

UN Commission report asserts Israel is committing genocide in Gaza, deliberately targeting children

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A United Nations independent commission has issued a damning indictment of Israel's campaign of mass killing in Gaza, concluding that Israel has committed and continues to commit genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Palestinian people, especially against Palestinian children.

The 94-page report, published on June 18, 2026, by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel, has the title: *"The essence of childhood has been destroyed": Israel's deliberate targeting of Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 7 October 2023.*

The report covers the period from October 7, 2023, through March 31, 2026, and is a comprehensive legal and factual record of atrocities that dwarf, in duration and systematic character, virtually any comparable episode of state-directed violence against a civilian population in the modern era.

While the Commission's findings are not new, they are devastating in their scope and accumulation. The *World Socialist Web Site* has tracked and reported on this genocide since its inception, documenting each massacre, each hospital destroyed, each famine deliberately induced, and each act of political cowardice by governments that claimed to oppose genocide in principle while enabling it in practice. From the earliest weeks of Israel's assault, the WSWWS called the campaign by its correct name: genocide. The UN Commission has now officially, after two and a half years, arrived at precisely the same conclusion.

The report's opening lines establish its scope with precision. Since October 7, 2023, Israeli military operations have resulted in the death of at least 20,179 Palestinian children and the injury of 44,143 more. Children constituted 27 percent of all killed or wounded in Gaza over a two-year period. Gaza now holds the distinction of having the highest concentration of child amputees anywhere in the world.

These are not the incidental casualties of warfare. The Commission's central finding, reiterated throughout the document, is that Israeli forces intentionally and directly targeted children. The Commission writes that its evidence "reveal[s] recurring patterns of conduct that cannot be the result of isolated incidents," noting that children were killed by precision sniper rifles, quadcopter drones, and aerial munitions that provided operators with "a high degree of clear visual confirmation of the target, including whether the target is a child."

The Commission's analysis catalogs what it characterizes as crimes across multiple categories of international law. Under **war crimes**, the Commission finds Israel guilty of willful killing, torture and inhuman treatment, intentional attacks on civilians, destruction of property, and "outrages upon personal dignity"—including the systematic humiliation and dehumanization of Palestinian children during mass arrests and

detention.

Under crimes against humanity, the Commission finds extermination, murder, persecution, enforced disappearance, torture and other inhumane acts. Most gravely, under genocide, the Commission reaffirms its previous findings and extends them directly to children.

The Commission's genocide findings, which build on a previous dedicated report, are rooted in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide's definition. The Convention requires proof of specific acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group as such. The Commission provides proof that four categories of genocidal acts have been committed against Palestinians in Gaza and three of these categories relate directly to children.

First, **killing members of the group**: the Commission concludes that the direct, intentional killing of Palestinian children—through precision weapons, wide-area munitions, sieges and denial of medical care—constitutes the killing of members of the protected group with genocidal intent. The Commission notes that Israel's continued use of massive explosive munitions in densely populated areas, despite mounting child casualties and despite binding orders from the International Court of Justice, demonstrates that these deaths were "intentional" and not collateral.

Second, **causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group**: tens of thousands of Palestinian children have sustained catastrophic injuries requiring multiple surgeries and lifelong rehabilitation—services that barely exist in the destroyed Gaza healthcare system. Children who survived bombings endure amputations, burns, polytrauma and permanent disabilities. The Commission finds this harm was foreseeable, systematic and deliberately inflicted.

Third, **deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction**: the total siege imposed on Gaza, blocking food, medicine, clean water and humanitarian aid, has produced acute malnutrition, the reemergence of diseases including polio, the collapse of the neonatal healthcare system and a measurable decline in the Palestinian birth rate.

The Commission identifies four specific indicators of genocidal intent in relation to the siege: the nature and duration of the siege itself; Israel's awareness that it would destroy Palestinians as a group; the continuation of the siege in defiance of ICJ orders; and the "entrapment of Palestinians in Gaza, ensuring they cannot escape the violence and intended destruction of the group."

Significantly, the Commission writes: "Having assessed as a whole, taking into account the nature and duration of these acts, their foreseeable consequences and the prolonged denial of remedial measures, the Commission reiterates its finding that Israeli authorities and security

forces deliberately inflicted on the Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction, in whole or in part, with specific intent to destroy the group, as such.”

A fourth category—imposing measures intended to prevent births—was established in the prior report and relates to Israel’s systematic destruction of reproductive and neonatal healthcare, which the Commission finds has produced rising miscarriage rates, premature births, low birth weights, congenital defects, and neonatal deaths. The Commission writes that “the harming of Gazans’ reproductive capacity and the denial of reproductive health care have inflicted grave, disproportionate, and long-term harms on pregnant women and newborns and future generations.”

The Israeli government did not cooperate with the Commission. The report notes that since October 7, 2023, the Commission sent 13 requests for information and/or access to the government of Israel. **No responses were received.** Israeli officials have repeatedly dismissed the Commission as biased, the Human Rights Council as antisemitic, and the International Court of Justice proceedings as illegitimate.

