404f76aff99071827d4160666ef9c742e3caec

The clips show an estimate of who might be near a target at the moment of impact. They cannot show what was known about who was inside, which is the knowledge the film says was present when strikes on homes were approved.

Methodology and limitations

This report sets the published account of the documentary NAZA against the IDF's own records: the target card on the fifteenth slide of an IDF presentation provided to the Institute, the strike chart on its eighteenth, 18 clips of IDF footage, and the Israeli government's published statements, principally the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' May 2015 report on the 2014 Gaza war, which prints the same target card whole. The film's claims come from The Guardian, which produced it; the film was not viewed.

The 2015 report was read in full as published on gov.il, and its passages are quoted by paragraph. Where the report names people, including the commander whose house the card concerns and the family in the Khan Yunis case, this report does not. The clips appear exactly as received, with their checksums, and the Institute has not verified when or where they were recorded.

Every record here is a party's own account. The 2015 report describes the rules of 2014, which the IDF has confirmed changed in the current war, and it prints one target card out of an unstated total. None of the records supports a count of homes struck, of homes struck without warning, or of families inside them.

Conclusion

The one target card Israel has published answers the question in the title for a single house in 2014. Does the IDF bomb homes knowing families are inside? On that card, yes: it lists the commander's family among those present, and it responds with a condition that they be warned out before one bomb was dropped on the weapons store. The same report states the other rule plainly. When the target was a person rather than the building, the attack was

made without warning, because a warning would have let him escape, and its example is a man in a residential home.

The records therefore describe two kinds of strike on a home and document only one. For the warned kind there is a card, a legal condition, a roof knock and a statement that no one was harmed. For the unwarned kind there is a parenthesis, one example and a stated view that a member of an armed wing may be attacked in all places. The film's account falls in the second row of that table.

Israel's own report describes the target card as part of the process for pre-planned attacks. For a strike on a person at home, what would its line for "Presence at target" record?

Frequently Asked Questions

What is roof knocking?

Israel's own 2015 report describes it as firing "a low-explosive projectile at the target's roof" to give "civilians in or near the target a last opportunity to seek safety before an attack." The report calls it a precaution beyond the requirements of international law and describes it for strikes on buildings.

Does international law require the IDF to warn before striking a home?

Article 57(2)(c) of Additional Protocol I requires "effective advance warning" of attacks that may affect civilians, "unless circumstances do not permit." Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that a strike aimed at "a militant who may exploit the warning to escape" is such a circumstance.

Why would the IDF strike at night?

The 2014 target card lists a nighttime strike among its conditions, and the 2015 report says the commander added it to the legal advisers' condition of a warning. The report does not state the reason for the choice of hour.

Is the family on the target card named?

Israel's 2015 report names the commander whose house the card concerns, and the card refers to "his family" without names. This report names none of them.

Did anyone die in the strike on the house in the target card?

Israel's own 2015 report states that "the IDF is unaware of any claim of fatality or harm as a result of the attack." That is the IDF's account, and the records examined here contain no other.

How does the IDF know who is inside a building before a strike?

The target card's list of who was present comes from its intelligence panel, and the IDF presentation says it uses "visual and intelligence means" to check that an area is clear of civilians. Aerial footage shows people outside a building; the 18 clips examined here show none inside.

Has Israel published target cards from the current war?

None is among the records examined here. The one card in the IDF presentation is the card Israel published in May 2015 for a strike on 8 July 2014.

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What an IDF targeting presentation and 18 clips of IDF strike footage show about the documentary NAZA's claim that civilian deaths were built into approvals.

NAZA

IDF targeting

Gaza

Civilian harm

Proportionality

Strike footage



Two IDF records provided to the Hanover Institute describe a strike process that asks whether civilians are present at more than one point: a presentation setting out 9 stages for every target, and 18 clips of targeting footage in which operators divert the munition or call the strike off after people appear near the target. The documentary NAZA, built on testimony from 24 anonymous insiders, alleges that civilian deaths were built into strike approvals, including one its interviewee calls “an approval for 500.” The IDF states that no such strike was ever planned, approved or carried out. Neither record shows how often the process stopped a strike across the war.

Key Findings

- The IDF, a party to the conflict, said on 14 September 2026 that it “has never planned, approved, or carried out a strike in Gaza in which 500 civilians or anything near that number were anticipated to be killed,” answering a NAZA interviewee who says “there was once an approval for 500.”
- The IDF’s targeting presentation sets out 9 stages for a target, with a legal review at the seventh and commanders’ approval at the eighth, and a strike chart that asks “Civilians in Target?” before “Permission to Strike.”
- In 18 clips of IDF targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute, dated on screen from 4 April 2024 to 12 July 2026, the munition is diverted in 10, the strike is aborted or cancelled in 7 and held in 1.
- 8 of the 18 IDF clips name a child or minors near the target before the strike is diverted or called off.
- None of the IDF records examined counts the strikes stopped because civilians were present; the IDF presentation says only that “Many strikes were cancelled due to unexpected presence of civilians.”

What does the documentary NAZA allege about how Israel approved strikes in Gaza?

NAZA, a documentary directed by Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor and produced by The Guardian, rests on testimony from **24** anonymous Israeli military and intelligence insiders. Reporting its Venice premiere on 10 September 2026, The Guardian reports that they describe “AI-based systems built to identify large numbers of potential low-ranking Hamas targets, who were then bombed in their homes at night, in the knowledge attacks would also kill their families.”

The title carries the argument. The Guardian reports that it “comes from an Israeli military acronym used euphemistically to refer to civilians expected to be killed in a military attack,” and its interview with the directors the next day calls NAZA “an acronym used by the intelligence service to indicate how many civilians it expects to die in an airstrike on Gaza.” Israel Hayom describes the title as a homonym of the Hebrew acronym for collateral damage. The directors, quoted by The Guardian, say the film’s focus is not “sporadic war crimes committed by rogue soldiers” but “the orders themselves, the policies, the accepted practices, the language and logic that make those practices possible, and the people who operate within them.”

The interviews were filmed at night on Tel Aviv rooftops, and the participants’ appearance and voices were digitally altered, according to The Guardian. Beyond the targeting systems, The Guardian reports first-person accounts of “the destruction of neighbourhoods where the Israeli military estimated that up to 25% of residents were still sheltering in their homes,” of the burning of homes, and of killings at a food distribution site.

The Institute has not viewed the film. Its content enters this report through its producer’s reporting and through a promotional clip quoted by The Times of Israel, and each claim below is attributed to the outlet that carried it. The records set against it are the IDF’s own: two statements, a published account of its intelligence tools, a targeting presentation and 18 clips of strike footage. Each is a party’s own account of its own conduct, and each is labelled that way where it is used.

Did the IDF approve a strike expecting 500 civilian deaths?

The IDF states that it did not. In a statement posted on 14 September 2026 it said it “has never planned, approved, or carried out a strike in Gaza in which 500 civilians or anything

near that number were anticipated to be killed.” The statement answered a promotional clip in which a NAZA interviewee says “there was once an approval for **500**.”

In the clip, as The Times of Israel reported it, the interviewee is asked for the largest number of expected civilian deaths ever approved for a strike and answers: “I don’t know how many were killed, because they never check this, but there was once an approval for 500.” His figure describes an approval, a number set before a strike, and he says the toll was never checked. The IDF’s statement goes beyond the approval. “Nor was any credible claim raised throughout the war suggesting that an IDF strike had caused anything near that number of fatalities,” it said, adding that “nothing about the interviewee, not his service nor his role can be independently checked and verified,” as The Times of Israel and Israel Hayom reported the post. Both statements are the IDF’s own account of its own conduct, and neither the denial nor the testimony it answers has been independently verified.

The IDF’s first response, on 11 September, set the terms of that objection. The film, it said, “relies on anonymous testimonies from individuals whose identity cannot be verified, including whether they served in the IDF, in what capacity, or whether they were involved in the matters about which the allegations are being made.” It also said a soldier who witnesses a violation “is required under military orders to report it,” and that “This also applies to individuals who were interviewed for the film.”

The two accounts agree that such an estimate exists. The IDF’s published description of its targeting procedure requires, “In each attack,” “an individual assessment of the anticipated military advantage and the incidental damage expected to civilians and civilian objects,” made “in relation to each specific strike, and not categorically.” The dispute is about the size of one estimate, which the interviewee says was approved and the IDF says no strike ever carried, for a strike that none of the public reporting identifies by date or place.

Does artificial intelligence choose the IDF’s targets in Gaza?

The IDF names **2** data tools in its published answer to the claim, Habsora and Lavender, and says neither chooses targets. The IDF states, in its response to NAZA of 11 September 2026, that decisions on “the selection and approval of strikes in the IDF are made by human personnel only, in accordance with IDF guidelines, and not by artificial intelligence.”

In the film's account, as The Guardian reports it, the tools identified and recommended targets: interviewees "helped develop an AI mapping tool that trawled for phone signals and recommended apartment buildings in Gaza to bomb," and describe systems "built to identify large numbers of potential low-ranking Hamas targets." The question both accounts turn on is [what happened between a recommendation and an approval](#).

The IDF's page on the two tools, first published on 18 June 2024 and updated on 14 September 2026, describes Habsora as a system, first used operationally in 2021, that "suggests to the intelligence analyst to focus his or her research on certain physical objects with greater potential of a military affiliation with a terror group." It says a suggestion "cannot be solely relied upon to identify a target without being thoroughly explored by the intelligence analyst, and approved by an authorized intelligence officer." It calls Lavender "a general-purpose database" and states that "this is not a list of confirmed military operatives eligible to attack."

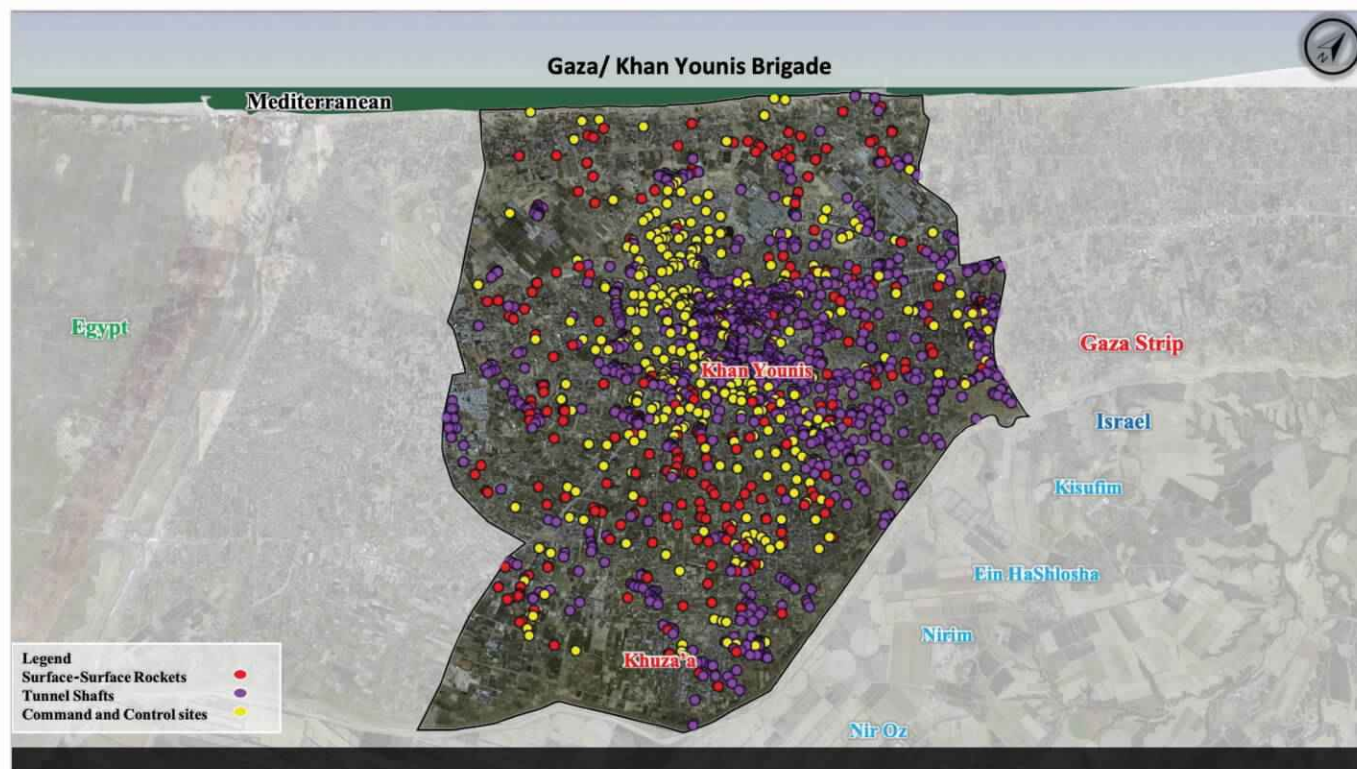
The same page separates the people involved. The IDF states that "intelligence officers who identify targets are not the ones who also decide to strike those targets," and that "operational commanders are those who approve strikes." The presentation examined below draws the same line: "Validation," "Legal review" and "Commanders' Approval" are separate stages that follow the identification of a target. Both documents are the IDF's own descriptions of its procedure. Neither shows how much time or scrutiny an individual approval received, and that is the point the film contests.

Where does the IDF say military targets were located in Khan Younis?

The IDF presentation records 3 categories of military objective on its opening map of the Khan Younis Brigade area, "Surface-Surface Rockets," "Tunnel Shafts" and "Command and Control sites," across the city and the towns around it, from the coast to Khuza'a on the eastern edge, with the markers densest in central Khan Younis.

The presentation builds the map over its first four slides, adding markers to the same satellite base, and the final version is reproduced here. It gives no count of sites, no date for the

intelligence and no identification of any individual marker. It is the IDF's own intelligence picture of one brigade area, and nothing in the records examined here can check it.



The map's legend: surface-to-surface rockets in red, tunnel shafts in purple, command and control sites in yellow. The presentation gives no count or date for the markers.

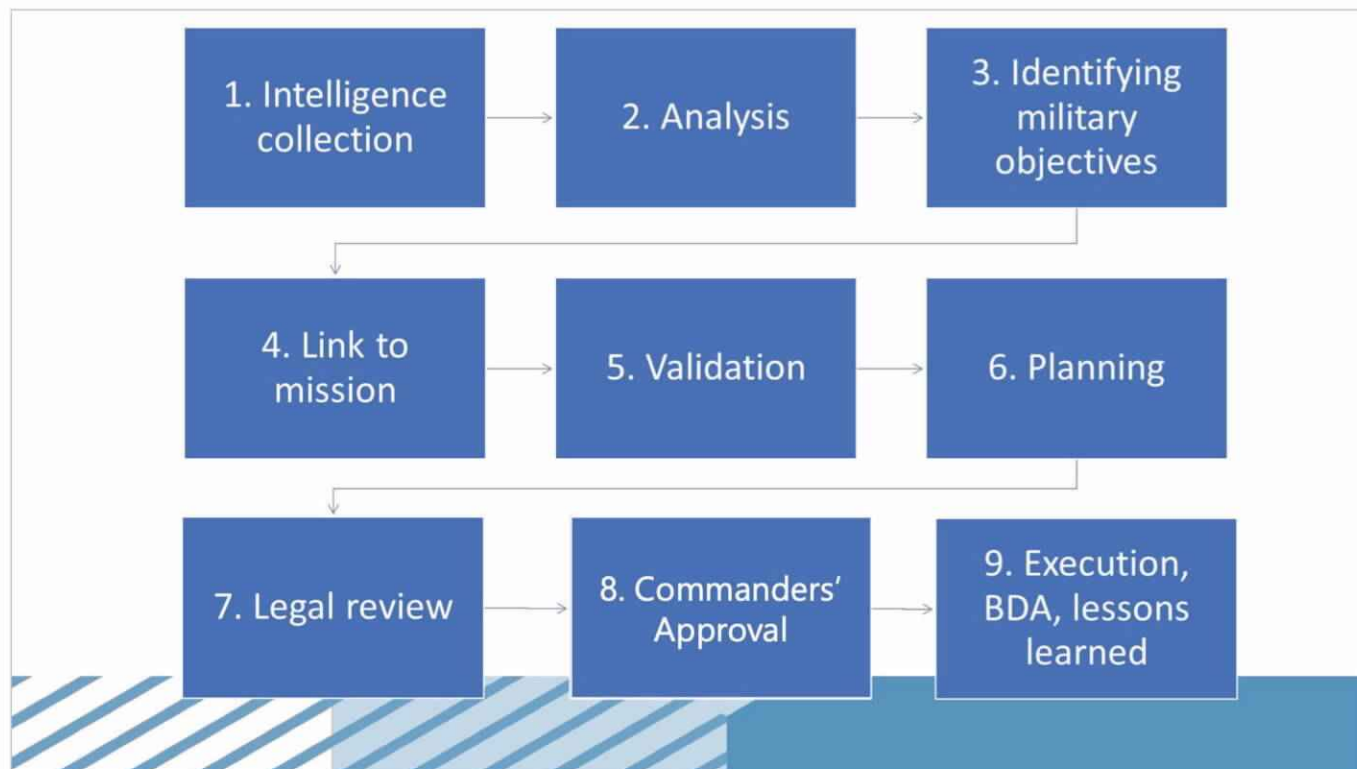
Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 4.

The map illustrates, for one area, the claim the IDF made in its response to NAZA: that “ Hamas continues to systematically operate from within the civilian environment, embedding its operatives and military infrastructure among the population and exploiting civilian areas for terrorist purposes.” The film’s interviewees describe the same kind of setting from the other side: homes struck at night with families inside.

The two claims meet in the presentation’s definition of a target. A military target, its eighth slide says, includes “ Objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action.” Under that definition a building on a residential street can be a lawful target, and every strike on one then carries the civilian estimate at the center of the dispute over the figure of 500. The one worked legal review in the presentation is such a case, from the 2014 war: a residential building in Abasan al-Kabir, a town east of Khan Younis.

What steps does the IDF say a target must pass before a strike is approved?

The IDF presentation sets out **9** stages for every target: intelligence collection, analysis, identifying military objectives, link to mission, validation, planning, legal review, commanders' approval, and a last stage of execution, battle damage assessment and lessons learned. The sequence frames the deck, appearing four times across its 18 slides.



The nine-stage target process as the presentation draws it.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 6.

The IDF presentation records what may be targeted in two parts. The first, objects which “by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action” and whose destruction “offers a definite military advantage,” reproduces word for word the definition in Article 52(2) of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. Israel is not a party to Additional Protocols I or II; its May 2015 report on the 2014 war states that it “abides by their provisions inasmuch as they reflect rules of customary international law.” The second is people: “A Member of an enemy armed force, a member of an organize [sic] armed group, or a civilian directly participating in hostilities (for such time that he does so).” The

qualification in parentheses matters, because it limits the last category to the period of participation.

The eighth stage has its own slide, and the IDF presentation states there that “The approving commander is an officer who has been professionally and operationally qualified for this role and possesses the authority to authorize strikes against designated targets.” The IDF states what that officer weighs in its published account of the procedure: “The decision whether to strike is made by the commander after considering this information and input, as well as operational, policy, humanitarian, and legal considerations.”

What the sequence establishes is the stated order of checks and the office that signs the last one. It does not record how long a target spent at each stage, how often one failed a stage, or whether stages were compressed when the pace of the war rose. The film’s allegations concern the practice inside these boxes, and the presentation describes the boxes themselves.

What does an IDF legal review of a target in a residential building look like?

The State of Israel published the presentation’s one worked example in May 2015: the same target card appears on page 144 of its report on the 2014 Gaza conflict, as the legal review for a strike on **8 July 2014**. It describes an “Arms cache and operational meeting place in a residential building,” marks the review “Conditional” on “the provision of an effective advance warning,” and recommends real-time visual surveillance.

