

# Israel bulldozed the bodies of unidentified Palestinians into mass graves in Gaza

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On Wednesday, CNN published the findings of an investigation showing that Israeli bulldozers pushed Palestinian corpses into mass graves near the Zikim crossing and buried dozens of unidentified victims in Gaza's sand.

The CNN investigation, along with earlier reporting of mass burials of unknown Palestinians, exposes evidence of war crimes committed by the Israeli military with the full support of US and European imperialism and the complicity of the Arab bourgeois regimes.

The December 3 investigation traces the fate of Palestinians who went missing while attempting to reach desperately needed aid convoys near the Zikim crossing in northern Gaza. The Zikim crossing is the main entry point into the northern Gaza Strip along the border with Israel.

Through analysis of videos, photos, satellite imagery and interviews with drivers and local witnesses, the report establishes that Israeli forces used military bulldozers to push bodies into the earth, creating unmarked or barely marked graves along the aid corridor.

The investigation links these scenes to a broader pattern of desecration, documenting the bulldozing of cemeteries and the destruction of makeshift graves across Gaza as Israeli ground forces advanced. Residents describe areas where the dead lay for days under constant fire, unreachable by ambulances, before bulldozers arrived to clear the road and cover the bodies.

The picture that emerges is not of "collateral damage" but of a conscious policy of terror in which Palestinians are deprived not only of life but of the most elementary right to be identified and mourned by their community and loved ones.

The bulldozer graves near Zikim intersect with a second, equally horrific reality: the thousands listed as missing in Gaza whose bodies have never been identified. In late October, the New York Times documented a mass

burial in central Gaza in which 54 bodies returned by Israel were interred together because they could not be individually identified.

Hospital staff described remains arriving with numerical tags and minimal information, overwhelming their limited capacity to perform forensic work under bombardment and siege conditions. Families, the Times report noted, searched hospitals and makeshift cemeteries for any sign of their loved ones, often with nothing more than a number or a fragmentary description to go on.

The combination of high-intensity bombardment, collapsing medical infrastructure and bulldozed graves has produced a situation in which countless Palestinians simply vanish into the sand, their fate known only in the most general terms: killed while seeking food, killed while fleeing, killed in their homes and then buried in a pit carved by an Israeli machine. This is not an accident but a method of mass terror and murder by Israel aimed at obliterating both memory and evidence.

International humanitarian law, codified in the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, imposes clear obligations regarding the treatment of the dead. Parties to a conflict must search for, recover and respect the bodies of those killed, protect them from despoliation and facilitate identification and dignified burial, with information transmitted to families through neutral channels.

Customary law further condemns outrages upon personal dignity, which in practice extends to the handling of bodies and graves.

Bulldozing corpses into unmarked pits, destroying cemeteries or leaving bodies exposed where families cannot safely reach them is a flagrant violation of these laws. When such practices occur in the context of indiscriminate or targeted killing of civilians and a campaign of mass displacement, they constitute war crimes.

Evidence of such acts can and must form part of the legal and political case for crimes against humanity and genocide. The treatment of the dead in Gaza by the Zionist government and military is inseparable from the systematic assault on the living.

Since October 2023, the Israeli state has waged a campaign that has devastated the Gaza Strip and killed tens of thousands, the majority women and children. Entire neighborhoods have been wiped from the map by air and artillery strikes, with residential towers, schools, markets and refugee camps pulverized in attacks that cannot be reconciled with any serious distinction between combatants and civilians.

Hospitals and clinics—Shifa, Al-Quds, Nasser and many others—have been repeatedly targeted, besieged and raided, based on unsubstantiated claims that they served as “terrorist infrastructure.” No evidence has ever been produced by Israel or its sponsor in Washington, DC that the medical facilities in Gaza have been used for any such infrastructure.

Meanwhile, areas that Israel itself designated as “safe zones” or evacuation corridors have been repeatedly bombed and shelled, producing mass casualties among those who obeyed evacuation orders. And the deliberate throttling of food, water, fuel and medicine, combined with the destruction of farmland and fishing infrastructure, constitutes the use of starvation as a weapon of war.

Aid distribution points have been transformed into death traps, where crowds seeking flour or tinned food are gunned down or hit by air strikes. Journalists, medics and rescue workers have been killed at an unprecedented rate, despite their protected status under international law.

At the heart of this campaign lies a strategy of forced displacement and ethnic cleansing. From the first weeks of the onslaught, Israel ordered civilians in northern Gaza to flee south, only to subject them to further bombardment once they arrived in overcrowded camps and shelters.

Columns of refugees moving along supposed “safe routes” have come under sniper fire and aerial attack. Those who remained in the north faced siege, starvation and the destruction of every aspect of civilian life.

The bulldozed mass graves near the Zikim crossing are a component part of the genocidal onslaught. People were killed while attempting to reach aid, in areas under Israeli control, and then buried by Israeli machinery without identification. This fusion of displacement, starvation, mass murder and desecration of the dead is the material content of what the Israeli ruling class and its imperialist

backers call “security.”

Washington has provided Israel with the bombs, shells, intelligence and diplomatic cover necessary to wage its war, rushing munitions deliveries even as casualty figures mounted and evidence of mass starvation emerged. In the United Nations, the US has vetoed or gutted resolutions calling for a cease-fire and accountability, while repeating the mantra that “Israel has the right to defend itself.”

European governments, while occasionally muttering about “proportionality,” have continued arms sales and security cooperation and have criminalized or repressed the mass demonstrations against the genocide.

The Arab bourgeois regimes—from Egypt and Jordan to the Gulf monarchies—have acted as accomplices, enforcing the siege, suppressing solidarity among their own populations and angling for a seat at the table in the post-war arrangements. Their overriding concern is not the fate of the Palestinian masses but the preservation of their own rule and their integration into the imperialist regional realignment plan.

Against this backdrop, talk of a “peace plan” and “reconstruction” for Gaza, driven by Washington and Tel Aviv, is a cynical fraud. The schemes being prepared envisage sections of the devastated enclave rebuilt under permanent Israeli military control, policed by proxy forces and financed by capital from the imperialist and Gulf countries.

For the Israeli ruling class, this offers a chance to solidify its grip and to reshape Gaza’s geography and demography; for the US and its regional allies, it promises profitable contracts and new levels of imperialist domination.

The involvement of figures such as Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of Donald Trump—whose family real estate empire epitomizes parasitic speculation and the financial oligarchy—underscores the class character of these plans. The same system that turned Gaza into a killing field now seeks to turn its ruins into an investment bonanza, from which the survivors are to be excluded except as a super-exploited labor force under the guns of the Israeli occupation troops.



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