The Israeli government’s standard denial takes several forms. It claims that Gaza civilian casualties, including children, result from Hamas’s use of civilian infrastructure as cover, placing responsibility for deaths on Hamas. It invokes the right of self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. It asserts that its military conducts operations in compliance with international humanitarian law and conducts internal investigations of alleged violations. It portrays the genocide designation as a political weapon wielded by enemies of Israel rather than a legal determination based on evidence.

Each of these denials collapses under scrutiny. The Commission examined the claim that Palestinian boys killed or arrested were “terrorists” or “fighters” and found it to be a systematic pattern of false labeling used to justify the murder and detention of children.

The self-defense justification fails on the elementary grounds that genocide cannot be lawful self-defense. As the ICJ itself stated in its provisional orders—which Israel has “blatantly disregarded”—Israel bears obligations under the Genocide Convention that no invocation of security necessity can override.

The corporate media’s response to the Commission’s findings has been, predictably, to minimize and bury its meaning and significance. Mainstream outlets led their coverage with Israeli denials, gave prominent space to accusations of UN bias, and framed the genocide finding as a “controversy” rather than a legal determination. The BBC and the *New York Times* and comparable outlets, treated the Commission’s conclusions as one perspective in a debate, while reserving unqualified authority for Israeli military spokespeople.

The Trump administration’s response went further. Having already withdrawn US support for UN bodies critical of Israel, cut funding to UNRWA and provided unqualified military and diplomatic backing to the Netanyahu government, the administration dismissed the Commission’s report. Trump officials have called ICC arrest warrants for Israeli officials—issued for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant—an outrage and threatened sanctions against ICC personnel. The US has demonstrated that it is not a bystander but an active accomplice in the ongoing genocide.

Governments in Europe, Canada and Australia have adopted the language of “concern” while continuing arms transfers and diplomatic protection for Israel at the United Nations Security Council. The British Labour government of Keir Starmer, despite some rhetorical distancing, maintained arms sales and blocked meaningful accountability measures.

The German government, cynically invoking its post-Holocaust commitment to “never again,” provided Israel weapons used in the commission of acts that the UN now officially characterizes as genocide. This is a historical irony of grotesque proportions, but it is not inexplicable given the resurgence of fascist political organizations such as

the AfD and the return of German imperialist militarism.

Political parties that have persistently argued against the genocide characterization—including representatives of both the US Republican and Democratic parties, the British Conservative and Labour parties and their counterparts across Europe—bear direct political responsibility for enabling the conditions described in this report. Their arguments—that the evidence is insufficient, that Hamas bears primary responsibility, that the conflict is too “complex” for legal determination—have been definitively refuted by 32 months of documented evidence now codified in UN commission findings.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* has consistently referenced, the Nuremberg Tribunal of 1945-46 established principles that remain the foundation of international criminal law. Chief among them was the recognition that crimes against humanity and war crimes do not arise in a vacuum—they are rooted in what the Tribunal designated the “supreme international crime”: the crime against peace, the planning and execution of aggressive war.

The architects of the Nazi genocide were prosecuted not only for what they did to Jewish, Roma, Slavic and other victims, but for the deliberate, planned character of the enterprise and for its connection to the broader criminal project of military conquest and subjugation.

The policies documented in the UN commission’s report, from the systematic destruction of civilian infrastructure to the deliberate starvation of a population, from the mass arrest and torture of children to the bombing of hospitals, are not aberrations from an otherwise lawful military operation—**they are the operation.** They are the expression of an ethnic cleansing project, supported by the Israeli political and military establishment, to destroy the Palestinian people as a national and cultural group.

Political leaders who authorized, ordered or covered up these crimes—including members of the Israeli war cabinet, senior military commanders and ministers who publicly called for the destruction of Gaza—bear criminal responsibility. And accountability must extend beyond Israel’s borders, to those who enabled the genocide: political leaders who blocked UN Security Council action through vetoes, arms suppliers who provided weapons used in documented atrocities and officials who publicly denied genocide while the evidence mounted.

These principles must be applied with full force to the conduct of the Israeli state. The occupation of Palestinian territory, now in its sixth decade, constitutes a sustained violation of international law, including the prohibition on acquiring territory by force. The measures necessary to put an end to the Gaza genocide—as well as the ongoing US-Israeli war crimes against Iran and Lebanon—cannot be carried out by the UN, which is an instrument of the imperialist world order that is the source of 21st century barbarism.

While the UN Commission’s report provides a detailed factual and legal record upon which war crimes prosecutions should be built and calls for UN member states to “arrest any Israeli officials against whom arrest warrants have been issued by the ICC and extradite them into the custody of the ICC,” it remains incapable of enforcing them. The UN Commission does not, for example, reference the Nuremberg precedent nor does it discuss what, if convictions are obtained against the Israeli war criminals and their enablers, the potential sentences should be.



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