- Top Secret -

Target ID: [REDACTED]

Intell Type of Target: Arms cache (military commander). Function: The target is an a Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Kh commander. The house is bc operational planning site for i operatives for the coordination Location: Abasan Al-Kabir, c Affiliation: Palestinian Islamic Presence at target: The milita and Palestinian Islamic Jihad Description: The target is pa 23*23m in size. The target structure measuring 13*13m i the roof of the structure is k concrete structure measuring tanks, 2 solar panels, and tl shack. Weaponry located at the target the manufacture of projectiles Sensitive sites: There are no 100m radius of the target. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Intelligence by [REDACTED] Aerial footage [REDACTED]	Legal Review Status: Conditional Military Objective: Arms cache and operational meeting place in a residential building Conditions: the provision of an effective advance warning. Recommendations: Real-time visual surveillance Reviewed by [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]	ives jet - store at whilst il se, nce cking"). Not Approved	Legal Review Status: Conditional Military Objective: Arms cache and operational meeting place in a residential building Conditions: the provision of an effective advance warning. Recommendations: Real-time visual surveillance Reviewed by [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]
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Planning in 2 Option 3	Conditions ☒ Real-time visual surv. ☒ Nighttime ☒ Indiv. warning to civilians in target ☐ Indiv. warning to civil. in surrounding structures ☒ Legal conditions ☐ [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
--	--

The worked legal review, the target card Israel published in 2015 for a strike on 8 July 2014. The redactions and the enlarged panel are in the original.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 15.

The presentation covers much of the card with an enlarged legal-review panel. The 2015 report, published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, prints it whole, translated and redacted, under the same "Top Secret" heading. Its intelligence panel records the target as an arms cache in the house of a senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad commander in Abasan al-Kabir, a town east of Khan Younis, and lists as present at the target "The military commander, his family, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives." Its operational directives call for a strike by fighter jet to destroy the weapons store "whilst avoiding harm to civilians," with one bomb.

The ticked conditions, identical in both versions, are "Real-time visual surv.," "Nighttime," "Indiv. warning to civilians in target" and "Legal conditions." The box for "Indiv. warning to civil. in surrounding structures" is not ticked. The 2015 report states that the legal advisers conditioned approval on an effective advance warning, that the commander added "that the attack be conducted at night," and that "Such steps could be taken due to the fact that the objective was the structure (and the weaponry therein) and not any persons inside." It states that "the IDF is unaware of any claim of fatality or harm as a result of the attack."

The example shows the legal-review stage producing a conditional approval rather than a plain yes, and what the conditions are made of: a warning, surveillance and the time of day. The warning condition tracks Article 57(2)(c) of Additional Protocol I: “effective advance warning shall be given of attacks which may affect the civilian population, unless circumstances do not permit.” It is a case from the 2014 war, published by Israel in 2015, not a record of a strike in the current war, and the statement that it caused no harm is the IDF’s own account. It is one target Israel chose to publish, out of a total neither document gives.

How does the IDF check for civilians before it strikes a target?

The presentation’s strike chart runs 8 steps from an intelligence-based target to “Permission to Strike,” and four of them are yes-or-no gates: “Area Evacuated?”, “Proximity to Sensitive Sites?”, “Target Coherent RoE?” and “Civilians in Target?”. The other steps are defining the exact location, “Warning Considerations” and choosing “The Right Munition.”



The strike approval chart: eight steps, four of them yes-or-no gates.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 18.

The check does not end at approval. “The IDF routinely reviews targets after the target-clearing procedures, and wherever feasible uses visual and intelligence means to ensure that the area is clear of civilians,” the IDF presentation states on its seventeenth slide. The IDF’s published procedure makes the same point about proportionality, which it says must be assessed “in relation to each specific strike, and not categorically.”

Two of the clips provided to the Institute show that last check in progress. In footage dated 5 July 2024, the exchange asks for a search of “the route below to make sure people aren’t approaching”; seconds later the report is that “Two people are on the route, they could be kids,” and the instruction is “Abort, abort. Abort.” In footage dated 14 August 2024 the concern is a single passenger: “We suspect that there is a woman in the car with him,” followed by “Stand by while we confirm.”



IDF FOOTAGE · STRIKE ABORTED OR CANCELLED · ON SCREEN: JULY 05, 2024 · 0:20

Search the route below to make sure people aren’t approaching

Two people are on the route, they could be kids

Abort, abort. Abort

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 ad4baa3568d96525bc86b00b275f7f4a6b966cb404dca85d33c9c3e43e35cb1d



IDF FOOTAGE · HELD TO CONFIRM · ON SCREEN: AUGUST 14, 2024 · 0:06

We suspect that there is a woman in the car with him

Stand by while we confirm

Copy, we are standing by

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 e86c28d8b65a71e6bfa7dbf3968c7b086251f554a55fd334d917791a33a6ef51

The chart is a procedure and the two clips show it applied in two instances. Neither records what happened when the answer at the civilian gate was no, which is the case the film's interviewees describe.

How does the IDF warn civilians in Gaza before strikes?

The IDF presentation documents a map dividing Gaza into **630** sectors, with a continuing estimate of the civilians present in each, kept by a Southern Command team led by a brigadier general and used to tell residents “precisely where the IDF intends to operate and where are the safer regions.”

Mapping Civilian Evacuation



The presentation's evacuation map, divided into numbered sectors.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 11.

The IDF presentation states that the team was “made up of intelligence experts, Arabists, legal advisers, OSINT specialists and more,” and maintained “contact with key communal leaders in those sectors.” The map was used internally, “so that forces are aware of civilian presence in each sector,” and externally as a “common language” with the population, carried “through the millions of leaflets, phone calls, and text messages which have been disseminated by the IDF since the start of the war.” The millions are the IDF’s own figure, and the presentation gives no count.

The IDF presentation documents one such notice in Arabic with an English translation. Addressed to residents of numbered blocks in named neighborhoods, it reads: “The area you are in is considered a dangerous combat zone!” and “For your safety, the IDF appeals to you immediately evacuate from this area and go to the known shelter in Deir al-Balah.”

تحذير عاجل!

إلى المتواجدين في
بلوك 2348 في حي الشهداء
بلوكات 2325 و 2347 في عين جالوت والفاروق
بلوك 662 في حي السلام
بلوك 2322 في حي اليرموك
بلوك 2324 في حي بيسان
بلوك 2326 في حي الشهداء

المنطقة التي تتواجدون بها تعتبر منطقة قتال خطيرة!
جيش الدفاع الإسرائيلي يعمل بشدة في منطقة سكنكم!!!
من أجل سلامتكم، جيش الدفاع الإسرائيلي يناشدكم بالاختلاء الفوري من
هذه المنطقة والتوجه إلى المأوى المعروفة في دير البلح

وقد أعذر من أنذر!
جيش الدفاع الإسرائيلي

Translation:
Urgent warning
To those present in:
Block 2348 in the Al-Shuhadaa neighborhood, Blocks 2325 and 2347 in the Ain Jaulut and Al-Farouq neighborhood.
Block 662 in the Al-Salam neighborhood
Block 2322 in the Yarmouk neighborhood
Block 2324 in the Bisan neighborhood
Block 2326 in the Shuhadaa neighborhood
The area you are in is considered a dangerous combat zone!
The IDF is operating in the area with force!
For your safety, the IDF appeals to you immediately evacuate from this area and go to the known shelter in Deir al-Balah
He who was warned was excused!

An evacuation notice, with the English translation the presentation supplies.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 13.

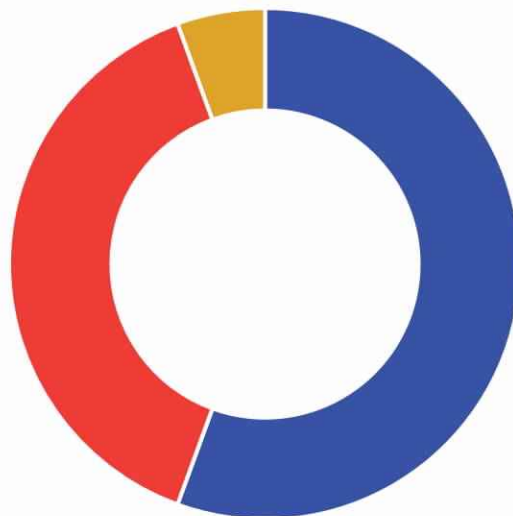
The same instrument appears in the film's account. The Guardian reports interviewees describing neighborhoods "where the Israeli military estimated that up to 25% of residents were still sheltering in their homes," which is an estimate of exactly the kind the sector map records. The two accounts share the measurement and differ on what followed it: the presentation presents the estimate as the basis for warnings and evacuation, and the film's interviewees describe strikes that went ahead regardless.

What does IDF strike footage show about how the IDF decides whether to strike?

In 18 clips of IDF targeting footage provided to the Hanover Institute, dated on screen across more than two years, each exchange ends in an instruction to divert the munition, abort the strike or hold, most often after people are seen near the target.

How the 18 clips of IDF strike footage end

LAST INSTRUCTION ON SCREEN, CLIPS DATED APRIL 2024 TO JULY 2026



■ Muniton diverted ■ Strike aborted or cancelled ■ Held to confirm

Source: Hanover Institute count of IDF footage provided to the Institute.

Ten end with the muniton diverted, 7 with the strike aborted or cancelled and 1 with a hold to confirm who is present. In 15 of the 18 the stated reason is a person; one concerns a truck, and two state no clear reason on screen, “This is an active area” and “Cancel [the attack].” The exchanges report “Four people approaching,” “We detect a lot of people,” “We detected many people there,” “A certain cyclist is arriving in a proximity to the building” and, for the truck, “Stay away from the truck,” then “Divert, don’t harm the trucks.” In five clips the subtitles render the instruction as “divert [ammunition],” with the bracketed word supplied in the subtitles.

Each clip runs 3 to 21 seconds, 2 minutes 15 seconds in all, and each begins mid-exchange and ends on the decision. Two are dated after the ceasefire of 10 October 2025, which the IDF recorded as taking effect at noon that day: 29 May 2026 and 12 July 2026. The rest fall between April 2024 and September 2025.

The clips show the moment of a decision and nothing either side of it. They do not identify the target, show what a diverted muniton struck instead, or record whether the target was

struck later. They are the IDF's own record of its own strikes, a selection made before the files reached the Institute, and they are published here exactly as received, each with the SHA-256 checksum of its file. The treaty rule closest to what they show is Article 57(2)(b) of Additional Protocol I, under which an attack "shall be cancelled or suspended if it becomes apparent" that it may be expected to cause excessive incidental harm to civilians.

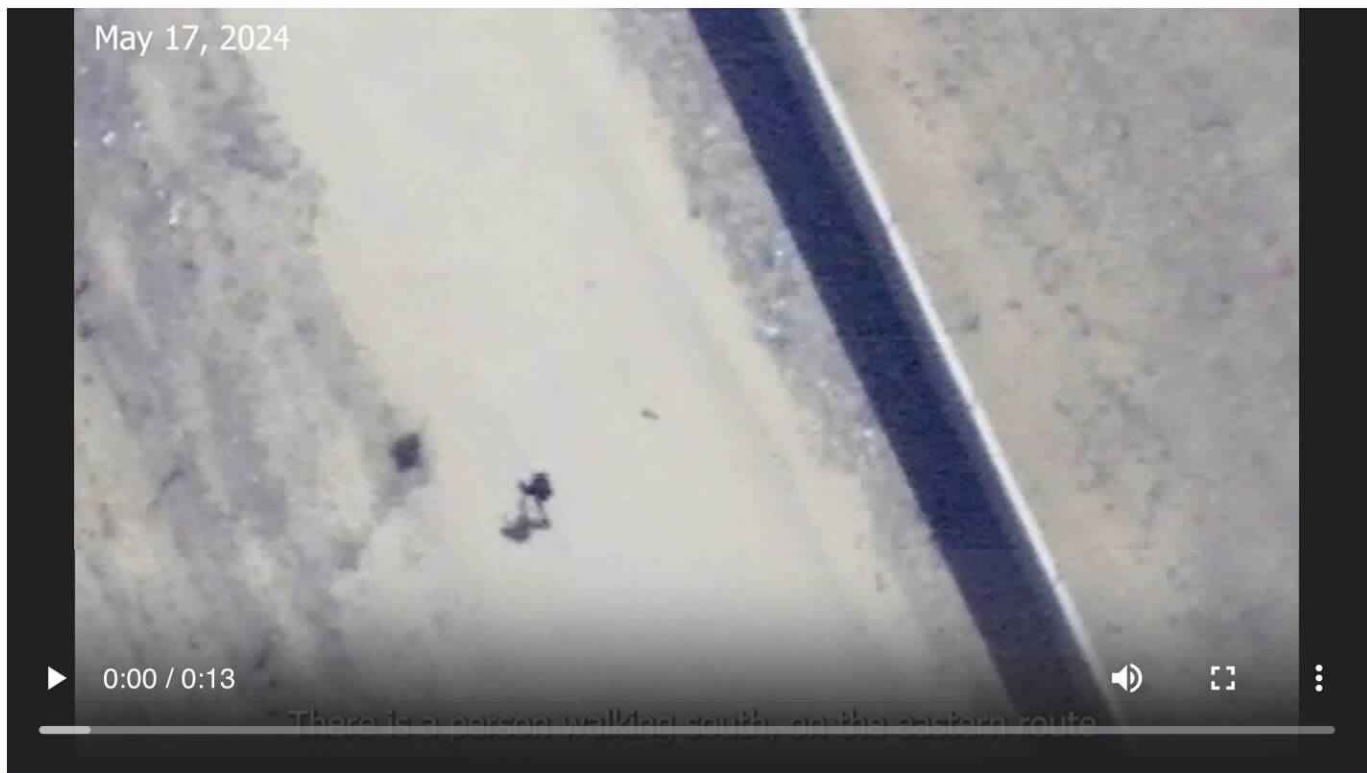


IDF FOOTAGE · STRIKE ABORTED OR CANCELLED · ON SCREEN: APRIL 04, 2024 · 0:04

A group of people approaching. So abort

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 3669de3fffd02c0d1500e5c14b03e7105783ce4f3681d1245efec138cb2bc9d6



IDF FOOTAGE • STRIKE ABORTED OR CANCELLED • ON SCREEN: MAY 17, 2024 • 0:13

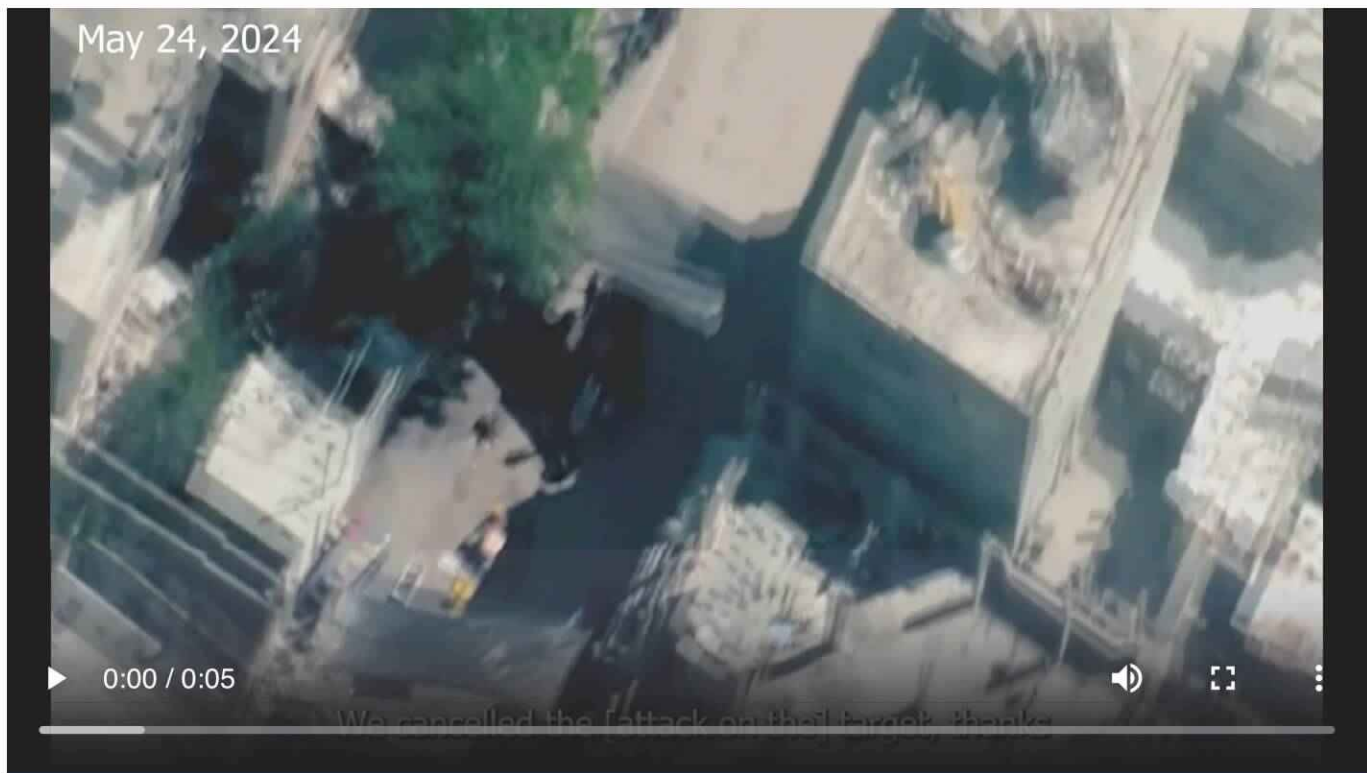
There is a person walking south, on the eastern route

He will probably pass close to the target during execution [of the attack], about fifty meters

Copy that, aborted

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 3dde5e34a1f27bc77bbe53d465404f76aff99071827d4160666ef9c742e3caec



IDF FOOTAGE • STRIKE ABORTED OR CANCELLED • ON SCREEN: MAY 24, 2024 • 0:05

We cancelled the [attack on the] target, thanks

Copy that, cancelled due to uninvolved [civilians]

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 c44b5af11767000cb8cfab5e46d2ab939ee4c0826f5c39590cdf3d43df565156



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: NOVEMBER 17, 2024 · 0:05

Stay away from the truck
Divert, don't harm the trucks
Divert from the truck

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 db00c02282b25b3417386e738859ebbb60a20827af92b4742668faa420b521ca



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: DECEMBER 25, 2024 · 0:03

We detect a lot of people

Abort, abort. Abort, divert [ammunition]

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 fd8afabb5ffdb8b5b483b51102b058ae79e871b15fd3cf1fbb28b1ea391f9c51



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: MARCH 13, 2025 · 0:07

People approaching, people approaching
When they approach, we will divert
Abort, abort
We are diverting. Divert [ammunition]

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 6caadce5fb1de9ecd853d4042f492a2339b260cf113bac91f414140622743228



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: JULY 11, 2025 · 0:04

Wait, we are diverting, guys

We detected many people there, we are diverting

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 9f7fa1d9c7eb4f5b4d51b95fd60219aa7b8f3c8a01a772eb8dd46ba46cc2d113



IDF FOOTAGE · STRIKE ABORTED OR CANCELLED · ON SCREEN: SEPTEMBER 25, 2025 · 0:03

This is an active area

We will not attack

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 60b42c22ca0f1f4481cf67980f626bde41311e75c93ca3da664ebe50bc03af2e



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: SEPTEMBER 28, 2025 · 0:04

Cancel [the attack]

Divert, divert [ammunition]

Divert

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 6fd6333bb92a7990622b241f933e4929068fe44d0af3885b776b0befd957f118

Does IDF footage show strikes called off because children were present?

In 8 of the 18 IDF clips the exchange names a child or minors near the target before the strike is diverted or called off, as in “Watch out, a child is coming, we are going to divert,” dated 29 May 2026. Two of the eight are hedged on screen: “they could be kids” and “possibly children.”

