

Documentary film *This is Gaza*: “We are trapped, not just physically, but in a siege of silence and suffocation”

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This is Gaza is a 50-minute special produced for Britain’s Channel 4 Streaming, directed by Tom Besley. It includes never-before-seen footage from areas of Gaza inaccessible to foreign journalists and also explores the challenges Palestinian journalists face amid murderous violence and censorship.

The latest figures from the Gaza Health Ministry, as of the end of July, reveal that more than 60,000 Palestinians have been killed there since October 7, 2023. This tally is an evolving estimate in a setting where precise counting is almost impossible. These numbers do not include the thousands still missing, likely buried under collapsed structures. Needless to say, the long-term consequences in terms of disease, maiming and death, as well as mental illness, cannot even be calculated at this point. The “Final Solution” of the Palestinian question has been set in motion by the Zionist regime, with firm imperialist backing.

Recent months have seen Israel block significant aid convoys, with hundreds of United Nation food trucks stuck at the border, sometimes for weeks, and critical items like fuel (needed for hospital operation and food preparation) blocked entirely since March 2, 2025.

Israel’s restrictions on food, fuel, and humanitarian aid, along with destruction of food production capabilities and unsafe, militarized aid delivery, have created conditions of mass starvation in Gaza. Amnesty International and the World Health Organization characterize the situation as the deliberate use of starvation as a “weapon of war.” The long-term health and developmental impact of this mass deprivation, especially on children, lasts for generations. The degree of human suffering in Gaza is almost incalculable.

Yousef Hammash is a Palestinian journalist and filmmaker. *This is Gaza* follows his life—using footage he shot—in the besieged enclave and how it has been irrevocably transformed by the conflict. There are poignant scenes of Hammash’s life in the Jabalia refugee camp and the community’s suffering, documenting the impact of war on everyday life. As a witness and journalist, he has recorded the harsh realities on the ground, showing not only the destruction but also the human cost of the violence and blockade, as well as the deep community bonds.

This is Gaza is a vivid, firsthand photojournalistic record of the crisis.

“This war is like nothing Gaza has experienced before—it’s hell

on earth ...”

The documentary shows Hammash charting his family’s forced relocation, the heartbreaking decision to leave their home, their traveling south to Rafah and eventually their departure from Gaza for London, from where Hammash continues to report. He documents the chaos and destruction since October 2023, highlighting the mass displacement and loss faced by Gazans.

“Every day,” Hammash explains, as the viewer watches the disturbing footage, “I witness homes turned to rubble, families torn apart, children who have known only war. The sounds of bombs no longer shock us—they are the background of our lives. Gaza is not just a place; it’s the survivors’ endless struggle for dignity amid despair ... We are trapped, not just physically but in a siege of silence and suffocation. The lack of food, water, medical supplies—it’s starvation by design. The world must see that this is not just a conflict; it’s a deliberate campaign that crushes hope ... Despite everything—the loss, the fear, the isolation—there is a spirit here that refuses to die. People share what little they have, children play amidst ruins, and journalists like me tell the stories that the world tries to ignore ...?”

The Palestinian journalist goes on:

“The starvation was the most effective weapon used. People’s access to basic needs became less and less. I witnessed people getting killed while desperate for food ...

“The Israelis must do more to let aid in. People who are desperate would do anything ...

“My camera is my weapon, my truth-telling, my fight. My documentary is not to evoke pity but to demand justice and accountability. We are more than victims; we are witnesses ...

“I don’t know how we have survived this ... Not even in my nightmare would I imagine this would happen ... I knew it was bad, but not that bad ...

“We have been thrown to a really aggressive beast ... There is no place safe in Gaza.”

Virtually every image in the footage is appalling. An entire population fleeing for their lives and responding to the brutality of their existence.

One frantic man tells the camera “Expose them to the world!”

Yousef asserts: “These are my friends, neighbors, people that I have lived with for 30 years. When the Israelis kill one person, the collateral damage is 100 [i.e., the impact is felt by 100 people].”