The other cases run across the two years. On 22 May 2024 the exchange reports “a group of five people now, even more, possibly children” and recommends that “it’s an appropriate time to abort.” On 8 August 2024 a strike is aborted for a cyclist, the operators wait for him to leave, and two more people arrive: “Currently not clear, there are two kids in the south.” On

10 December 2024 the question is “Isn’t that a child near him?” and the answer is “Divert, divert, divert. I diverted.” On 27 June 2025 a woman and then “two children” are seen; on 7 July 2025 “There is a child here”; on 12 July 2026, “Four minors, currently not very close.” Of the eight, five end with the munition diverted and three with the strike called off.

The IDF’s ethical code states the standard these exchanges illustrate. Under its value of Purity of Arms, a soldier “will not use their weapon or power to harm uninvolved civilians and prisoners and will do everything in their power to prevent harm to their lives, bodies, dignity and property.” The code is the IDF’s own statement of what it requires; the footage shows eight moments in which a child was seen and the strike stopped.

What the footage does not show is a strike in which no child was seen, or one in which a child was seen and the strike went ahead. The film’s interviewees describe the second kind, homes struck at night “in the knowledge attacks would also kill their families.” The broader question of whether [children are being targeted in Gaza](#) rests on registers of the dead, which count outcomes, not decisions.



IDF FOOTAGE · STRIKE ABORTED OR CANCELLED · ON SCREEN: MAY 22, 2024 · 0:11

There are people there

I recommend to abort, there is a group of five people now, even more, possibly children and more. A lot
A lot, it's an appropriate time to abort

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 c3945b980e225aa9f563d63e6c7438a54240582bf286e0852da852d82bf46eb8



IDF FOOTAGE · STRIKE ABORTED OR CANCELLED · ON SCREEN: AUGUST 08, 2024 · 0:12

A certain cyclist is arriving in a proximity to the building
Currently not clear
Copy that, aborted. Update me when he leaves
He left, but two more people just arrived
Currently not clear, there are two kids in the south
Copy that, we are aborting

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 a7e47d15c0fcbef5053da8e09ac1b371ac8524643baceba711dc728957c4cd86



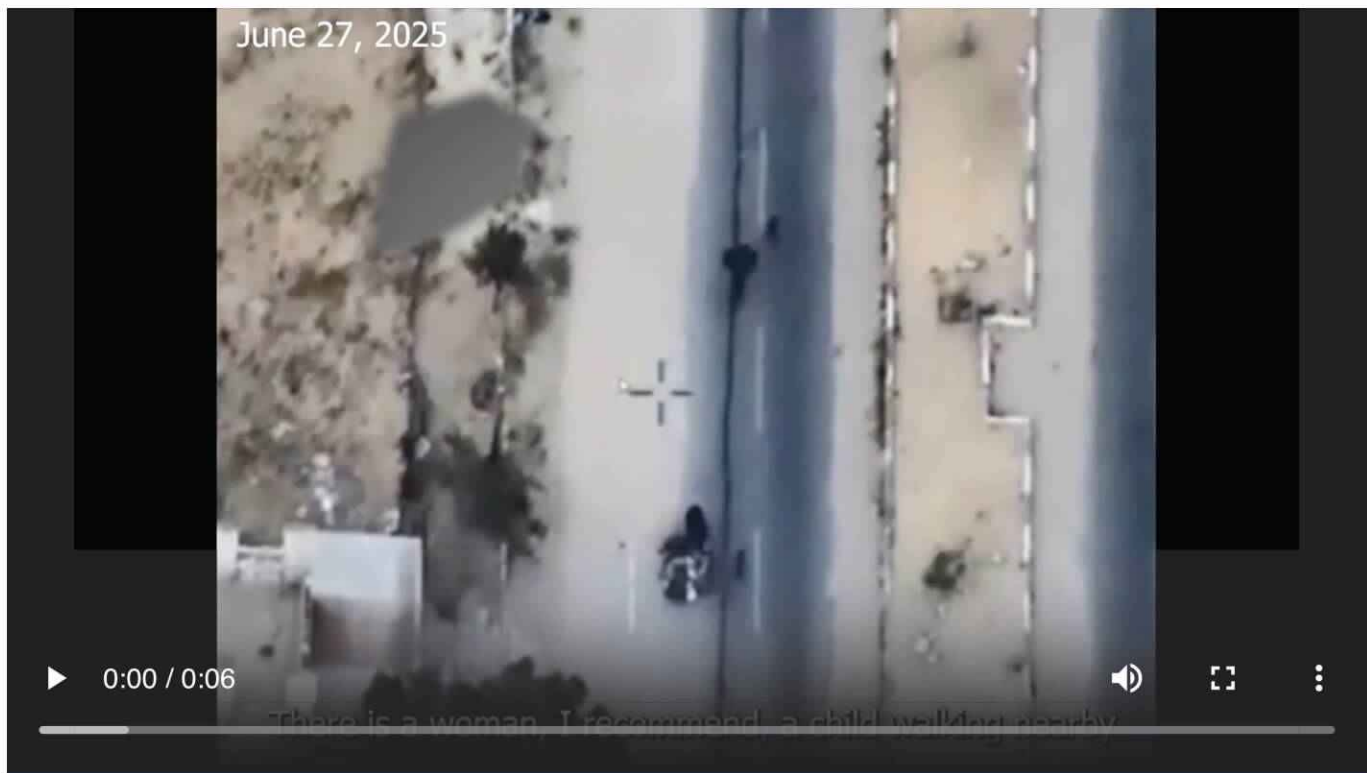
IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: DECEMBER 10, 2024 · 0:03

Isn't that a child near him?

Divert, divert, divert. I diverted

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 2eb4430fc852a7df06871ebbe66a9f205871dd4a2ab8a1d6df1356a93e978244



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: JUNE 27, 2025 · 0:06

There is a woman, I recommend, a child walking nearby

There are two children

Copy that, divert [ammunition]

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 130f6e5e881de62eb2515c8bf3c933e3726d01cc5219fb5643e1ed49c1b8bf71



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: JULY 07, 2025 · 0:06

There is a child here. Make sure we divert? Divert

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 4cd2bcba9835c3fe691608081e6c1f71e47176d19a67c1d218a2904b6c04c007



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: MAY 29, 2026 · 0:05

Watch out, a child is coming, we are going to divert

He is coming, we are going to divert

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 d4e4edaed9bd7c43aae7fea6108e9250abd98568c8c8f0e286de362e65c24c78



IDF FOOTAGE · MUNITION DIVERTED · ON SCREEN: JULY 12, 2026 · 0:07

Four people approaching, ten seconds

Four minors, currently not very close

Divert [ammunition]. Divert [ammunition] [sic]

Source: IDF footage provided to the Hanover Institute, published as received.

SHA-256 d4cf3b12ccfd06c8924ad95373faeae7c3a46f048458a83728af518430ac33a0

How often does the IDF call off strikes because civilians are present?

The IDF records examined here give no count. The IDF presentation states that “Many strikes were cancelled due to unexpected presence of civilians” and illustrates the point with

3 examples, only one of them dated: Monday, 14 July 2014, during the Gaza war of that summer, more than nine years before the current war began.

The IDF routinely reviews targets after the target-clearing procedures, and wherever feasible uses visual and intelligence means to ensure that the area is clear of civilians. Many strikes were cancelled due to unexpected presence of civilians

Examples of IAF strikes that were cancelled due to the presence of civilians close to the targets:



The presentation's examples of cancelled strikes. Only the first carries a date.

Source: IDF targeting presentation provided to the Hanover Institute, slide 17.

The three examples pair screenshots with the exchanges: "we identified civilian on the roof..." and "copy that, let's move to the next target"; "There is civilian walking in the yard" and "we will not strike this target now"; and "there are probably children here.. We are stopping everything." The two undated examples cannot be placed in either war.

The 18 clips are a selection too, and the IDF has released footage of this kind before: The Times of Israel reported on 18 December 2023 that the IDF had published videos of airstrikes aborted because civilians were present. None of the IDF publications read for this report, its two statements on the film, its page on its intelligence tools and the presentation, carries a count of strikes stopped. The IDF does publish counts elsewhere in its accountability record: its Military Advocate General's Corps reported 74 criminal investigations opened in connection with the war as of 3 August 2024, its own count of its own processes.

Measuring the rate would take three numbers the records do not supply: how many targets were approved, how many were struck, and how many were stopped at each gate of the strike chart. With them, the 18 clips and the film's cases could each be placed against the whole. Without them, both remain examples, chosen by the people presenting them, of a process whose ordinary behavior neither publishes. The IDF's wider record on [claims of deliberate targeting](#) has the same gap.

Methodology and limitations

This report sets the published account of the documentary NAZA against the IDF's own record: its two statements on the film, its page on its intelligence tools, a targeting presentation and 18 clips of footage, with other IDF publications where they bear on a point. The film's claims come from The Guardian, which produced it, and from a promotional clip quoted by The Times of Israel; the film itself was not available to the Institute and was not viewed. The IDF's statement of 11 September 2026 and its page on its intelligence tools were read on idf.il. Its statement of 14 September 2026 was posted on social media and is cited as The Times of Israel and Israel Hayom quote it.

The 18 clips were provided to the Hanover Institute by a source on 17 September 2026. They appear here exactly as received: the Institute has not cut, altered, re-encoded or subtitled them, and the dates and English subtitles on screen are part of the files as supplied. Each file's SHA-256 checksum is listed beneath it so any copy can be checked against what the Institute received. Some frames carry grey masking patches that were present on receipt. The audio is carried as received and was not reviewed. The Institute has not independently verified when or where the footage was recorded.

The subtitles were read from frames sampled every half second and checked against enlarged frames; they are quoted as displayed, including one misspelling marked [sic]. Each clip is classified by its last instruction on screen: "divert" as diverted, "abort," "cancel" or "We will not attack" as aborted or cancelled, and "stand by" as held. A clip counts toward the child figure when a child, kids or minors are named in the exchange, including the two hedged cases.

The targeting presentation, 18 slides, was provided to the Institute and is published in full at the link in the sources. Before publishing, the Institute removed the file's document metadata, an author field and a document-management label; every page is unchanged. The slides reproduced as figures link to the page they show. Two of the presentation's examples date from the 2014 war: the legal review on slide 15 is the target card the State of Israel published in its May 2015 report on that conflict, for a strike on 8 July 2014, and one of the three cancelled-strike examples on slide 17 is dated 14 July 2014.

Every record here is a party's own account, and the clips and the presentation are selections, so none supports a rate, a share of all strikes or a finding about any incident the film describes. Neither the records nor the film identify a single strike by date and place on which the two accounts can be compared.

Conclusion

The IDF's own targeting records answer the question in the title on their own terms: they show a process that asks about civilians repeatedly, and a set of moments in which it stopped because of them. A target passes nine stages, including a legal review and a commander's signature. A review of a residential building, from the 2014 war, comes back conditional on a warning to the people inside. A sector map estimates who is still present in each part of Gaza, and the strike chart asks whether civilians are in the target before it grants permission to strike. In 18 recorded exchanges the instruction is to divert, abort or hold, and in eight of them the people seen are children.

They also show where the film's allegation sits. The interviewee's "approval for 500" and the IDF's denial concern an estimate the IDF says every strike requires, made at a stage no clip shows and recorded in files that have not been published. The footage begins after that estimate was made and ends before anyone could count against it.

The argument now turns on documents that neither the military nor the film has put in public view. If one strike's file were published in full, with its estimate, its gates and its outcome, which of the two accounts of the system would it describe?

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE SEPTEMBER 16, 2026

Does “Occupation” Still Describe Israel? What the Word Designates, the Test It Turns On, and What Each Register Counts

The term attaches to named parcels of territory, not to a state. What the instruments, Israel’s own court record and each population register show.

Occupation

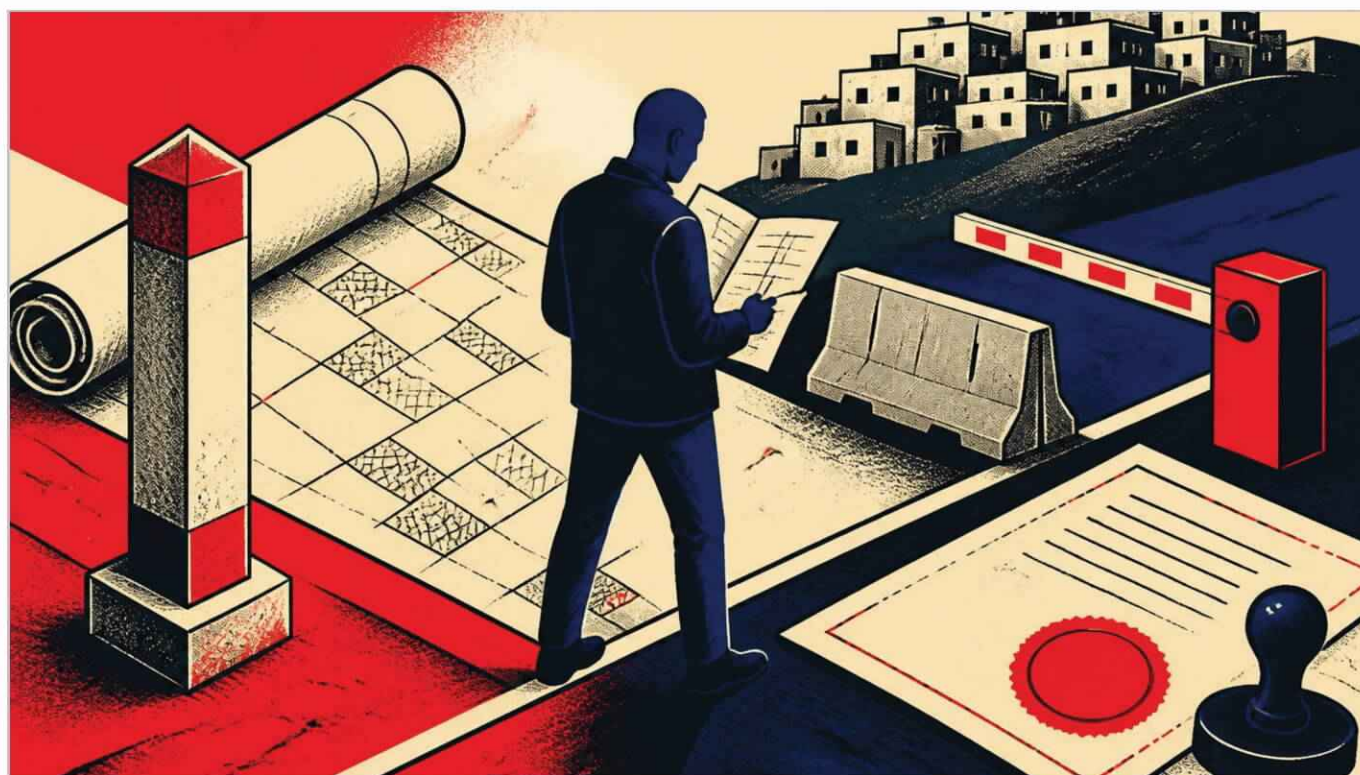
International Law

West Bank

East Jerusalem

Gaza

Population Registers



“Occupation” is one of the few words in this conflict that a foreign ministry, a military order and a protest placard all use, and in its legal usage it names parcels of territory rather than a state: Benjamin Rubin’s 2009 entry on Israel and the occupied territories in the Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law runs to 125 numbered paragraphs and treats five separately named territories, each with its own dates. Israel’s own Supreme Court applied that body of law to the West Bank in 1979 and has continued to reason inside it; a commission appointed by the Prime Minister concluded in 2012 that the classical law does not apply at all. Both positions sit on the Israeli record, and each register that counts people in these territories counts them differently.

Key Findings

- Benjamin Rubin’s 2009 Max Planck Encyclopedia entry, the standard reference treatment, organises the subject by territory rather than by state, covering the West Bank including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, Sinai and Lebanon, and was last updated in October 2009.
- Israel’s Supreme Court held unanimously on 22 October 1979, in HCJ 390/79, that the Hague Regulations bind the military administration in the West Bank as customary international law, while expressly declining to decide the Fourth Geneva Convention question.
- A commission appointed by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice on 13 February 2012 concluded in its report of 21 June 2012 that the classical laws of occupation “cannot be considered applicable” to Israel’s West Bank presence, and its own closing paragraph left adoption to the government.
- The Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories opens its permit policy document of 8 February 2022 by stating that under a 1967 military order the West Bank “is a closed military area and not to be entered or exited without a permit issued on behalf of the military commander.”
- The Security Council adopted resolution 2803 on 17 November 2025 by thirteen votes to none with two abstentions, creating a Board of Peace as a transitional administration over

Gaza authorised until 31 December 2027.

Which territories does the word occupation actually designate?

The word attaches to parcels of territory, not to a state. Benjamin Rubin's 2009 entry on the subject in the Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law runs to **125 numbered paragraphs** and is organised territory by territory: the West Bank including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, Sinai and Lebanon, together with the operation of Israeli law in them.

That structure is the answer to the question as most readers ask it. A doctrinal reference work on this subject does not have a chapter on Israel; it has chapters on places held, each with its own start date and its own instruments. Rubin's entry was last updated in October 2009, which means it does not know the General Assembly's resolution on Palestine of 2012, Palestine's accession to the International Criminal Court in 2015, or anything decided since. It is citable for the doctrinal framework as it stood in 2009, with that date in the sentence, and for nothing after.

The parties' own signed agreement uses the same grammar. In the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement of 28 September 1995, Israel and the PLO stated at Article XI(1), and again at Article XXXI(8), that they "view the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit." Article XI(3) then defines Area A and Area B as populated areas "delineated by a red line" and shaded brown and yellow "on attached map No. 1," and defines Area C residually as the areas of the West Bank outside them.

One consequence is worth recording. The agreement itself carries no territorial percentage: the words "per cent" appear once in the main Agreement, in Article IX on appointments to the Executive Authority, and nowhere in relation to land. The familiar figure that Area C is about 60% of the West Bank is therefore a later measurement by some other body, and belongs to whoever measured it.

Territory	What a named record does with it	Source
West Bank, Area C	Outside the Council's territorial jurisdiction; Israel retains authority through its military government	Israel and the PLO, Interim Agreement, 1995, Art. XVII(2) and XVII(4)(a)

Territory	What a named record does with it	Source
Gaza Strip	Treated with the West Bank as “a single territorial unit”	Israel and the PLO, Interim Agreement, 1995, Art. XI(1)
East Jerusalem	Counted inside one Jerusalem municipal population of over one million	Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, Jerusalem Day 2024
Golan Heights	Reported as a territory of its own, 23,200 core Jews	DellaPergola, 2019, American Jewish Year Book

Is it often said the term no longer fits?

It is often said, and the fullest Israeli statement of that position is an official one. A commission appointed on 13 February 2012 by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice concluded, in a report signed on **21 June 2012** and released on 9 July 2012, that the classical laws of occupation cannot be considered applicable to Israel’s presence in the West Bank.

Its words at paragraph 65 are these: “from the point of view of international law, the classical laws of ‘occupation’ as set out in the relevant international conventions cannot be considered applicable to the unique and sui generis historic and legal circumstances of Israel’s presence in Judea and Samaria spanning over decades,” and therefore “the establishment of settlements cannot in and of itself be considered to be illegal.”

Three things travel with that conclusion. First, it is a legal position taken by a commission appointed by the Prime Minister on the legality of Israeli government conduct, and it was never adopted as government policy by the report’s own account: its closing paragraph reads, “Should the government decide to adopt our recommendations, it will be necessary to implement those principles in detail.”

Second, the same commission was sharply critical of the state it reported to. At paragraph 65 it also wrote that “the picture that has been displayed before us regarding Israeli settlement activity in Judea and Samaria does not befit the behavior of a state that prides itself on, and is committed to the rule of law,” and that “all actions on this matter can only be done in accordance with the law.”

Third, the only full English text in circulation was produced by Regavim, a legal advocacy organisation that itself made submissions to the commission and is named in the report as advancing the non-occupation position. The Conclusions and Recommendations section of that file is marked as coming from the original Israeli government translation; the body is the organisation's. Where the exact wording matters, the Hebrew governs, and a report should say which text it is quoting.

What test decides whether a territory counts as occupied?

The test turns on authority exercised by a military commander, and the instrument Israel's own Ministry of Defense cited for the West Bank as recently as **8 February 2022** is a military order of 1967. The Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories opens its permit policy document with it, in its own English.

Its first clause reads: "Under the Order Concerning Closed Areas (West Bank Area) (Amendment) (No. 34), 1967, the area of Judea and Samaria is a closed military area and not to be entered or exited without a permit issued on behalf of the military commander." That is the framework a 2022 Israeli policy document names as the basis for the permits it goes on to quota.

The founding instruments run on the same logic. Military Order 59, signed on 31 July 1967 by the GOC Central Command in his capacity as Commander of IDF Forces in the West Bank Area, created a Custodian of Government Property, defined government property by who owned it on 7 June 1967, and gave the Custodian power to take possession. The order is named in its own text for the West Bank Area rather than for Judea and Samaria, the issuing authority's index records nine amendments to it, and there is no official English text at all: the Collection of Proclamations, Orders and Appointments prints each order in Hebrew and Arabic only.

The 1995 Interim Agreement then divided authority explicitly rather than ending it. Article XVII(2) gives the Palestinian Council territorial jurisdiction over West Bank territory "except for Area C," and personal jurisdiction over "all persons, except for Israelis." Article XVII(4)(a) states that "Israel, through its military government, has the authority over areas that are not under the territorial jurisdiction of the Council, powers and responsibilities not

transferred to the Council and Israelis.” Article XVII(1) lists what is carved out entirely: “Jerusalem, settlements, specified military locations, Palestinian refugees, borders, foreign relations and Israelis.”

The agreement also set its own clock. Annex I provided three further redeployments at six-month intervals, to be completed “within 18 months from the date of the inauguration of the Council,” and Article XXXI(5) set permanent status negotiations to commence “not later than May 4, 1996.” That is what the signed text promised in 1995.

Does Israel’s own court record apply the law of occupation?

It does, and it has since 1979. In HCJ 390/79, decided **unanimously by a panel of five on 22 October 1979**, Israel’s Supreme Court held that the Hague Regulations, “as customary international law, they do indeed bind the military administration in Judea and Samaria,” and annulled an order of possession over land registered to Palestinian owners near Nablus.

What that judgment did not do matters as much. Deputy President Landau accepted that possession of privately owned land for a civilian settlement “is potentially justified under Article 52 of the Hague Regulations,” and the petition succeeded on the facts of the particular requisition, on a dominant-purpose test drawn from administrative law. The court expressly declined to decide Article 49(6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention, holding that “as part of treaty-based international law, it is not binding law in an Israeli Court.” Justice Witkon added: “It is a mistake to think... that the Geneva Convention does not apply to Judea and Samaria. It does apply, though... it is not ‘justiciable’ in this Court.”

The framework has kept operating. On 2 August 2011, in HCJ 8887/06, the court issued a final order requiring the state to evacuate the outpost of Migron, recording that “the State did not dispute that the lands which constitute the object of the Petition are registered lands under private Palestinian ownership.” On 25 December 2014, in HCJ 9949/08, it ordered the removal of Amona within two years on the same ground.

On 31 December 2014, in HCJ 8091/14, the court reproduced Regulation 119 of the Defence (Emergency) Regulations, 1945 in its current Israeli wording and declined to bar punitive demolition, while holding at paragraph 23 that “the disproportionate use of said authority by

the military commander, which amounts to collective punishment that is prohibited under international law, is precluded.” Justice Hayut recorded that the regulation “currently forms part of Israel’s positive law,” preserved by section 10 of Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty. The state’s own submission in that case was that “in the last decade, since 2005, the military commander has exercised the contemplated authority only several times.”

So the Israeli record holds two positions at once: a commissioned review concluding the classical law does not apply, and a judiciary that has reasoned inside it, by name, for more than four decades.

Did the 2005 withdrawal end the test in Gaza?

Israel’s own aid portal records that **no aid entered the Gaza Strip between 2 March and 19 May 2025**, in the portal’s own words “According to the directive from the political echelon.” The publisher is COGAT, a unit of the Israeli Ministry of Defense, and it is reporting its own operational record as a party to the events.

The withdrawal itself is bracketed by Israeli records. The 1995 Interim Agreement’s Schedule 11 left Gaza’s water systems to the Palestinian Council with one carve-out: “the existing water systems supplying water to the Settlements and the Military Installation Area, and the water systems and resources inside them shall continue to be operated and managed by Mekoroth Water Co.” In March 2005 the opinion prepared at the request of the Prime Minister’s bureau surveyed unauthorized outposts “in Judea, Samaria and Gaza” and counted 105 of them. In Sergio DellaPergola’s territorial accounting for the beginning of 2019, no separate Gaza core-Jewish figure is reported at all.

What Israel publishes about the period since is a record of administered access. Its 2022 permit document, in the section covering the Gaza Strip, provides that departure abroad “shall be through the Allenby Bridge Crossing, solely in escorted groups (shuttles),” and that “As a rule, Palestinians are not granted departure through Ben Gurion Airport, with the exception of BMC permit holders and extremely exceptional unique humanitarian cases (monthly quota of 20).” COGAT’s own workbook carries 32,946 truck rows entering Gaza at four inspection points between 21 October 2023 and 31 May 2024, a count its officers make at

those points during inspection, though the per-truck tonnage attached to each row is declared by the shipper.

The economic envelope predates the withdrawal and outlasted it. Under the Protocol on Economic Relations signed in Paris on 29 April 1994, both sides undertook to “maintain the same import policy... as applied by Israel with respect to its importation,” with import-tax revenue cleared “within six working days from the day of collection.” The 1995 Supplement added that “Israel will deduct 3% from each transfer.”

Israel’s position is that it does not occupy Gaza. The records above are the ones each party publishes about control; the 2005 removal of settlements and forces is one dated fact inside that set, not the whole of it.

What did the 2024 World Court opinion change about the word?

It did not change what the word designates. It added a separate finding about legality, and on the narrowest margin in the document: the International Court of Justice held **by eleven votes to four**, on 19 July 2024, that Israel’s continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful and must be brought to an end as rapidly as possible.

That is an advisory opinion, delivered on a request the General Assembly made on 30 December 2022. It is not a judgment, it arose in no contentious case between parties, and it binds no one. Its English text is authoritative.

The recorded votes are the part of it that is a record, and they are not uniform. The dispositif at paragraph 285 has nine separately voted subparagraphs carrying four different majorities: unanimous on jurisdiction; eleven votes to four on the unlawful-presence finding and on the obligation to bring it to an end; fourteen votes to one on ceasing new settlement activity and on reparation; twelve votes to three on the duties of other states and of international organizations. Vice-President Sebutinde voted against subparagraphs 2 through 9 and appended a dissenting opinion. Judges Tomka, Abraham and Aurescu voted against subparagraphs 3 and 4, and Judges Abraham and Aurescu also against 7, 8 and 9.

Two distinctions in the opinion are worth carrying. It treats status and legality as separate questions, so “occupied” and “unlawfully occupied” are not one finding, and the second of the two commanded the smallest majority. And at paragraph 278, reasoning from its 1971 Namibia opinion, it states a duty to distinguish, in dealings with Israel, “between the territory of the State of Israel and the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.” The court that made the unlawfulness finding is asking states to keep the state and the territory apart.

Does annexation remove territory from the occupied category?

Annexation changes what a register counts, and Israel’s register counts East Jerusalem inside Israel. The Central Bureau of Statistics reported for Jerusalem Day 2024 that the city’s residents passed **one million** at the end of 2023, 60.5% of them Jews and Others and 39.5% Arabs, with the neighbourhoods annexed after 1967 inside that single municipal population.

Enacted Israeli law says the same thing in one clause. Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People, adopted in 2018, states at clause 3: “The complete and united Jerusalem is the capital of Israel.” Fifteen petitions against that Basic Law were dismissed by an eleven-justice panel of the Supreme Court on 8 July 2021 in HCJ 5555/18, which upheld it while holding that the Knesset as constituent authority is “not all powerful.”

The counting convention arrived in stages, and it is documented. In a 2020 review for POMEPS, Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler and Lihi Ben Shitrit trace how the Bureau’s Yearbook moved East Jerusalem into the general population count for Israel proper in the 1968 edition, folded settlers into Israel’s total by a 1970 footnote as “Israeli residents in the Administrated Territories,” counted settlement localities inside the total number of Israeli localities by 1983, and removed the separate territories chapter in 1997. The authors call this a normalization of settlements, which is their analytic framing rather than the Bureau’s. They also record the reverse case: the Green-Line-straddling locality of Shani Livne is placed by the Bureau in Israel’s South District and counted by other trackers as a settlement.

How Israel’s statistical yearbook absorbed the territories

FOUR DATED CHANGES IN HOW THE CENTRAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS COUNTED, 1968 TO 1997



Source: Hirsch-Hoefler and Ben Shitrit, 2020, POMEPS; think-tank report, not peer-reviewed.

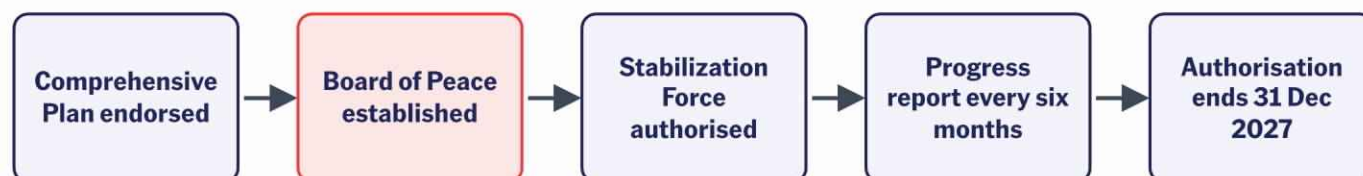
There is a treaty rule pointing the other way, and it comes with its own recorded limits. Article 11 of the 1933 Convention on Rights and Duties of States commits its parties “not to recognize territorial acquisitions or special advantages which have been obtained by force.” Nineteen American republics signed it, no European, African or Asian state is a party, and the delegates of Brazil and Peru recorded on Article 11 “That they accept the doctrine in principle but that they do not consider it codifiable.”

Does the 2025 ceasefire plan change Gaza’s legal status?

A new authority now exists over Gaza, with a fixed end date. The Security Council adopted resolution 2803 at its 10046th meeting on 17 November 2025 **by thirteen votes to none, with two abstentions**, establishing a Board of Peace “as a transitional administration with international legal personality.”

China and the Russian Federation abstained, per the verbatim record of that meeting. Operative paragraph 1 endorses the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict of 29 September 2025, carried in full as Annex 1. Operative paragraph 7 authorises a temporary International Stabilization Force to deploy under unified command, to “use all necessary measures to carry out its mandate,” and to ensure “the process of demilitarizing the Gaza Strip.” Operative paragraph 8 keeps both the Board and the authorised presences in place “until Dec. 31, 2027, subject to further action by the Council.” Operative paragraph 10 requires one written progress report to the Council every six months.

What resolution 2803 (2025) authorised, in order

ADOPTED 13 VOTES TO NONE, 2 ABSTENTIONS

Structure as set out in the resolution's operative paragraphs; the resolution requires progress reporting, not compliance findings.

Source: UN Security Council resolution 2803 (2025), 17 November 2025, and the verbatim record S/PV.10046.

One report has been filed under paragraph 10. In S/2026/418 of 15 May 2026, transmitted by the Permanent Representative of the United States, the Board wrote that “violations continue to occur on a near daily basis, some of which are serious,” and gave no total, no rate and no attribution for them. The same report records at paragraph 37 that the Stabilization Force had not yet deployed: “Preparations for deployment are well advanced,” with founding contributors signing on 19 February 2026 and a pre-deployment site survey completed in late April 2026.

The resolution created governance machinery and a deadline. It does not use the word “violation” anywhere in its operative paragraphs or its annex.

Who is counted living in the territory each register calls occupied?

The two statistical bureaus count the same residents into different national totals. The Israel Central Bureau of Statistics reported for September 2025 a population of about **10.148 million**, roughly 7.758 million Jews and others and 2.130 million Arabs, and that total includes East Jerusalem residents and West Bank settlers.

Three cautions attach to that figure. The two named groups sum to 9.888 million, not to 10.148 million, because the Bureau also counts roughly 260,000 foreign residents in the total but outside both groups; the published shares of 78.5% and 21.5% belong to the 9.888 million base. Against the full total the same counts are 76.4% and 21.0%. And the scope choice is itself

the subject here: the Bureau places inside Israel's total people whom other registers place outside it.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics counts on a different base. Its 2017 census, the third it has conducted and the most recent, enumerated 4,780,978 residents of the West Bank and Gaza on a reference date of 1 December 2017, and could not directly enumerate East Jerusalem, where administrative estimates were used. Every later total in the series is projected off that count.

The gap is old and has been argued over in detail. In 2006 a Begin-Sadat Center report calculated 2.49 million rather than the 3.83 million the Palestinian bureau reported for mid-2004, a difference of 1.34 million, itemising 210,000 East Jerusalem Arabs it held were double-counted in Israel's own survey. Sergio DellaPergola, building a Palestinian base from Israeli rather than Palestinian data in a paired 2005 brief, still reached about 3.4 million. In a 2013 peer-reviewed audit in *The Middle East Journal*, Ian Lustick concluded that the campaign rested on "complex but systematic manipulation of data," and documented that it was tied to proposals to annex 60% or more of the West Bank.

That last point is the one the counting question turns on. The registers are not neutral instruments recording a settled geography; each encodes a claim about where the line runs, and both bureaus publish East Jerusalem residents into their own totals.

Does the term describe the State of Israel itself?

No register or instrument reviewed here predicates the word of the state. The Provisional Government of Israel declared on 14 May 1948 "THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JEWISH STATE IN ERETZ-ISRAEL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE STATE OF ISRAEL," and the 1933 Montevideo Convention sets out **four** qualifications of statehood: "a permanent population; a defined territory; government; and capacity to enter into relations with the other states."

Nothing in that treaty makes occupation a disqualifier, and nothing in it provides a body to apply the test. Article 3 runs the other way: "The political existence of the state is independent of recognition by the other states." Article 6 adds that recognition "is unconditional and irrevocable."

The legal usage runs the other way too. Rubin's 2009 reference entry is organised by territory. The 1995 Interim Agreement carves jurisdiction by area and by person. The 1967 military order names an area and a date. The 2024 advisory opinion, at paragraph 278, asks states to distinguish between "the territory of the State of Israel and the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967," which only makes sense if the two are separable in the first place.

Popular usage does something different, and it is measurable. The naming of Israel's army as the "Israeli Occupation Forces" shifts the predicate from a territory held to the institution itself, and that shift is the subject of a separate Institute report on [the Israeli Occupation Forces naming](#). The distinction is not a quibble about vocabulary. A statement about territory can be tested against a map, a military order and a jurisdiction clause. A statement about a state cannot be tested against any of them, because no instrument in this record makes a state the unit of the claim.

So the question as typed has two answers depending on which usage is meant, and the two do not converge. In the legal register the word designates places, dated, each with its own instruments and its own disputes. In the political register it designates a country.

Methodology and limitations

This report draws on four kinds of source, each labelled in the text: enacted instruments and treaty texts; court judgments of Israel's own Supreme Court; official records published by Israeli government bodies and by the Palestinian and Israeli statistical bureaus; and one advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, reported by its recorded votes rather than adopted as a finding.

The International Court of Justice opinion of 19 July 2024 is advisory, arose on a General Assembly request, and binds no one. It is reported here by what it states and by how its bench divided across nine separately voted subparagraphs carrying four different majorities, the narrowest being eleven votes to four. Its conclusions are not carried as findings of this report.

Several figures are a party's own count of its own conduct and are marked as such: COGAT's truck-level entry record and its statement about the March to May 2025 period; the Board of Peace report of 15 May 2026, written by the transitional administration the resolution

created and transmitted by one of the four guarantors; and the permit quotas in the February 2022 policy document, which are ceilings authorised rather than permits issued or people who crossed.

Where the literature disagrees, both poles are named. The Levy Commission of 2012 and the Supreme Court's 1979 Elon Moreh judgment reach opposite conclusions about whether the classical law of occupation applies to the West Bank, and both are Israeli records: one a report commissioned by the Prime Minister and never adopted as government policy, the other a unanimous holding of five justices. On the population dispute, the Begin-Sadat report of 2006 is a think-tank estimate led by non-demographers, not peer-reviewed, and its central claim is contested by Sergio DellaPergola and audited critically by Ian Lustick in a peer-reviewed journal in 2013.

Limits on the underlying records are stated where they bite. Rubin's reference entry was last updated in October 2009 and is silent on everything since. Military Order 59 has been amended nine times by the issuing authority's own index, so the 1967 text is not the text in force. The Interim Agreement carries no territorial percentage, so any Area C share comes from another body. The Palestinian bureau's last full census was in 2017 and could not directly enumerate East Jerusalem. The Israeli bureau's published group shares belong to a 9.888 million base rather than to its 10.148 million total. The Levy Report's only full English text was produced by an organisation that made submissions to the commission. No official English text of Military Order 59 exists on any state host, and the Hebrew governs.

Conclusion

The question was whether one word still portrays a country after everything that has happened. On the records read here, the word is not a portrait of a country at all. It is an attachment to named ground: a 1967 order over a defined area, a 1995 agreement that draws Areas A, B and C on an attached map and carves out Jerusalem, settlements and Israelis by name, a reference work that has chapters on places rather than on a state, and a court asking others to keep the state and the territory apart.

What the developments changed is not the designation but what sits on top of it. Israel's Supreme Court has reasoned inside occupation law since 1979 and annulled orders under it in

2011 and 2014; a commission appointed by the Prime Minister concluded in 2012 that the classical law does not apply, and no government adopted that conclusion. The Security Council built a transitional administration over Gaza in November 2025 with a stated end date of 31 December 2027, and seven months later the force meant to monitor the ceasefire had not deployed. Israel's statistical yearbook absorbed East Jerusalem into Israel's count in 1968 and dropped its separate territories chapter in 1997, while the Palestinian census counts many of the same residents and cannot directly enumerate them. Each of these is a different kind of record, and none of them moves the noun.

The gap the record leaves open is between two grammars. One predicates the word of parcels, and can be checked against a map, a military order, a jurisdiction clause and a population register. The other predicates it of a state, and matches no instrument in this file. When a word carries two grammars at once, the argument people think they are having about facts on the ground is partly an argument about which grammar is being used, and neither side announces it. Is the slide from the first to the second one of the inputs that turns a territorial dispute into a claim about a people?

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do court judgments and a government commission reach opposite conclusions in the same country?

They apply different bodies of law to different questions. In HCJ 390/79 the Supreme Court held the 1907 Hague Regulations bind the military administration as customary international law, which Israel's courts can apply, while expressly declining to decide the Fourth Geneva Convention question because treaty law "is not binding law in an Israeli Court." The 2012 Levy Commission addressed the broader characterisation and concluded the classical law does not fit Israel's decades-long presence.

Does the 2024 World Court opinion oblige anyone to do anything?

It is advisory. It arose on a General Assembly request of 30 December 2022, it is not a judgment in a contentious case, and it binds no state. What it does carry is a recorded

division: nine separately voted subparagraphs, with the unlawful-presence finding passing eleven votes to four and four justices dissenting from it.

How much of the West Bank is Area C?

The signed agreement does not say. The 1995 Interim Agreement defines Areas A and B by coloured lines on an attached map and defines Area C as whatever is left, and the words “per cent” appear once in the whole main Agreement, in a clause about appointments. Every circulating share, including the familiar 60%, comes from a later measurement by some other body and belongs to whoever measured it.