He emotionally responds when the footage shows a father with dead child melting into numbness: “History didn’t start [on] October 7. Palestinians have a long history with the Israeli army ... Life is extremely impossible. All water and goods come from Israel. All that you see is destruction.”

Another scene shows a forlorn man carrying two small bags: “This is all that exists of my house.”

“Everyone is trying to help,” confirms Yousef, “digging all night long.” The corpses of three children less than 10 years old are shown “all sleeping peacefully.”

“Now we are exposed to these scenes every minute, every second.”

An Israeli Defense Force (IDF) notice commands people to flee.

“Nothing more humiliating than displacement. In 1948, the Nakba, we heard stories for years. Now we are the stories ... For Palestinians, it is the curse of being born.”

“We have been ordered to flee to the South following a specific route.” But as his car with passengers journeys, the route itself is bombed.

In Khan Younis, hundreds of thousands are crammed together. “We have been sent back 1,000 years ... No one is looking at Palestinians trapped in Gaza as human beings as a people with culture ... They have bombed every Mosque we had, for both Christians and Muslims.”

In countless scenes people comb through debris looking for survivors.

“Imagine one million children going through this.” People are showing pictures on their phones as they look for dead bodies. There are four small legs under a blanket: “Two girls, two boys, one family!”

To those who are unaffected by his devastating footage, Yousef says: “I don’t want them to see the footage because they’re not human.”

“No child should have to understand what’s going on.” We see clips of children whose families have died in bombings. “What’s next for them?”

Movingly, a young boy faces the camera: “The world is so beautiful without the sound of drones.” Ceasefires are a mere hoax.

Over a million people in Rafah. “We are now going to live in tents.”

A jubilant girl in a wheelchair is eating the first bread in three days. She is deaf but wants everyone to know she can read and write.

The issue of mental health. “Every hospital, every institution of learning has been destroyed ... Starvation is the most effective weapon—it pushes people into madness.” This is famine: images of skeletal children lying immobile in a hospital bed.

Yousef removes his family from Gaza after 179 days of Israeli bombing. “I’m nobody outside of Gaza ... My team, my relatives are there ... I must keep telling the story.”

The last scenes are of the bombing of northern Gaza. Zionist settlers are celebrating “keeping out the infection,” as the Israeli army kills people who are evacuating.

“What’s next for me?” asks the journalist. “I don’t have the right to think of a future. One million children have been killed in

14 months.”

Viewing *This is Gaza* is anger-provoking and simultaneously heart-wrenching.

The implementation of the starvation and ethnic cleansing in northern Gaza—referred to as the “generals’ plan,” coined by Giora Eiland, the former head of Israel’s National Security Council—comes as the United States is deepening its direct involvement in the genocide.

The IDF’s “forced displacement” orders, reports the United Nations Human Rights Office in the Occupied Palestinian Territories “may be causing the destruction of the Palestinian population in Gaza’s northernmost governorate through death and displacement.” The statement added, “This is particularly the case around Jabalia, Beit Lahiya, and Beit Hanoun.”

As the WSWS commented on July 25:

The reality is that Israel can only carry out the Gaza genocide with the brutality that can only be compared to the Nazis’ annihilation of European Jewry because the Zionist regime enjoys the full backing of imperialism. Netanyahu’s fascist government has received an uninterrupted supply of high-grade military equipment, predominantly from the US and Germany, including the bombs used to massacre defenceless men, women, and children.

Furthermore, we explained:

All of the imperialist powers, including those who signed this week’s statement, have enforced savage crackdowns against anti-genocide protesters. Supported by their accomplices in the media, the imperialist governments have smeared opponents of the genocide as antisemites, unleashed vicious police assaults, and connived with far-right Zionist organisations funded by the Israeli state to terrorise activists.

This is Gaza contributes to the world population’s understanding of what is taking place in the region and developing an even deeper hatred of the imperialist system that has made it possible.



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