Which Israeli register counts East Jerusalem residents?

Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics counts them inside Jerusalem’s single municipal population, which passed one million at the end of 2023 at 60.5% Jews and Others and 39.5% Arabs. The Palestinian census of 2017 also covers East Jerusalem, but could not enumerate it directly and used administrative estimates.

What did the 2005 Gaza withdrawal not change?

The economic framework signed in 1994 and 1995 remained. The Paris Protocol binds both sides to a common import policy and a six-day revenue clearance, and the 1995 Supplement added a 3% Israeli deduction from each transfer. Water arrangements for Gaza were expressly left “unchanged” by Article 40, paragraph 25 of the Interim Agreement, with settlement water systems staying under Mekoroth.

Does resolution 2803 define what counts as a ceasefire violation?

No. The word “violation” appears nowhere in the resolution’s operative paragraphs or in the annexed Plan. The resolution requires the Board of Peace to file a written progress report every six months, and the first such report, of 15 May 2026, described violations as occurring “on a near daily basis” without publishing a total, a rate or an attribution.

Is there an official English text of the military orders?

Not for Military Order 59. The Collection of Proclamations, Orders and Appointments prints each order in Hebrew and Arabic on facing halves of the page and in no third language, and

the issuing authority's index gives only a Hebrew and an Arabic title. Every English wording of that order in circulation is an unofficial translation.

Does international law say a state cannot exist if it holds occupied territory?

The 1933 Convention on Rights and Duties of States lists four qualifications for statehood and none of them concerns occupation. It also names no body to apply the test, states at Article 3 that political existence "is independent of recognition by the other states," and was signed by nineteen American republics only.

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Palestinian Refugees

Right of Return



Arguments about who belongs somewhere are often settled, in conversation, with a number of years. The instruments that govern forced displacement do not contain one: Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 prohibits “individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory,” and does so “regardless of their motive,” without setting any minimum or maximum term of residence anywhere in its text. Duration is legally operative elsewhere, in property law, and in the 1948 case it ran against the displaced rather than for them: the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 put arable land left fallow for three consecutive years into the tapu process, and Israel’s Absentees’ Property Law of 1950 assigned status by where a person stood on named dates. The scale the question assumes is itself on the record, at 711,000 refugees on the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine’s estimate of September 1949.

Key Findings

- Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 prohibits mass forcible transfer and deportation from occupied territory “regardless of their motive,” and states no term of

residence; the Rome Statute of 1998 defines deportation or forcible transfer at Article 7(2)(d) by whether the displaced were “lawfully present,” not by how long.

- The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine estimated 711,000 refugees from Israel-controlled territory in a technical report dated 7 September 1949, published in its General Progress Report of 23 October 1950.
- Duration is a live legal test in land law: Article 78 of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 turned ten years of undisturbed possession into a prescriptive right, and Article 68 put arable land left fallow for three successive years into the tapu process.
- The Conciliation Commission’s Refugee Office valued abandoned Arab property at £P100,383,784 over 16,324 square kilometres in September 1951, priced as at 29 November 1947, and expressly declined to build the estimate on the Custodian of Absentee Property’s records.
- Where length of presence does carry legal weight, in the indigenous-rights instruments, the criterion is descent from the inhabitants at a named historical moment rather than a count of years; the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 13 September 2007 by 143 votes to 4, with 11 abstentions.

Does any law make an expulsion lawful after enough years?

Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 prohibits “individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not,” and adds that this holds “regardless of their motive.” The clause carries no term of years. Its trigger is protected status and the act.

The same structure recurs in the later instrument. The Rome Statute of 1998 lists deportation or forcible transfer of population among crimes against humanity at Article 7(1)(d), and defines it at Article 7(2)(d) as “forced displacement of the persons concerned by expulsion or other coercive acts from the area in which they are lawfully present, without grounds permitted under international law.” The qualifier is lawful presence, a status a person either holds or does not on the day in question. Article 8(2)(a)(vii) makes unlawful deportation or transfer a grave breach. Neither article asks how long anyone had been there.

Two limits belong with that. The Fourth Geneva Convention was adopted on 12 August 1949, after the events of 1947 to 1949, so it is not the law that governed those events at the time, and the Rome Statute postdates them by half a century. And the prohibition in Article 49 is drafted for occupied territory and protected persons, categories that have to be established before the clause reaches anything.

On the 1948 case specifically, the Israel Law Review records in its article “1948 Refugees” that in the course of the Zionist and Israeli military operations about 400 Palestinian towns and villages were destroyed, resulting in the expulsion and flight of about 80% of the residents of the Palestinian regions on which the State of Israel was established. That is a share of the residents of those regions, not of Mandate Palestine as a whole. The dispute the peer-reviewed literature actually conducts over those events concerns the act and its authorship, which is where the instruments point.

Is it often said that long residence settles the question?

It is often said that a population’s long habitation makes its removal illegitimate, and the displacement the argument rests on is real and larger than “hundreds of thousands” on every named estimate. The Conciliation Commission’s Technical Committee on Refugees put the figure at approximately 711,000 in a report submitted at Lausanne on 7 September 1949.

That estimate is the floor of the published range, not its centre, and the bodies behind the other figures counted different things.

Body and year	What it estimated	Figure
UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine, estimate of 7 September 1949	Refugees from Israel-controlled territory	711,000
Morris, 2004, archival reconstruction	Palestinians who left their homes and became refugees during the 1948 war	roughly 700,000
Fischbach, 2003, Columbia University Press	Palestinians uprooted from late 1947 through 1948	more than 726,000
Israel Law Review, “1948 Refugees”	Share of residents of the regions on which Israel was established who were expelled or fled	about 80%

These are four separate constructions by four bodies and they are not summed, averaged or spliced into one series. The Commission's own count excludes people displaced inside Israel, because it counts refugees *from* Israel-controlled territory, and its authors described it as only "as accurate as circumstances permit."

So the premise's factual core stands. What does not follow from it is the inference. Read across the instruments and the archives, the argument is never about tenure length: Morris (2004) attributes the exodus to multiple causes varying by locality and phase, including military attack, fear of attack, expulsions in certain sectors, and flight, and rejects both a single master expulsion plan and the claim that departures were voluntary; Pappé (2006) argues the displacement was a planned ethnic cleansing. Those two poles disagree about what was done and by whom. Neither turns on how long the displaced had lived there, and neither would be resolved by establishing it.

Where does the figure of 1,300 years come from?

No official record and no peer-reviewed study establishes 1,300 years as a measured duration of continuous Palestinian residence. The oldest enumeration either statistical office rests on is recent by comparison: the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics counted 4,780,978 residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip on 1 December 2017, in the third census that authority has ever conducted.

The Bureau's own rounds are 1997, 2007 and 2017, the authority itself having been established after the Oslo Accords, and Palestinian figures for years before 1997 have no census basis at all, being modelled or back-estimated. On the Israeli side, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported a Moslem population of 1.707 million at the end of 2021, 18.1% of all residents, and approximately 184,200 Christians in December 2025, about 1.9% of the population, in each case a present-day headcount rather than a tenure record. No register on either side records how long anybody's ancestors were resident, because no register was built to.

Counted back from 2026, 1,300 years reaches 726. Nothing in the statistical apparatus of either party covers that span, and the question of [continuous Palestinian presence](#) is worked out in named scholarship rather than in an enumeration.

Even the Mandate-era figures most often reached for are approximations offered inside an argument. The Palestine Royal Commission, reporting in July 1937, wrote that “About 1,000,000 Arabs are in strife, open or latent, with some 400,000 Jews,” and the report writes both as approximations in an argumentative passage rather than as an enumeration.

The absence has a straightforward explanation and it is worth stating plainly rather than filling. Duration of residence is not a quantity any official statistical office has ever been asked to produce, because no instrument makes anything turn on it. A figure with no legal consequence attached generates no register, and a register that does not exist cannot be cited.

Where does the law actually count years of residence?

Duration is a live and operative legal test, and the place to find it is land law. Article 78 of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 provides that “If a person has possessed Arazi Mirie and Mevkufe for ten years without disturbance his prescriptive right (Hak Karar) becomes proved,” in the English translation of F. Ongley revised by Horace E. Miller, published in London in 1892.

Where a duration term actually appears in the land law

OTTOMAN LAND CODE OF 1858, ARTICLES AS RENDERED IN THE ONGLEY TRANSLATION

Undisturbed possession (Art. 78)	10
Arable land left fallow (Art. 68)	3
Mevat left unopened (Art. 103)	3

Source: Ottoman Land Code of 1858, Ongley translation revised by Miller, 1892.

Article 68 runs the other way. Where an owner “allows it to lie fallow for three successive years without having proved any valid excuse,” the land “becomes the right of Tapu,” at which point the former possessor may recover it on payment and, only if he declines, it passes

at auction to another holder. Article 103 applies a separate three-year rule to dead land granted for reclamation and then left unopened.

The 1858 code counts years over dirt, not over people, and it counts a person's absence from cultivation rather than the length of their family's presence.

The 1950 statutes did not count years at all. Jeremy Forman and Alexandre Kedar record, in their 2004 study in Environment and Planning D, that the Knesset enacted the Absentee Property Law in March 1950 and the Development Authority (Transfer of Property) Law in July 1950, and that the absentee definition reached anyone who, on or after 29 November 1947, had been a national of an Arab country at war with Israel, present in one of those countries or in any part of Palestine outside the regulations' jurisdiction, or "a citizen of Palestine who abandoned his or her normal place of residence." The authors place that definition in the 1948 regulations the statute replaced and carried forward.

The result, in their words: "practically no Jewish Israelis, but tens of thousands of Arab Israeli citizens, were classified as absentees, assuming the paradoxical legal identity of 'present absentee'." A test keyed to a date rather than to a duration reached people who had never left the country.

Does time extinguish a displaced person's claim?

The published legal scholarship splits, and neither pole rests on tenure. Victor Tadros, in Politics, Philosophy & Economics in 2017, argues that the current generation of Palestinians retains a significant interest in return and that their rights are not diminished in proportion as that interest is diminished; Andrew Kent, in the University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law in 2012, argues the opposite side of the same doctrinal question.

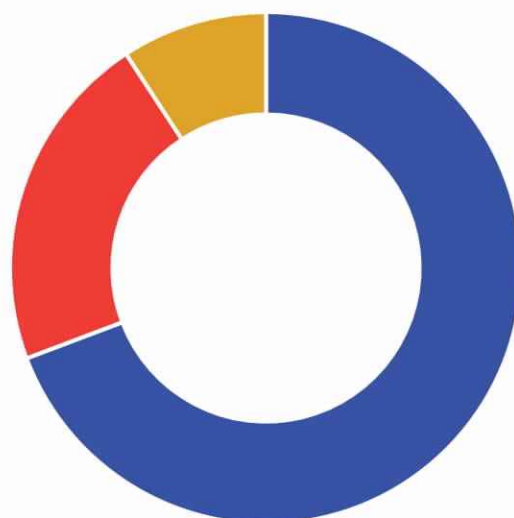
The two are not symmetrical in kind and should not be presented as though they were. Tadros is peer-reviewed normative philosophy and stops short of the conclusion commonly attributed to it: his published abstract states that the article "does not defend the duty on Israel to permit return," and that whether such a duty exists "depends on whether the economic, social and security costs override that right." Kent's is a student-edited law review

article rather than a peer-reviewed one, and it assumes its factual premises about 1947 to 1949 for the sake of argument rather than establishing them.

What did not lapse with time is the documentary file. The Conciliation Commission's Refugee Office completed a global evaluation in September 1951, reported in the Commission's working paper of 2 October 1961, estimating the abandoned land that had passed to Jewish hands at 16,324 square kilometres, of which 4,574 square kilometres were cultivable.

How the Refugee Office valued abandoned Arab property in 1951

PALESTINE POUNDS, PRICED AS AT 29 NOVEMBER 1947; TOTAL £P100,383,784



■ Rural lands ■ Urban lands ■ Jerusalem lands

Source: UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine, A/AC.25/W/81/Rev.2, 2 October 1961.

The Office chose 29 November 1947 as the valuation date because it was “the last date before the exodus of refugees when land values in Palestine were reasonably stable,” built the extent estimate from the Mandatory government's Village Statistics 1945, and warned that the estimates “must inevitably be regarded as approximate ones.” Frank D. Lewis, in *Explorations in Economic History* in 2007, re-valued non-agricultural property from

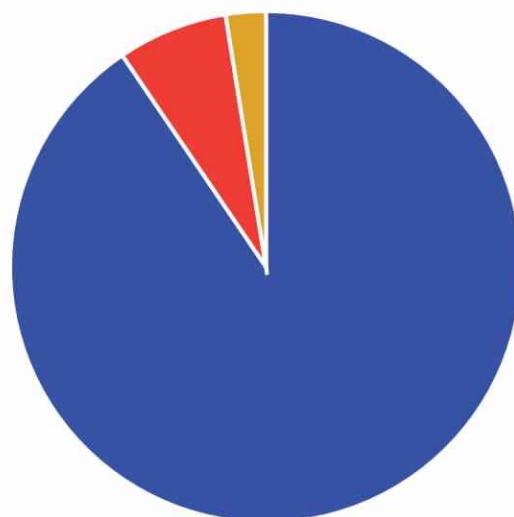
transfer prices and tax payable and reports amounts “much higher than those derived by the United Nations Conciliation Commission in 1951.”

Does prior occupancy ever strengthen a legal claim?

There is one body of law where length of presence carries weight, and it is the indigenous-rights regime. The General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 13 September 2007 by 143 votes to 4, with 11 abstentions, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States voting against.

The recorded vote on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2007; 158 DELEGATIONS RECORDED A POSITION



■ In favour ■ Abstaining ■ Against

Source: UN General Assembly recorded vote, resolution 61/295, 13 September 2007.

Even here the criterion is not a number of years. Article 1(1)(b) of the International Labour Organisation’s Convention No. 169 of 1989 reaches peoples who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a

geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present State boundaries, and who retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions. That is descent from the inhabitants at a named historical moment, coupled with institutional continuity. It is a status test, not a duration test, and no threshold of years appears in it.

What the status confers is also narrower than the question assumes. Article 10 of the 2007 Declaration provides that indigenous peoples “shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories,” and that no relocation shall take place without their free, prior and informed consent and after agreement on just and fair compensation, with the option of return where possible. That is a prohibition plus a consent and compensation regime, reached by the same route as Article 49: through the act and the consent, not through the calendar.

So the one regime that does look backwards at presence produces a bar on removal rather than a licence for it, and it reaches that bar without counting years. Who qualifies under those criteria in this particular case is a separate and contested question, examined in the Institute’s report on [indigeneity claims and the treaty criteria](#).

What does Israel’s founding text claim about presence?

The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, read on 14 May 1948, grounds the new state in a chain of named instruments rather than in a term of years, and its recitals run from the First Zionist Congress convened by Theodor Herzl to a General Assembly resolution of 29 November 1947 that the text calls “irrevocable.”

The same text addresses the population already present in terms of rights rather than tenure. It pledges that the state “will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its citizens irrespective of religion, race or sex” in the Knesset’s published English text, and it appeals “to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.” The two official English translations differ on one word in the equality clause, the Knesset publishing “all its citizens” and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs “all its inhabitants,” so the text quoted here is the Knesset’s.

The entitlement statute that followed is likewise status-based. Section 1 of the Law of Return, 5710-1950, provides that “Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an *oleh*,” and section 4B, inserted by Amendment No. 2 in 1970, defines a Jew for the purposes of that Law as “a person who was born of a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion.” Section 4A extends the same rights to a child, grandchild or spouse of a Jew. None of it counts years of residence, in either direction: a person qualifies by descent or conversion, not by tenure, and the length of anyone else’s tenure is not a variable the statute contains.

The pattern holds across the earlier British record too. The Palestine Royal Commission, signing its report on 22 June 1937, concluded that the obligations undertaken to Arabs and Jews “have proved irreconcilable” and returned “to Partition as the only method we are able to propose for dealing with the root of the trouble,” proposing a frontier between two sovereign states in a territory both populations inhabited. The recommendation turned on the line, not on which population had been there longer.

Has any court ruled on the 1948 expulsion question?

No court has ruled on whether the 1948 displacement was lawful, and none has been asked to measure how long the displaced had lived there. Israel’s own Supreme Court has adjudicated land taken later: in HCJ 390/79, decided 22 October 1979, a five-justice panel annulled an order of possession over the registered plots of seventeen Palestinian petitioners at the village of Rujeib.

The reasoning there is a study in which variables a court does weigh. The Deputy President held that possession of privately owned land for a civilian settlement is potentially justified under Article 52 of the Hague Regulations, but only “when it is proved, according to the facts of the case, that military needs were those which in practice brought upon the decision,” and the petition succeeded because the political level had initiated the settlement and the military had endorsed the site afterwards. In HCJ 6698/95, decided 8 March 2000, the same court declared that the State “was not permitted, by law, to allocate state land to the Jewish Agency, for the purpose of establishing the communal settlement of Katzir on the basis of

discrimination between Jews and non-Jews.” Ownership, authority, purpose and equality all carried weight. Length of residence appears in neither judgment.

At the international level the closest adjudicated record concerns a different period. The International Court of Justice delivered an advisory opinion on 19 July 2024 on the legal consequences of Israeli policies and practices in the territory occupied since 1967, holding by eleven votes to four, in the narrowest of its nine separately voted subparagraphs, that the continued presence there is unlawful. That opinion is advisory rather than binding, and its subject matter begins in 1967.

For 1948 the file was handled by a conciliation body rather than a tribunal. The Conciliation Commission counted refugees, sampled claims and valued property, and its Refugee Office declined to rest the valuation on the Custodian of Absentee Property’s records because “it would be inappropriate to assess compensation entirely on the basis of information furnished by an interested party.” That is a procedural finding about evidence, not a determination of legality. The substantive disagreement over [what happened to Palestinians in 1948](#) has been conducted in the archival literature, between Morris (2004) and Pappé (2006), over plan and causation.

Methodology

This report answers a question about what legal instruments contain, so its primary sources are the instruments themselves: the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the Rome Statute of 1998, the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 in the Ongley translation revised by Miller and published in 1892, the Absentee Property Law and Development Authority (Transfer of Property) Law of 1950 as set out in Forman and Kedar (2004), the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel of 14 May 1948 in the Knesset’s published English text, the Law of Return, 5710-1950 with its 1970 amendment, International Labour Organisation Convention No. 169 of 1989, and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted on 13 September 2007. Recorded votes and court judgments are cited as records of what was decided.

Several translation and text limits carry into the prose. There is no official English text of the Ottoman Land Code, since the Ottoman state issued none; Ongley (1892) is a private British

translation, and the parallel Fisher translation of 1919 renders the recovery payment under Article 68 differently. The Knesset marks its Basic Law translations unofficial and the two official English texts of the 1948 Declaration differ on one word in the equality clause. The full English text of the Geneva Conventions is not published on any United States or Swiss federal host that this programme treats as citable, and the depositary's own portal serves no document text; the wording of Article 49 is quoted here from the treaty text as it circulates through the custodial and legal literature.

Figures carry the scope their publishers gave them. The Conciliation Commission's 711,000 is an estimate for refugees from Israel-controlled territory, not a census, and excludes people displaced inside Israel; its 1951 sampling survey covers refugees in Jordan only and rests on claims its own authors record as "unchecked and not documented"; its 1961 valuation is described by the Refugee Office as approximate. Forman and Kedar state plainly that "There is no one agreed-upon figure for the land that moved from Arab hands to the state in the wake of 1948," and this report does not supply one.

Where the literature disagrees it is named rather than resolved. Morris (2004) and Pappé (2006) hold opposite positions on whether the 1948 departures followed a plan. Tadros (2017), peer-reviewed and sourced here from its published abstract, and Kent (2012), a student-edited law review article, hold opposite positions on what elapsed time does to a claim of return. Lewis (2007) is likewise abstract-sourced and no figure from its body is reproduced. The 1,300-year figure in the question was searched for as a measured or legally operative quantity and none was located; that is recorded here as an absence rather than filled.

Conclusion

So does a number of years settle it? The instruments do not contain one. Article 49 of the 1949 Convention prohibits mass forcible transfer "regardless of their motive," and the Rome Statute's definition turns on whether the displaced were lawfully present, so a reader who supplies 1,300 years, or 13, has supplied a figure the clause has no slot for.

Where the law does count years, it counts them over land rather than over people, and in 1948 it counted them against those who had gone. Three fallow years under Article 68 of the

1858 code put arable land into the tapu process; ten years of undisturbed possession under Article 78 matured into a prescriptive right; and then came a statute that asked only where a person stood on 29 November 1947, a test that reached tens of thousands of people who had never left the country. Meanwhile the Conciliation Commission put 711,000 refugees and 16,324 square kilometres on the record within three years, valued the property at £P100,383,784 as at November 1947, and refused to build the count on an interested party's files. The indigenous-rights instruments, the one place where prior presence is a criterion, reach a bar on forcible removal by way of descent and consent, and never by way of a term of years.

What none of it contains is the variable the question offers. That absence is worth sitting with, because arguments of this shape are made in both directions and by all sides: a duration is produced, and the listener is invited to treat it as the thing that decides. If the enacted texts, the land codes, the compensation file and the court records all reach their results without it, what is the number doing when someone supplies it?

Frequently Asked Questions

Which treaty first prohibited mass forcible transfer from occupied territory?

The Fourth Geneva Convention, adopted on 12 August 1949, carries the prohibition at Article 49, which bars “individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory,” regardless of motive. It postdates the 1947 to 1949 events in Palestine by a year and is therefore not the law that governed them at the time.

Why does the Rome Statute say “lawfully present” rather than “long resident”?

Article 7(2)(d) of the Rome Statute of 1998 defines deportation or forcible transfer as displacement of persons “from the area in which they are lawfully present, without grounds permitted under international law.” Lawful presence is a status a person holds or does not hold on a given day, which makes the element provable from a residence or citizenship record rather than from a genealogy.

How many Palestinian families filed property claims, and where were they counted?

The Conciliation Commission's working paper of 12 April 1951 sampled the fact-sheets issued to the 84,000 heads of refugee families in Jordan, about 540,000 persons. It found 34% of those families claiming no property at all and 66% claiming buildings or land, with total land claimed of 3,508,540 dunums. The frame is refugees in Jordan only, not all 1948 refugees.

What is a "present absentee" under Israeli law?

Forman and Kedar (2004) use the term for Arab citizens of Israel classified as absentees under the 1950 property legislation while remaining physically in the country, because the statutory test keyed to presence at a normal place of residence on or after 29 November 1947. Their finding is that practically no Jewish Israelis but tens of thousands of Arab Israeli citizens fell into the category.

Why does the Palestinian statistical authority have no census before 1997?

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics has conducted three censuses, in 1997, 2007 and 2017, the authority itself having been established after the Oslo Accords. Population figures for the territory before 1997 are modelled or back-estimated rather than enumerated, which is why no Palestinian-published headcount exists for earlier decades.

How much has actually been recorded as paid out on the 1948 property file?

The Conciliation Commission's 1961 working paper records that release of Arab refugee bank accounts blocked in Israel began in the summer of 1953 and that £2,633,175 of those accounts had been released by 31 August 1956. That is a released balance on bank accounts and is a different quantity from compensation for land or buildings, which the same paper values separately.

Which scholars disagree about whether the 1948 departures were planned?

Benny Morris, in the second edition of *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), attributes the exodus to causes varying by locality and phase and rejects a single master expulsion plan. Ilan Pappé, in *The Ethnic*

Cleansing of Palestine (Oneworld, 2006), argues the displacement was a planned ethnic cleansing. Both are named poles of a live scholarly dispute over causation.

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Yes, for an influential current inside the movement, and the record carries a figure: in January 1941 Chaim Weizmann told Zionist leaders he hoped some 500,000 Palestinians could be moved to Iraq or Transjordan, one of the transfer proposals the Oxford University Press volume *The Onset of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1917-47* (2020) attributes to leading pre-state figures including Theodor Herzl, Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion. The largest transfer figure in the period's official record, though, is not Zionist at all: Britain's Palestine Royal Commission recommended in 1937 that partition be accompanied by moving about 225,000 Arabs out of the area it allotted to a Jewish state. What the record does not hold is an adopted instrument of the Zionist Organization or the Jewish Agency naming a target Arab population, and the movement's most territorially maximalist current argued in 1923 that settlement would have to proceed with the Arab population in place. The question underneath the phrase is whether the state was planned with the people already there in mind, or in their absence.

Key Findings

- In January 1941 Chaim Weizmann told Zionist leaders he hoped some **500,000** Palestinians could be transferred to Iraq or Transjordan, per the Oxford University Press volume *The Onset of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1917-47* (2020), which names Herzl, Weizmann and Ben-Gurion as pre-state figures who advocated some form of transfer, including forced transfer.
- The Palestine Royal Commission (Cmd. 5479, 1937) recommended moving about **225,000** Arabs out of the area it allotted to a Jewish state, against about 1,250 Jews out of the area allotted to an Arab state. It was a British government commission's recommendation and it was never enacted.
- Ze'ev Jabotinsky's two essays of November 1923 argue that colonisation must "proceed regardless of the native population," behind an iron wall of force, because "there can be no voluntary agreement between ourselves and the Palestine Arabs."
- Benny Morris (Cambridge University Press, 2004) reconstructs roughly **700,000** Palestinians displaced in 1948 and rejects both a single master expulsion plan and the account that the departures were voluntary; Ilan Pappé (2006) argues the displacement was planned ethnic cleansing.
- The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, 14 May 1948, appeals "to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel" to remain "on the basis of full and equal citizenship"; Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counted about **2.130 million** Arab residents in September 2025.

Which Zionist leaders discussed transferring Arabs out?

In January 1941 Chaim Weizmann told Zionist leaders he hoped some **500,000** Palestinians could be transferred to Iraq or Transjordan, a figure recorded in the Oxford University Press volume *The Onset of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1917-47* (2020). The same volume states that leading pre-state figures including Theodor Herzl, Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion advocated some form of transfer, including forced transfer.

The earlier of Weizmann's two documented statements is a letter. The 2020 volume records that in 1930 he wrote of an "exchange of populations" that could be encouraged, using the vocabulary the interwar period applied to the Greek and Turkish arrangements of the

previous decade. The 1941 figure was stated to a meeting of leaders in the second year of a world war, at a moment when no Jewish state existed and the territory was under British mandatory administration.

Two properties of this evidence set the limits on what it supports. The first is that these are statements by individuals, in a letter and in remarks to a leadership meeting, not clauses of an adopted text. Nothing in the volume presents the 500,000 as a target carried in a resolution, a budget line or an executive minute. The second is that the volume names three figures across a span of more than four decades of political activity, from Herzl's writing in the 1890s to Ben-Gurion's leadership in the 1940s, so the statements are not contemporaneous with one another and do not describe a single deliberation.

What the volume does establish, and it is the part of the answer that holds, is that transfer was discussed at the top of the movement rather than at its margins, and that it was discussed in figures. A hope for the movement of half a million people is a quantity, and it was put in writing by a scholar working from the period's records. The question the remaining sections work through is what a set of quantified private advocacies establishes about a movement's policy, and what else the same decades produced.

Is it often said every Zionist wanted the Arabs gone?

It is often said that Zionists wanted the Palestinian Arabs gone. Benny Morris's archival reconstruction, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), supports the direction and then separates the claims: transfer thinking was widespread in the mainstream leadership from the mid-1930s, roughly **700,000** Palestinians were [displaced in 1948](#), and Morris rejects both a single master expulsion plan and the account that the departures were voluntary.

Three distinct claims sit inside the one phrase, and each rests on a different class of document. A demographic objective, that the state should hold a Jewish majority, is established by what the movement's institutions built and counted. An advocated transfer is established by statements, letters and committee discussions. An executed expulsion is established by conduct, locality by locality, in 1948 and after. A source that establishes one of the three does not thereby establish the others.

Ilan Pappé's *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oneworld, 2006) states the strongest scholarly version of the third claim, arguing that the 1948 displacement was a planned ethnic cleansing. Morris, working the Israeli military and state archives, attributes the exodus to causes that varied by locality and phase, including military attack and fear of attack, expulsions in certain sectors, and flight. The two books are the standing poles of a named scholarly dispute, and the dispute is about what the same archives establish, not about whether people left.

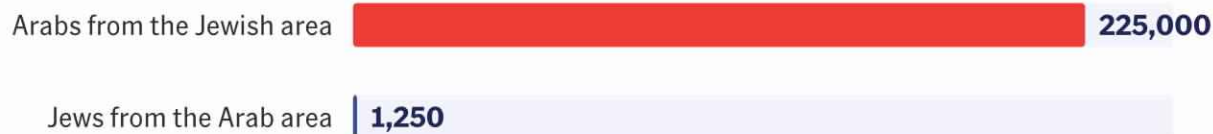
On the scale of what happened, the peer-reviewed literature carries its own figures. An article in the *Israel Law Review* records that about 400 Palestinian towns and villages were destroyed in the course of the Zionist and Israeli military operations, and that about 80% of the residents of the Palestinian regions on which the State of Israel was established were expelled or fled. That is a measure of outcome. It is cited here as a measure of outcome, and it is a separate evidentiary question from what anyone intended in 1930, 1937 or 1941.

What did the 1937 British commission actually recommend?

Britain's Palestine Royal Commission recommended in 1937 that partition be accompanied by the transfer of about **225,000** Arabs out of the area it allotted to a Jewish state, against about 1,250 Jews out of the area allotted to an Arab state. The recommendation is a British government commission's, in a report signed 22 June 1937 and presented to Parliament as Cmd. 5479 in July 1937.

The 1937 partition recommendation, by population to be moved

RECOMMENDED TRANSFERS OUT OF EACH ALLOTTED AREA, AS REPORTED IN THE COMMISSION'S REPORT



Source: Palestine Royal Commission, Cmd. 5479, 1937; figures carried as reported. A recommendation, never enacted.

The Commission was issued by Royal Warrant of 7 August 1936 to ascertain the causes of the disturbances that broke out in Palestine that April, and it heard 60 witnesses at 30 public sessions and 53 at 40 private ones. Its conclusion, at Chapter XX, was that Britain's two obligations "have proved irreconcilable" and that "we cannot, in Palestine as it now is, both concede the Arab claim to self-government and secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home." Its remedy, at Chapter XXII, was partition: "We return, then, to Partition as the only method we are able to propose for dealing with the root of the trouble."

Two limits belong with the figures. The recommendation was never carried out. The Woodhead Commission of 1938 found the partition scheme impracticable and the 1939 White Paper abandoned it, so the 225,000 describes a plan Britain proposed and then dropped, not a population that moved. And the recommendation was made by the mandatory power's own inquiry into its own obligations, which is why the asymmetry between the two figures is a fact about a British proposal rather than about any Zionist body's policy.

The same report recommended a "political high level" of Jewish immigration fixed at 12,000 a year for five years, and a grant of £2,000,000 to the proposed Arab State. Those clauses sit alongside the transfer clause in one document. Transfer entered the official record of the period in a British command paper, and the figure most often attached to the transfer question originates there.

Did the Revisionists call for removing the Arab population?

Ze'ev Jabotinsky's two essays of November 1923, published a week apart in the Russian-language Revisionist weekly *Rassvet* in Berlin, argue that no voluntary agreement with the Arab population is available and that settlement must therefore proceed behind a wall of force. They argue that [colonisation](#) continues in the presence of the population, not in its absence.

The central sentence of "The Iron Wall (We and the Arabs)," of 4 November 1923, reads: "Zionist colonisation must either stop, or else proceed regardless of the native population. Which means that it can proceed and develop only under the protection of a power that is independent of the native population, behind an iron wall, which the native population cannot breach." On agreement, the same essay is categorical: "There can be no voluntary

agreement between ourselves and the Palestine Arabs. Not now, nor in the prospective future.”

Jabotinsky presents this as a description rather than a proposal. “That is our Arab policy,” he writes, “not what it should be, but what it actually is, whether we admit it or not. What need, otherwise, of the Balfour Declaration? Or of the Mandate?” He grounds the claim on precedent, holding that there is no “solitary instance of any colonisation being carried on with the consent of the native population.” The second essay, “The Ethics of the Iron Wall” of 11 November 1923, answers the charge that the first is immoral.

The significance for the question is structural. The recorded case that not every Zionist current sought the smallest possible Arab population is usually made with the binationalists, the doves of the movement. The harder counterweight is that its most territorially maximalist current, the one that opposed partition and demanded the whole mandate, built its argument on the premise that the existing population stays and resists, and that force is directed at the resistance. Jabotinsky’s texts are evidence of what their author wrote in 1923 and of nothing wider; he led the Revisionist faction, not the movement. Ronny Shlomi’s 2025 article in the *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* examines what that faction submitted to the League of Nations, and its own text establishes that Jabotinsky’s politics remain an open dispute in the historiography.

Was a Jewish majority pursued by immigration rather than removal?

The pre-1914 colonies pursued separation economically rather than demographically. Yuval Ben-Bassat’s 2009 study of the six Judean colonies southeast of Jaffa, built from the colonies’ own logbooks, contracts and the Rothschild Bank Archive, finds that “economic connections with the Arab population predominantly revolved around the employment of low-wage day workers, especially during the high agricultural seasons,” and records that in 1903 the committees of Gederah, Rehovot and Rishon le-Zion moved to stop leasing colony land to Arabs.

Ben-Bassat records the colonists’ stated reason for those decisions as “the widespread theft and damage to property in the colonies claimed to have been committed by the Arab rural

population,” a rationale he reports as their claim and does not establish. He also records the direction of travel before it: the Rothschild administration set the ratio between Jewish and Arab workers and fixed their wages, and in 1899 Baron Edmond de Rothschild expressed the wish to see the region between Eqrone and Rishon le-Zion “cultivated by Jewish workers and blooming.” What the colony records show is exclusion from employment and tenancy inside purchased holdings, not removal of villagers from their own villages.

Gershon Shafir’s *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1989) supplies the framing the period’s scholarship works in. Shafir reads the conflict’s origins as a struggle over the land and labour markets on the frontier of settlement, treats the availability of land as a precondition created by the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the world market, and reads the First Aliyah as a drive for a settlement colony that became a plantation economy employing Palestinian Arab labour, followed by the Second Aliyah’s “conquest of labor” and the split labour market that came with it. Shafir counts nothing; the periodization and the framing are what his book establishes.

Tyler Weisman’s 2014 undergraduate survey of the founding-period texts, presented at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, describes the same pattern, that colonists hired Arabs “as laborers or tenant farmers, paying very low wages.” It is student work drawing on the secondary literature rather than measurement. How the holdings themselves changed hands, and from whom, is a separate register of the record and is set out in the Institute’s report on [land purchase](#) and ownership.

Did Zionist institutions count the population as a planning task?

A demographic majority was an administrative objective with an institution behind it, and this is the better-documented half of the answer. Anat Leibler’s 2014 study in *Social Studies of Science* traces the professional and political activity of the demographer Roberto Bachi before 1948, showing how demographic expertise, pro-natal advocacy and the systematisation of ethnic categories intersected with state formation in Israel’s pre-state period.

Leibler's finding is that demographic statistics and ethnic classification were politically entangled in the region long before there was a state to administer them, and that the categories themselves, including the later "Mizrahi," were produced by that work rather than found by it. An organisation that builds a statistical apparatus to measure the composition of a population is doing something more legible than making a remark: it is treating the ratio as an object of policy, on the record, with staff and a method.

The Israeli policy literature treats it the same way. An undated Institute for National Security Studies paper, *Science and Politics in Demographic Planning*, takes demographic planning as an explicit object of state policy rather than an inference about it, which is the shape of the claim the pre-state material supports.

The same logic ran on the other side of the line. Philippe Fargues, writing in *Population and Development Review* in 2000, finds that Israeli and Palestinian fertility across the twentieth century tracked national conflict and pronatal sentiment rather than a smooth modernisation curve, and that high fertility was framed as national strength by Palestinians and Israelis alike. His analysis is interpretive rather than a single measured sample, and it covers both populations.

The limit is precise. Institutional counting establishes that a demographic objective existed and was pursued as a measurable one. It does not establish the method by which the objective was to be reached, and the methods available to a movement without sovereignty were immigration, natural increase, land acquisition and labour policy. A majority can be pursued by adding to one side of a ratio or by subtracting from the other, and the counting apparatus alone does not say which.

What did the 1948 founding text say about Arab inhabitants?

The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, read on 14 May 1948, appeals "to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions." The appeal is in the founding instrument itself, read the day the state was declared and published in Official Gazette Number 1.

The same document pledges that the state “will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its citizens irrespective of religion, race or sex.” That is the wording the Knesset publishes; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs publishes the same sentence with “all its inhabitants,” and the Hebrew is the original of which both English texts are translations. Which text is being quoted matters on precisely the clause the equality question turns on.

A founding declaration is not enacted law. Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, adopted in 1992, enumerates dignity, life and body, property, personal liberty, exit from and entry to Israel, and privacy, and contains no equality clause; its section 1 provides only that the rights it lists “shall be upheld in the spirit of the principles included in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel.” The Declaration states what the state pledged on its first day, and the pledge was not transposed into a Basic Law right.

On the population itself, Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics counted about **2.130 million** Arab residents in September 2025, alongside about 7.758 million Jews and others. The Bureau’s published shares of 21.5% and 78.5% are computed on those two groups’ combined 9.888 million; a further roughly 260,000 foreign residents sit inside its 10.148 million total but outside both groups, which is why the two shares do not divide into the total. The Bureau also counts East Jerusalem residents and West Bank settlers inside Israel’s total, a scope choice distinct from the international convention. These are Israel’s own official statistics, and they describe the state that exists rather than anyone’s intention for it.

Where do historians disagree about pre-state intent?

Historians reading overlapping archives reach different conclusions about intent, and the disagreement is specific. Benny Morris (2004) finds transfer thinking widespread in the leadership from the mid-1930s while rejecting a single master expulsion plan; Ilan Pappé (2006) argues in *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* that the displacement was planned. The dispute is about what a body of private advocacy establishes about adopted policy.

Source and year	What it reads	Where it lands
Morris, 2004, Cambridge University Press	Israeli military and state archives, locality by locality	Transfer thinking widespread in the leadership; no single master plan; departures not voluntary

Source and year	What it reads	Where it lands
Pappé, 2006, Oneworld	The same period, read as a planned operation	The 1948 displacement was ethnic cleansing
Dowty, 2022, Stroum Center for Jewish Studies	The settler-colonial characterisation of Israel	Argues against classifying Israel as a settler colonial state
Locker-Biletzki, 2025, Review of Radical Political Economics	Settler-colonialism and capital, 1920 to 1956	Argues the period is settler-colonial in structure
Ukashi, 2018, Peace and Conflict Studies	Zionism, imperialism and indigeneity	Argues Zionism is an indigenous emancipation movement
Dana, 2024, Middle East Critique	Settler-colonial theory applied to Israel	Argues the case is exceptional within the field

Source: each author's own published argument, dated. Dowty is a signed faculty essay, not peer-reviewed. Locker-Biletzki is a refereed conference paper in a symposium published for the Union for Radical Political Economics. Ukashi and Dana are peer-reviewed interpretive essays; neither measures anything, and Dana's article contains no figures at all.

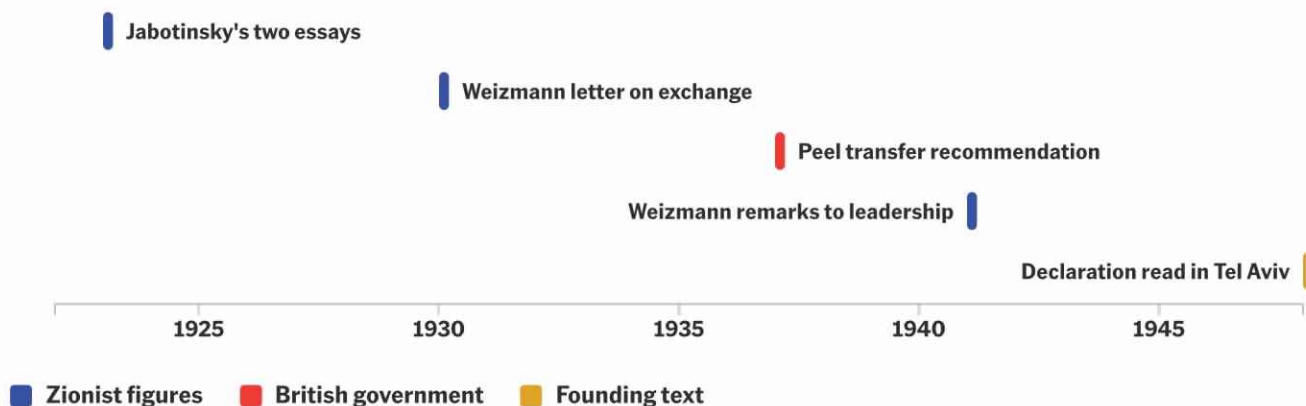
The second disagreement in that table is not about archives but about frameworks. Whether a demographic majority objective amounts to an eliminatory logic depends on which analytical scheme is applied, and the scholars applying the competing schemes are named above with the journals that published them. The Institute's survey of the [named scholarship on the settler-colonial question](#) sets out the criteria each side works from. None of the four framework arguments rests on a count, and none of them is a finding about what any leader wrote.

What does the pre-state record not contain?

No adopted policy instrument of the Zionist Organization or the Jewish Agency naming a target Arab population or ordering removal appears in the scholarship cited in this report. The transfer material is of four kinds: a private letter (Weizmann, 1930), remarks to a leadership meeting (January 1941), diary entries and committee discussions reported by historians, and one foreign government's commission recommendation (Cmd. 5479, 1937).

Where the transfer material sits, and who produced it

THE DOCUMENTS CITED IN THIS REPORT, BY YEAR AND BY THE BODY THAT PRODUCED EACH



Source: *Jabotinsky Institute in Israel; The Onset of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1917-47, Oxford University Press, 2020; Palestine Royal Commission, Cmd. 5479, 1937; Provisional Government of Israel, 1948.*

Each document type establishes something different. A letter establishes what its writer put in writing on a date. Remarks to a leadership meeting establish what was said, to whom, in what forum. A commission recommendation establishes what a foreign government's inquiry proposed and whether it was enacted. Only an adopted resolution or minute, published with its text and its vote, establishes what an organisation decided. The transfer record is heavy in the first three and, in the sources cited here, absent in the fourth.

The sentence most often quoted on this subject, attributed to Ben-Gurion on expelling the Arabs, reaches readers through later scholarly citation rather than through a published facsimile of the letter it comes from. That is a fact about how the quotation circulates, recorded here without inference: a sentence that has not been read in the archive by the person repeating it is a sentence whose context has not been read either.

What would close the gap is specifiable. A dated resolution of a Zionist Congress or a minute of the Jewish Agency Executive, published with its wording and its vote, would move the claim from advocacy to policy, in the way the 1937 recommendation is anchored in a command paper with a chapter number. Its absence from the sources read here is not evidence that the statements were not made, that the majority objective was not pursued, or that intent was absent. It bounds what kind of claim the surviving record supports, and the bound is narrower than the phrase in the question.

Methodology and limitations

This report assembles four source types and labels each where it is used. Primary and official records: the Palestine Royal Commission report (Cmd. 5479, 1937), the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel (1948), Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty (1992), and Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics population release of September 2025. Period political texts: Jabotinsky's two essays of November 1923. Peer-reviewed research: Ben-Bassat (2009), Leibler (2014), Fargues (2000), Shlomi (2025), Ukashi (2018), Dana (2024), Locker-Biletzki (2025), and the *Israel Law Review* article on the 1948 refugees. Scholarly books and volumes: Morris (2004), Pappé (2006), Shafir (1989), and the Oxford University Press volume of 2020.

Three sources are not peer-reviewed and are flagged at first use: Dowty (2022) is a signed faculty essay for an academic centre; Weisman (2014) is undergraduate work presented at a conference and drawing on the secondary literature; the Institute for National Security Studies paper is an undated policy paper. Locker-Biletzki (2025) was refereed and is typed by its publisher as a conference paper in a themed symposium.

Several figures carry handling rules. The 225,000 and 1,250 are the Commission's recommended transfers, carried as reported, and are a recommendation rather than an enumeration; the Commission's own population figures for the territory are rounded characterisations inside an argumentative passage and are used here only as such. The 500,000 is attributed to one leader's stated hope at a leadership meeting, not to any adopted document. The Central Bureau of Statistics figures are Israel's own official counts, and the report states the base of its published shares because the two named groups do not sum to the Bureau's total. Translation is a live limit on two texts: Jabotinsky's essays are quoted from the English typescript held by the Jabotinsky Institute in Israel, the Russian originals having appeared in *Rassvet* nos. 42/43 and 44/45, and the Declaration exists in two Israeli government English texts that differ on the word the equality clause turns on.

Where the literature disagrees, the competing works are named with their publishers and years rather than summarised into a consensus. The report measures what the documents say, who produced each one and when; it reports document types and their reach, and the intent of any individual is not a quantity the documents settle.

Conclusion

So was the state planned with the people already there in mind, or in their absence? Both, in different documents, and the documents are not of equal kind.

The quantified advocacy is real and it is at the top: a hope, stated to a leadership meeting in January 1941, that some 500,000 Palestinians might be moved, sitting alongside a 1930 letter about an encouraged exchange of populations and a list of three founding figures who advocated transfer in some form. The largest transfer number in the period's official record came from London, not from any Zionist body, and the plan it belonged to was dropped within two years. The movement's hardest territorial current argued the opposite premise, that the population stays and resists and that force answers the resistance. The colonies of the 1880s and 1890s pursued separation through wages and leases rather than through villages. The institutions counted, and counted deliberately. The founding text of May 1948 appealed to Arab inhabitants to remain on terms of full and equal citizenship, and roughly 700,000 people were displaced within months of it. About 2.130 million Arab residents are counted inside the state today by the state's own statisticians.

That is a record in which the intention is documented in letters and the outcome is documented in archives, with no adopted instrument standing between them in the sources read here. The phrase in the question, as few Palestinian Arabs as possible, travels today through arguments in which a movement's private advocacy is treated as its published policy, and the shorthand carries into how a people's national origin is described to audiences who will never open a command paper. Which document is any given claim standing on, and what does that document actually establish? The gap between a letter and a resolution is small on a page and large in what it proves, and it is worth asking who benefits from its being closed by assertion.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many Palestinians were recorded as refugees after 1948?

The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine's Technical Committee on Refugees estimated approximately 711,000 "refugees from Israel-controlled territory" in a

report of 7 September 1949, published in the Commission's General Progress Report of 1950 (A/1367/Rev.1). The Committee labelled it an estimate rather than a census, and it counts refugees from Israeli-controlled territory only, so no internal displacement figure can be derived from it.

Which English text of the 1948 Declaration should be quoted?

There are two, both published by Israeli government bodies, and they differ on the equality clause. The Knesset publishes "complete equality of social and political rights to all its citizens irrespective of religion, race or sex"; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs publishes the same sentence with "all its inhabitants." The Hebrew is the original and both English versions are translations of it, so any quotation should name which text it came from.

Where can Jabotinsky's 1923 essays be read in English?

The English typescript is held and published by the Jabotinsky Institute in Israel, archive reference A 1 - 7/14. The originals are Russian, published as "O zheleznoi stene" in *Rassvet* nos. 42/43 of 4 November 1923 and "Ob etike zheleznoi steny" in nos. 44/45 of 11 November 1923, in Berlin. The two essays are frequently conflated; each carries its own date and argument.

How large were the two populations when the Peel Commission reported?

The Commission itself wrote, at Chapter XX of its 1937 report, that "About 1,000,000 Arabs are in strife, open or latent, with some 400,000 Jews." Both figures are the Commission's own rounded characterisations inside an argumentative passage, written as approximations, and neither is an enumeration. They should not be cited as a census of Mandate Palestine.

Why do Israeli and Palestinian population counts differ today?

They count different territory on different bases. Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counts East Jerusalem residents and West Bank settlers inside Israel's total; the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics benchmarks on its 2017 census, which enumerated 4,780,978 residents of the West Bank and Gaza on 1 December 2017 and could not directly enumerate East Jerusalem. Every Palestinian total after 2017 is a projection off that measured base.

Who sold the land the earliest colonies were built on?

Yuval Ben-Bassat's 2009 study records that about a dozen absentee landlords owned property in the Judean region, "in many cases Christians from nearby Jaffa," and that they sold the colonists much of the land on which settlement there took place. The study works from the colonies' own local archives, Ottoman state records and the Rothschild Bank Archive, and reports no acreage totals.

Why is 1882 to 1914 the standard period for the early settlement?

The periodization comes from Gershon Shafir's *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), which opens on the First Aliyah and closes on the eve of the First World War, reading the period through the land and labour markets of the late Ottoman era. It is interpretive historical sociology and carries no measured rate of its own.

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Four registers count the occupation's human cost across different territories and years. What each one measures, and where the counting stops.

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Casualty Data

Gaza

West Bank

Measurement



The human cost of the occupation is usually given as a single total, and several separate registers each publish one: the longest, a 2025 peer-reviewed analysis titled *Occupation, displacement, and violence in the West Bank*, records **117,014 conflict-related casualties** in the West Bank between 2000 and 2023. The largest is the Gaza Ministry of Health's own count of 73,670 people killed and 174,682 injured as of 10 September 2026, a party's reporting on its own territory, which the ministry states excludes the missing, the bodies under rubble and the unidentified. A joint World Bank, European Union and United Nations assessment of April 2026 prices Gaza's recovery and reconstruction at US\$71.4 billion over a decade. No two of these registers count the same people over the same years, and several of the harms they are cited for carry no published number at all.

Key Findings

- A 2025 peer-reviewed analysis titled *Occupation, displacement, and violence in the West Bank* records 117,014 conflict-related casualties in the West Bank across 24 years, 2000 to 2023, counting deaths and injuries on one instrument.
- The Gaza Ministry of Health reports 73,670 people killed and 174,682 injured as of 10 September 2026, its own count on its own definitions, which the ministry itself says omits five named categories of the dead.
- Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025), in *The Lancet*, estimated 64,260 deaths from traumatic injury in Gaza to 30 June 2024, with a 95% confidence interval of 55,298 to 78,525, against a registry total of 37,877 for the same date.
- The Site Management Cluster counted an estimated 1,708,822 people in 1,591 verified displacement sites in Gaza, with data extracted on 16 May 2026; 38% of households in those sites reported no shelter assistance in the preceding six months.
- The joint World Bank, European Union and United Nations assessment of April 2026 puts physical infrastructure damage in Gaza at US\$35.2 billion and recovery and reconstruction needs at US\$71.4 billion, which measure different things.

How many West Bank casualties does the long-run record count?

A 2025 peer-reviewed analysis titled *Occupation, displacement, and violence in the West Bank* records **117,014 conflict-related casualties** in the West Bank between 2000 and 2023, counting deaths and injuries together on a single instrument. That is a 24-year register of the occupation itself rather than of the war that began in October 2023, and it is the longest continuous series carried in this report.

Within that period the analysis itemises 69,312 Palestinian casualties, comprising 1,092 deaths and 68,220 injuries, and 4,118 Israeli casualties, comprising 198 deaths and 3,920 injuries. The two itemised subtotals account for 73,430 of the 117,014, and the balance is not broken out in the figures carried here; the register is reported by title and year because its author list is not available in the material read for this report.

The composition of those subtotals is the finding the headline total obscures. Injuries are 68,220 of the 69,312 Palestinian casualties, 98.4% of the itemised Palestinian figure, and 3,920 of the 4,118 Israeli casualties, 95.2%. On this register the occupation's recorded cost over two decades is overwhelmingly a record of people wounded and surviving, at a ratio of roughly 62 injuries to each death on the Palestinian side and roughly 20 to one on the Israeli side.

That distinction matters for what any single number can carry. A death enters a register once and closes; an injury enters once and then continues as a medical, occupational and household cost that no casualty register is built to follow. The 117,014 counts events at the moment they were recorded. It carries no field for what followed, and neither the analysis nor any register carried here publishes a subsequent figure for the 68,220.

West Bank conflict-related casualties, 2000 to 2023

ITEMISED DEATHS AND INJURIES; THE TWO SUBTOTALS DO NOT EXHAUST THE 117,014 OVERALL FIGURE



Source: Occupation, displacement, and violence in the West Bank, 2025, peer-reviewed.

Is the cost larger than the deaths and injuries counted?

Yes, and the bodies that do the counting say so in their own documents. The joint World Bank, European Union and United Nations Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment of April 2026 puts physical infrastructure damage in the Gaza Strip at **US\$35.2 billion** for October 2023 to October 2025, a quantity no casualty register counts and no casualty register was designed to count.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development states in its own assessment of the economic costs of the occupation that losses including loss of life, family life, shelter and homeland cannot be fully monetized. That is a measuring body recording the limit of its own instrument, and it is the clearest statement available of why a money figure and a casualty figure never converge on one total.

What exists instead is a set of instruments, each built to count one slice. The Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment measures damage to structures and the cost of replacing them, combining remote sensing with ground-verified data across two years. The Costs of War project at Brown University, in Neta Crawford's 2025 paper, compiles direct and indirect death and sets Gaza against Afghanistan and Ukraine on a deaths-per-month basis. Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025) estimate deaths from traumatic injury alone. The Site Management Cluster enumerates people living in displacement sites. None of the four measures the others, and none was built to.

The same assessment records that more than 50% of hospitals in Gaza were non-functional and that the economy contracted by 84%. Those are properties of institutions and of an economy rather than of persons, and they sit alongside the casualty registers rather than inside them. A reader who wants one number for the whole is asking four instruments to answer a question none of them poses. What the record supports is a list of separately measured quantities, each with a named measuring body, a stated period and a stated method, and the explicit note from one of those bodies that some of the losses were never put into the arithmetic at all.

Which territory and which years does each published count cover?

A separate West Bank count records **1,091 Palestinians killed** between 7 October 2023 and 3 May 2026, including at least 239 children, as UN OCHA compiles it and as a 2026 UNRWA situation report republished it. It covers the same months as the Gaza count and a different territory, which makes it the third of three registers that share no common denominator.

The three run as follows. The West Bank register in the 2025 peer-reviewed analysis covers 2000 to 2023, the West Bank only, and counts deaths and injuries together. The Gaza register covers 7 October 2023 to 6 May 2026, the Gaza Strip only, and reports 72,619 people killed and 172,484 injured as the Gaza Ministry of Health counted them at that date. The second West Bank register covers 7 October 2023 to 3 May 2026 and counts deaths only.

Three features make them non-additive, and each is visible from the windows alone. The first is territory: the Gaza figure contains no West Bank deaths and the West Bank figures contain no Gaza deaths. The second is period: the long West Bank register stops in 2023, before the Gaza window opens, so the two do not overlap by a single day and the third register overlaps only the Gaza one. The third is unit: two registers count casualties, meaning deaths and injuries pooled, and one counts deaths alone, so the larger of the West Bank figures is not a death toll and cannot be set beside one.

The practical consequence is that no total for the occupation as a whole appears in any of them. The 2025 analysis stops where the current war begins. The Gaza count opens on 7 October 2023 and carries nothing before it. There is no published register in this report that

runs continuously across both territories from 2000 to the present, so a figure presented as the occupation's full human cost has been assembled by whoever assembled it, out of parts that were measured separately.

Who produced the Gaza figure that circulates as a UN count?

The 72,619 figure is the **Gaza Ministry of Health's own count** of its own territory, collated by UN OCHA and republished in a 2026 UNRWA situation report. It is a party's reporting relayed twice rather than an independently verified tally, and the ministry publishes the same register directly: 73,670 killed and 174,682 injured in its report of 10 September 2026.

The ministry states the limits of its register itself, in a notice of 7 January 2024 it has not withdrawn. Five categories are excluded: the missing and the bodies trapped under rubble; the unidentified who reached hospitals; the unidentified whose bodies were handed over by Israel; those buried by their families without passing through a hospital; and the victims in Gaza and North Gaza after the information system stopped functioning in November 2023. Those are the issuing body's own scope statements, and they travel with every figure taken from it.

The ministry also runs two counts, not one. The cumulative daily figure counts everyone who reached a hospital; the name-by-name lists count only records the ministry has finished. Its published lists carry 21,323 records to 29 March 2024, 28,185 to 30 June 2024 and 34,344 to 31 August 2024. The June list splits into 22,368 records drawn from ministry records and 5,817 from notification by relatives, which are the two channels its published work on [what the Gaza Health Ministry publishes about its own count](#) sets out.

Two published numbers exist for the same day. The ministry's own daily report for 30 June 2024 gives 37,877 killed and 86,969 injured. A 2024 UN OCHA emergency report, drawing on the same ministry data, gives 37,718 fatalities and 85,523 injuries as of 30 June 2024. Neither body reconciles the pair, and the difference of 159 deaths arises somewhere in the relay rather than in a second count of the dead. The question of whether the register runs high or low against another instrument is treated separately in the Institute's work on [whether the ministry undercounts or overcounts deaths](#).

How many people were displaced, and who enumerated them?

The Site Management Cluster counted an estimated **1,708,822 people** living in verified displacement sites across Gaza's five governorates when it extracted its data on 16 May 2026, after fieldwork by 165 trained enumerators between 3 February and 19 April 2026. The cluster describes the result as a social count of organised displaced communities rather than a census of discrete physical locations.

The enumeration covered 1,856 targeted sites and confirmed 1,591 active, across 116 neighbourhoods, with collection led by twelve partner organisations. Of the 1,591 sites, 83% are makeshift, meaning informal, open-air and tented; about 11% are collective centres in schools and public buildings; the remainder are scattered sites of fewer than ten households. Roughly 1.5 million residents were living in approximately 246,000 tents or tent-like shelters, an average of about six people per tent against a standard emergency tent designed for five, with about 59,000 shelters housing more than eight.

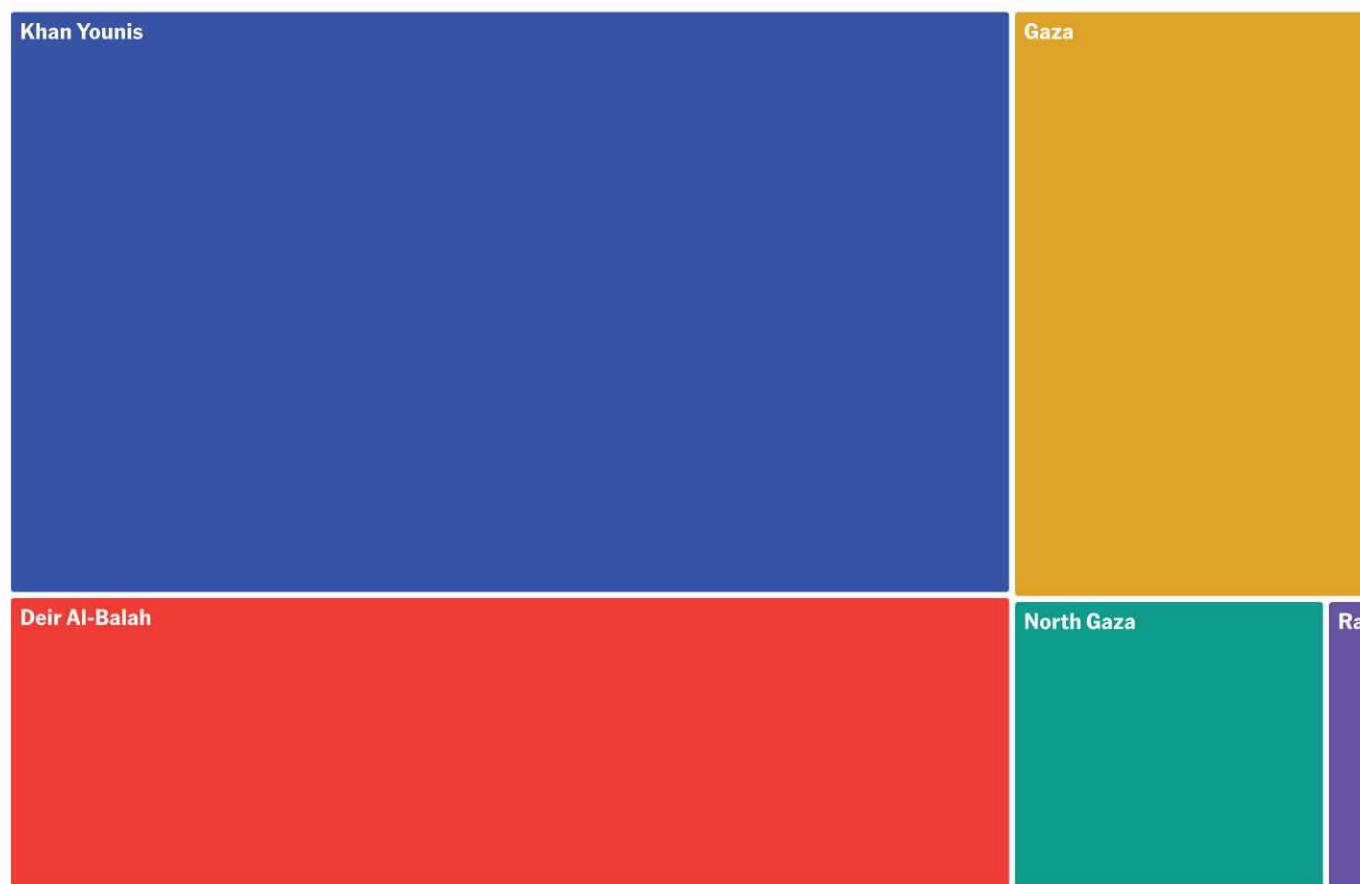
Two figures describe what was not reaching people. 7,700 households, about 38,500 individuals, were sleeping outdoors with no shelter at all, present at 19% of surveyed sites. 136,000 households, about 680,000 people and 38% of all households in sites, had received no shelter assistance in the six months preceding the survey.

The cluster's own caveats bound each of these. Household counts are derived rather than enumerated, applying a standard household size of five where disaggregated data was unavailable. Sex-disaggregated and age-disaggregated data exist for only 253 of the 1,591 sites, so every demographic share rests on a subsample. A single interview per site means the figures for persons with disabilities and female-headed households are underestimates, which the cluster states. The earliest data were about four months old at publication, and the cluster calls the assessment a baseline rather than a point-in-time snapshot.

A separate figure of 1.9 million displaced circulates from a 2026 UNICEF update, which footnotes it as a UN estimate of 2025 vintage and describes it as cumulative, covering people displaced at any point, many of them several times. It counts a different object from the 1.7 million in sites at a stated date, and no publisher reconciles the two.

People in verified displacement sites, by governorate

GAZA STRIP, DATA EXTRACTED 16 MAY 2026; THE FIVE GOVERNORATES SUM TO 1,708,822



Source: Site Management Cluster in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2026, field enumeration.

How many deaths are attributed to causes other than weapons?

Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025), in *The Lancet*, estimated **64,260 deaths from traumatic injury** in the Gaza Strip between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024, with a 95% confidence interval of 55,298 to 78,525. That estimate covers injury deaths only, and the authors state plainly that it excludes deaths from healthcare disruption, food insecurity, water and sanitation failure and disease.

The method was capture-recapture across three lists: 22,368 identified decedents from Palestinian Ministry of Health hospital morgue records, 5,817 individual decedents from the ministry's rolling online mortality survey, and obituary pages scraped from social media. Those first two are the same two channels the ministry's own 30 June list reports, so the study

and the registry are not independent counts of the same thing. Against the registry total of 37,877 at that date, the estimate implies 26,383 deaths absent from the registry, which is 41% of the study's own estimate rather than a 41% uplift on the registry figure. The authors report an annualised crude death rate of 39.3 per 1,000 people, a rate ratio of 14.0 against all-cause mortality in 2022.

For deaths from causes other than injury, the picture is thinner. Neta Crawford's 2025 Costs of War paper, the document most often cited for indirect death, makes no indirect estimate of its own; it relays a range of 4,540 to 12,500 indirect deaths for 7 October 2023 to 5 January 2025 from a preprint by Spagat and colleagues, and that range belongs to those authors with the preprint label attached.

A widely circulated figure of 62,413 starvation deaths originates in an October 2024 open letter by 99 American medical professionals who volunteered in Gaza. Its appendix derives the number by multiplying population estimates in named food-insecurity phases by the threshold crude death rates that define those phases, summing across six overlapping windows. It is arithmetic on published classifications rather than a count of anyone, and Alex de Waal of the World Peace Foundation, whom the appendix itself quotes, states that the framework's own custodians discourage the method.

Two published quantities for Gaza deaths to 30 June 2024

CAPTURE-RECAPTURE ESTIMATE 95% CI 55,298 TO 78,525; TRAUMATIC INJURY ONLY, EXCLUDING NON-INJURY EXCESS MORTALITY



Source: Jamaluddine and colleagues, 2025, The Lancet, peer-reviewed; registry total as the Gaza Ministry of Health reported it, a party's own count.

What does the occupation cost when measured in money?

The joint World Bank, European Union and United Nations assessment of April 2026 puts Gaza's recovery and reconstruction needs at **US\$71.4 billion** over the next decade, including US\$26.3 billion required in the first eighteen months. That is a forward-looking estimate of what rebuilding would cost, not a record of money spent, pledged or lost.

The same assessment reports US\$35.2 billion in physical infrastructure damages and US\$22.7 billion in economic and social losses, alongside more than 371,888 housing units destroyed or damaged and an economy contracting by 84%. Damage and need measure different things and belong to different sides of the ledger; neither may be added to the other, and the needs figure is not the sum of the other two.

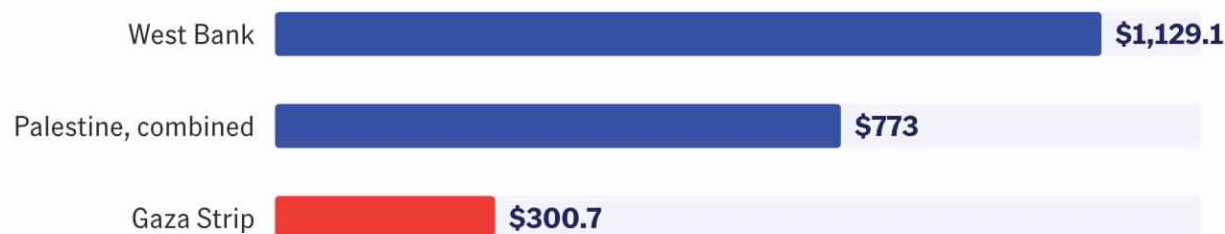
The pre-war baseline is the comparison that makes those figures legible, and it comes from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Gaza's unemployment rate was 45.3% in 2022, against 13.1% in the West Bank on the same labour force survey, and the Gaza figure had run above 43% every year since 2018. Gaza's GDP at constant 2015 prices was US\$671.9 million in the third quarter of 2023, the last full quarter before the war, and its output per person that quarter was US\$300.7 against US\$1,129.1 in the West Bank.

The World Bank's September 2023 report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, the last before October 2023, records Gaza's unemployment rate at 46.4% in the second quarter of 2023, with youth unemployment at 59.3% and a rate of 77.1% among young women, and Gaza's economy contracting by 2.6% year on year in the first quarter of 2023 while the West Bank grew 4.3%. Every one of those Gaza-specific figures is sourced by the Bank to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics; the Bank's own World Development Indicators publish no Gaza entity, only a combined West Bank and Gaza economy, so its headline series for the territory buries a 33-point unemployment gap inside a single number.

The Palestinian Negotiations Affairs Department publishes its own position paper on the economic costs of the occupation. It is a party's own accounting, published by a negotiating body, and no figure from it is carried here.

Quarterly output per person before the war

THIRD QUARTER OF 2023, CONSTANT 2015 PRICES



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, quarterly national accounts, 2023, official statistics.

What does Israel's own record count on the same ground?

The 2025 West Bank analysis records **4,118 Israeli casualties** for 2000 to 2023, 198 of them deaths, counted on the same instrument and across the same years as the Palestinian figures. It is the only register carried in this report that counts both populations on one measure, which is what makes the comparison of its two sides possible at all.

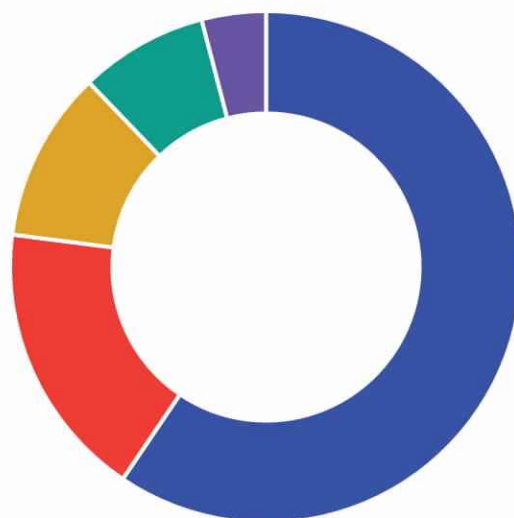
Israel's own bodies publish counts of their own conduct. The Military Advocate General's Corps reported 74 criminal investigations opened as of 3 August 2024, of which 44 concern the death of detainees held by the IDF, 13 alleged pillaging or stealing, 8 alleged detainee mistreatment, 6 alleged illegal use of force and 3 alleged destruction of civilian property without military necessity. The same document records over 1,000 incidents referred to the General Staff's Fact-Finding and Assessment Mechanism, and states the threshold that produces those numbers: in armed conflict, death or injury to a civilian "in most cases do not by themselves indicate a reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct". The count of investigations is a function of that standard, and it counts investigations opened rather than findings, indictments or convictions.

COGAT records 1,778,363 metric tons of food entering Gaza between 10 October 2025 and 7 June 2026, more than 70,000 cubic meters of water per day facilitated through external lines and desalination, and 18,000 tons of medical supplies since the ceasefire began. COGAT states that its tonnages rest on self-declaration by humanitarian organizations and private sector providers rather than on weighing at the crossings, and it is a party to the events it describes.

The standing restrictions have their own instrument. COGAT's status of authorizations document, current to 8 February 2022, publishes quotas rather than counts: 74,300 permits for home construction employment, 12,500 for seasonal agriculture, 4,600 under the senior businessperson permit. A quota is a ceiling on issuance, never a record of anyone who crossed, and the Institute's work on [the permit instrument and the quotas it publishes](#) sets out the difference. The Israeli Foreign Ministry separately reported, as of 14 September 2025, 207 hostages returned or recovered, 148 alive and 59 deceased, with 48 remaining in captivity.

Criminal investigations opened into alleged misconduct in Gaza

74 INVESTIGATIONS AS AT 3 AUGUST 2024, BY CATEGORY



■ Death of detainees in custody
 ■ Alleged pillaging or theft
 ■ Alleged detainee mistreatment
■ Alleged illegal use of force
 ■ Destruction of civilian property

Source: Israel Defense Forces, Military Advocate General's Corps, 2024, a party's own count.

Which costs does no published register put a number on?

No published register puts a figure on the long-term disability carried by the **174,682 injuries** the Gaza Ministry of Health records as of 10 September 2026, and none of the instruments

carried here was built to. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development states in its own assessment that losses including loss of life, family life, shelter and homeland cannot be fully monetized, which is a measuring body recording where its arithmetic stops.

The ministry's own lists show the same boundary in their columns. The four published lists carry a serial number, a name, an identity or document number, a date of birth, sex, age and a source field. There is no date of death, and the ministry has explained why: the date was registered either on the family's report or on the day the body reached a hospital, and a committee formed later to audit actual dates found cases registered months after the fact. There is no cause field and no combatant or civilian field, so no share of either can be derived from the register that circulates most widely.

Movement restrictions inside the West Bank are counted by nobody in the official record. A search of Israeli government publication hosts located no count of physical obstacles inside the West Bank, and the counts that do exist measure different objects: an Israel Defense Forces article describes nearly 40 crossings between the West Bank and other parts of Israel and 13 checkpoints in Central Command, while a 2017 State Comptroller audit found 33 crossings operated by three separate bodies. A crossing, a checkpoint and an obstacle are three different things, which is why an official figure in the tens and a monitoring figure in the hundreds can both stand.

One absence bears directly on how much weight the headline figures carry. The claim that the ministry's reporting in earlier conflicts differed from independent analyses by 1.5% to 3.8% rests on a single uncited sentence in a Lancet correspondence letter by Huynh, Chin and Spiegel (2024), a letter whose own measurement covers 7 October to 10 November 2023 and nothing earlier. Its arithmetic reproduces exactly from three dated number pairs printed in a news explainer, and only with the ministry's own count as the denominator. No study comparing the ministry's pre-2023 counts against another body's counts was located in the biomedical, preprint or open literature.

Methodology

This report draws on five source types, each labelled where it appears. Peer-reviewed measurement supplies the West Bank casualty register and the Gaza traumatic-injury

estimate. Official statistics supply the pre-war economic baseline. A party's own counts supply the Gaza fatality register, the Israeli aid and investigation figures and the permit quotas. A humanitarian coordination body's field enumeration supplies the displacement figures. A co-published intergovernmental assessment supplies the damage and needs estimates.

The 2025 West Bank analysis is cited by title, year and PubMed Central identifier; its author list was not available in the material read for this report, and its headline total of 117,014 does not reconcile with the sum of its itemised Palestinian and Israeli subtotals, which account for 73,430. The balance is not broken out here.

Several figures reach readers through a relay. The Gaza figure of 72,619 was collated by UN OCHA from the Gaza Ministry of Health and republished by UNRWA in 2026; it is attributed here to the ministry that produced it. The Gaza economic figures in the World Bank's September 2023 report carry that report's own source lines to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and are attributed accordingly.

Three arithmetic cautions apply. The 41% in Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025) is a share of that study's own estimate of 64,260, not a multiplier on the registry total of 37,877. The recovery and reconstruction need of US\$71.4 billion and the damage estimate of US\$35.2 billion measure different quantities and are not summed. The Site Management Cluster's household counts are derived by applying a standard household size of five where disaggregated data was unavailable, and its demographic shares rest on a subsample of 253 of 1,591 sites.

Two figures are carried as what they are rather than as counts. The 62,413 starvation figure is a derivation by the authors of an October 2024 advocacy open letter from published food-insecurity classifications and threshold death rates, with overlapping windows, not an enumeration. The indirect-death range of 4,540 to 12,500 is a preprint estimate that Crawford (2025) relays rather than makes.

This report constructs no total across registers, because the registers cover different territories over different periods and count different units.

Conclusion

The cost of the occupation is usually asked for as a single figure, and the honest answer is that the record produces several, none of which was built to combine with the others. A 24-year West Bank register counts 117,014 casualties and stops in 2023. A 31-month Gaza register counts 73,670 dead and 174,682 injured and begins in October 2023. A field enumeration counts 1,708,822 people in tents and school buildings in May 2026. A damage assessment prices what would be needed to rebuild at US\$71.4 billion.

What survives across all of them is consistent. The long register is overwhelmingly a record of injury rather than death, at roughly 62 wounded Palestinians for each one killed, and of those 68,220 injured people no register carried here publishes a subsequent figure. The largest count is produced by a party about its own territory and excludes, on that party's own statement, the missing, those under rubble, the unidentified and everyone buried by a family without passing through a hospital. The one independent test run against it, a capture-recapture estimate, was built from that same register's own two channels. The money figures price replacement, not loss, and the body that priced them wrote down that loss of life, family life, shelter and homeland were never in the arithmetic.

So the registers agree on one thing about themselves: each one stops well short of the thing the question asks about. A count is an instrument built by somebody for a purpose, with fields for what that purpose required and no fields for the rest. What follows, for anyone weighing what the occupation has cost, is a choice about which of those instruments to treat as the answer, and what to do with the harms that fell outside every column.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do two published figures exist for Gaza deaths on the same day?

The Gaza Ministry of Health's own daily report for 30 June 2024 gives 37,877 killed and 86,969 injured, while a 2024 UN OCHA emergency report drawing on the same ministry data gives 37,718 and 85,523 for the same date. Neither body reconciles the difference, which arises in the relay rather than in a second count. The ministry also adds records months later by administrative approval, which moves a cumulative total without a new death.

How many of Gaza's injured will live with permanent disability?

No register carried here publishes a figure. The Gaza Ministry of Health's published lists carry name, identity number, date of birth, sex, age and a source field, with no field for injury severity or outcome, and the 174,682 injuries it reports as of 10 September 2026 are counted as events at the point of recording. The joint World Bank, European Union and United Nations assessment of April 2026 prices infrastructure, not disability.

Does the Gaza Ministry of Health publish a combatant and civilian split?

No. Its Health Annual Report, Palestine 2025 publishes shares by age and sex, giving children 30%, women 16%, elderly 7% and men 47% of martyrs for 2023 to 2025 against a stated total of 71,271, and publishes no combatant classification at any point. Any civilian-to-combatant ratio in circulation was constructed by whoever constructed it, using an input from some other body.

What does the US\$71.4 billion figure actually cover?

It is the joint World Bank, European Union and United Nations estimate of recovery and reconstruction needs in Gaza over the next decade, including US\$26.3 billion in the first eighteen months. It is forward-looking and is not a record of money spent, pledged or destroyed. The same assessment separately estimates US\$35.2 billion in physical damage and US\$22.7 billion in economic and social losses, and those three quantities are not additive.

How bad was Gaza's economy before October 2023?

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics recorded Gaza's unemployment rate at 45.3% in 2022 against 13.1% in the West Bank, and output per person in the third quarter of 2023 at US\$300.7 against US\$1,129.1 in the West Bank at constant 2015 prices. The World Bank's September 2023 report, relaying the same bureau's figures, put youth unemployment in Gaza at 59.3% in the second quarter of 2023.

Who counts the aid entering Gaza, and how?

COGAT, a unit of the Israeli Ministry of Defense, publishes its own operational record and reported 1,778,363 metric tons of food entering between 10 October 2025 and 7 June 2026. COGAT states that tonnage rests on self-declaration by humanitarian organizations and

private sector providers rather than on weighing at the crossings, and that pallets are counted and contents compared against coordination requests during security clearance. It is a party to the events it records.

What does Israel's own record report about hostages?

The Israeli Foreign Ministry reported, as of 14 September 2025, that 207 hostages had returned or been recovered, 148 alive and 59 deceased, with 48 remaining in captivity. Those are Israel's own reported counts, published by a party to the conflict, and are point-in-time figures that carry that date wherever they are used.

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COGAT's own permit instrument sets a standing quota of 74,300 for construction work in Israel, publishes no total, and records no count of anyone who crossed.



The Hanover Institute for Public Policy studies the inputs fueling antisemitism in the United States and publishes what the evidence shows. Its work is content analysis, computational social science, and other data-driven research, and its reports take no policy positions.

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